

Gravford 1224(1-7)

Companion to the [British] Almanac

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Extracts from the "Compan-
ion to the [British] Alma-
nac" for 1838, 1839, 1840,
1841, 1842 and 1851.

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Gravford (Post Office) K
Also Post Office notice
of November, 1877.
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XV.—NEW SYSTEM OF TWOPENNY POST.

THE "Ninth Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the Management of the Post-Office Department," with the evidence appended, is an interesting document, and is rendered more so by the recommendation contained in it, from the commissioners, of permitting as an experiment, "the free circulation of letters by the twopenny post under stamped covers." The following is an abstract of the Report, and a portion of the evidence and papers in the Appendix:—

The establishment of a post for the delivery of letters in and around London originated from the enterprise of a private individual, about the close of the Protectorate. In a report of the Postmasters-general to the Lord High Treasurer, in 1702, they say,—“In obedience to your lordship's order of reference of Mr. William Dowckra's petition, we have considered of the allegations therein contained, and do humbly acquaint your lordship that we are informed your petitioner was the person who did first set up a penny post; and that it being thought to interfere with the power granted by parliament to the Postmaster-general, a suit was commenced against him by the order of the late King James, then Duke of York, whereupon there was a trial at the King's Bench bar, and a verdict given against him, and damages found; and that soon after the Revolution, the petitioner did apply himself to the House of Commons for some consideration of his case; and after examination thereof, the House came to a resolution that the petition and case of Mr. William Dowckra, merchant, in relation to the penny post-office, be humbly represented and commended to his Majesty from this House, to relieve him therein, as to his great wisdom and justice shall be meet.” Mr. Dowckra, on this recommendation, received a pension of 500*l.* per annum, for seven years from 1691, and afterwards for three years longer. In 1697, he was made Comptroller of the Penny Post; but it would appear that his enterprise in starting the post was better than his management of it, for he was dismissed in 1700, in consequence of complaints against him. The complaints set forth, that “Hee hath removed the general penny post from Cornhill, a place most proper, being near the 'Change, and in the heart of the citty, to a more remote place altogether improper, whereby the messengers' walks are altered from one to two houres, so that letters are thereby delayed for some hours, to the great hindrance of business and fatigue to the poor messengers, and 100*l.* charges to His Majesty to fit his house for his own convenience. Hee forbids the taking in any bandboxes (except very small), and all parcels above a pound, which, when they were taken, did bring in considerable advantage to the office, they being now at great charge sent by porters in the citty, and coaches and watermen into the country, which formerly went by penny-post messengers much cheaper and more satisfactorily. Hee stops, under spetious pretences, most parcellls that are taken in, which is great damage to tradesmen by loosing their customers or spoiling their goods; and many times hazard the life of the

patient, when physick sent by a doctor or an apothecary." Other complaints charged him with opening and detaining letters, &c.

A Mr. Povey set up a private post in 1708, under the name of the Halfpenny Carriage, and appointed receiving houses and persons to collect and deliver letters for hire within the city of London, Southwark, and Westminster. But this attempt was suppressed by the post-office authorities.

The commissioners say that the regulations under which letters were conveyed by the penny post cannot be clearly ascertained from the records of the department. No limit appears to have been assigned to the weight of the parcels and packets, although it was required that they should not exceed 10*l.* in value, from which it may be inferred that the office was held responsible to that amount for their safe delivery. The conveyance of parcels continued down to 1765, when it was enacted by the 5 Geo. III. c. 25, that no packet exceeding the weight of four ounces should be carried by the penny post, unless it had first passed or was intended to pass by the general post.

From the first establishment of the penny post down to the year 1794 the postage was paid in advance. The delivery of letters was originally confined to the city of London, Southwark, and Westminster; but it was extended to the towns and villages round London on the application of the inhabitants, who voluntarily agreed to pay an additional penny on the receipt of their letters. This additional penny was for some time a perquisite of the messengers; but, from 1687, it was carried to the account of the revenue.

The charge of this additional penny was not authorised by law till 1727. In an account of the "gross and neat produce of the second penny by the letters taken in by the several receivers of the penny-post office in London, which were directed and delivered to sundry persons in the country," the gross produce in 1687 is stated at 326*l.* 4*s.* 9*d.*; in 1690, as 314*l.* 10*s.* 1*d.*; in 1692, as 338*l.* 14*s.* 11*d.*; in 1700 it was 358*l.* 1*s.* 7*d.*; and in 1702, 361*l.* 6*s.* 7*d.*

The penny post became a twopenny post in 1801, under the 41 Geo. III. c. 7, and in 1805, the postage on letters delivered beyond the limits of the city of London, Southwark, and Westminster, was advanced to threepence. In 1831, the boundaries of the twopenny post were extended to include all places within three miles of the general post-office; and, in 1833, the boundaries of the threepenny post were extended to places not exceeding twelve miles.

Since the commencement of the present century,—that is, from the time that the penny post was converted into a twopenny post,—the gross annual receipts of the establishment have been gradually augmented from 54,893*l.* to 120,801*l.*, which was the amount for the year ended 5th January, 1837. The charges of collection on this latter sum amounted to 47,466*l.* There are 209 twopenny post receiving houses within the three-mile boundary, and 194 within the threepenny-post boundary. The keepers of the receiving houses are shopkeepers; they used to be paid according to the number of letters received; but they now have fixed salaries, according to the duty performed, and the situation. Some of

these annual payments are very small, as low as 5*l.*, and varying from that up to 40*l.* In one instance, a salary of 100*l.* is paid; this is for a receiving house in Cornhill, which sends to the general office from 1500 to 1700 letters a day. The total annual expense of the 209 twopenny-post receiving houses is 3,338*l.* An account exhibits the number of letters collected from these receiving houses in *four weeks*,—they amount to 841,674. The following exhibits the number of letters on two particular days, selected as being considered "heavy" days; the reader will remark the proportion of the total number of letters for the day which are posted in the afternoon, intended for delivery by the seven o'clock dispatch:—

Number of letters put into the twopenny post-offices in January 9th and 23rd, 1837:—

January the 9th.		
	Five o'clock Collection.	Total for the Day.
Town	13,847	41,190
Country	5,754	8,541
Window	767	2,888
	<hr/> 20,368	<hr/> 52,619

January the 23rd.		
	Five o'clock Collection.	Total for the Day.
Town	14,815	45,377
Country	6,810	10,499
Window	698	2,595
	<hr/> 22,323	<hr/> 58,471

A considerable portion of the evidence given before the Commissioners related to plans for the acceleration of the delivery of letters by the twopenny post. Up to November 14, 1837, the average time which was occupied before an answer could be received to a letter put into the receiving house between eight A.M. and seven P.M. was 14½ hours; and the average period between the receipt and delivery of a letter was about 5½ hours. There were six deliveries daily, at 8, 10, and 12 o'clock, A.M.; and 3, 5, and 7 o'clock, P.M., the collections being made from the different receiving houses two hours before each delivery, with the exception of that for the first, which is made at eight the previous evening. From two o'clock till five, a period when the number of letters posted is probably greater than at any other time (as appears from the account given above), there was no delivery, and the last collection of letters was made at five o'clock, whilst letters from the general-post receiving houses are not collected till six. The Commissioners proposed that the deliveries shall, in future, be every second hour, from eight A.M. until eight P.M., and that the collections shall be made at the same hours, *viz.*, at 8, 10, and 12, A.M. and 2, 4, 6, and 8, P.M. This recommendation has been carried into effect. The alteration began on the 14th of November last; and the inhabitants of the metropolis are now enjoying the benefit of the Commissioners' suggestion. The riding work of the twopenny-post office is now provided for, under contract, at an expense of 7½*d.* per double mile for the horse posts, and 7½*d.* for mail-

carts. The wages of the riders and drivers, and the expense of the carts, are defrayed by the contractor, who undertakes to convey the bags at the rate of eight miles an hour. The total sum paid for this service in 1836 was 4,107*l.* The commissioners suggest that, in many cases, the short stages and omnibuses now running in and around London could be more efficiently and cheaply employed for the purpose of conveying the letter-bags; and several omnibus proprietors, examined by the commissioners, expressed great willingness to undertake the service for a small remuneration and to bind themselves to perform it with regularity.

There is a system of registration for letters containing specie transmitted through the twopenny post. Persons wishing to send money are desired to give their letters in charge to the receiver, who enters the address upon the bill, where a blank space is left for the purpose. The officer who takes the collection is responsible for every letter so entered, and passes it to the money clerk, who enters it in the book, and the letter carrier who delivers it signs that book. There is no additional charge for registration; but letters containing bank notes and drafts are not registered. The reason assigned for this is, that there is no means of ascertaining the truth of the statement of the party delivering it in, and that it would open a door for registration of letters over which there could be no check. The superintending president of the twopenny post is asked,—“Is there a great loss of letters in the twopenny post department?”—“I am sorry to say,” he answers, “there are many losses, and I fear there will always be while bank notes pass through the office in the way they do.” “Are large sums frequently transmitted through the twopenny post?”—“No, not large sums; sometimes there may be 50*l.* or 100*l.* in a letter; but mostly much smaller sums.” Another officer is asked, “If a person wishes to force you to register a letter now, he has only to put a halfpenny in it, and then it must be registered?”—“Exactly so.” “Is that done at all?”—“It is occasionally done; letters with farthings are sometimes registered.” The number of registered money letters passed through the twopenny post on the 30th of January, 1837, was 468.

A RETURN of the Number of Applications made for Missing Letters at the Twopenny Post-office in each of the last Three Years, and showing the Number of Cases where it was alleged that these Letters contained Property, the Amount which it was stated they contained, and also the Number of Letters and the Amount of Property recovered.

Date.	Number of Inquiries	Number of Cases alleged to contain Property.	Amount.	Number of Letters Recovered	Amount.
			£. s. d.		£. s. d.
From 5th April, 1834 to 5th April, 1835	3,282	116	1,154 6 2	35	893 6 2
From 5th April, 1835 to 5th April, 1836	2,358	103	1,277 11 11	37	288 14 0
From 5th April, 1836 to 5th April, 1837	2,882	120	3,741 13 1	52	2,657 7 6

The weight of packets transmitted through the twopenny post should not exceed four ounces; all above this weight are stopped, and notice is sent to the person to whom they are addressed. "We do not run it too close," says the superintending president; "if it is within a quarter of an ounce over the weight we do not stop them; and many, I have no doubt, pass beyond that." The number of overweight packets stopped in 1836 was 1406.

One of the witnesses examined by the commissioners was Rowland Hill, Esq., the author of "Post-Office Reform," a pamphlet which, during the past year, has attracted a considerable share of public attention. A large portion of his evidence related to the acceleration of the delivery of the letters transmitted through the twopenny post. "It appears to me," says Mr. Hill, "that one cause of the dilatoriness of the present delivery is the attempt to treat so enormous a place as London as a single town. I think it should be treated as several. Suppose there were ten district offices, then London would be divided into ten great districts, each of which would be treated as a distinct town." Mr. Hill's plan requires that the rates of postage should be uniform, and also be paid in advance. A number of objections to the plan were stated by Mr. Smith, the superintending president of the twopenny post. He objected to the establishment of district offices on account of the expense; and to the taking away the option from the public of paying the postage or leaving it to be paid by the receiver. Out of 287,908 twopenny-post letters transmitted in a single week, only 50,956 were postpaid in advance. The commissioners did not feel themselves warranted in recommending the present adoption of Mr. Hill's plan, of having district offices and hourly deliveries, in opposition to the advice of the officer at the head of the department, although they intimate their own approval of it; but another portion of the plan they have recommended for immediate experiment. The success of this experiment will mainly depend upon the way in which it is worked, and the light in which the subject is understood by the public. When it is recollected that the success of the experiment will probably lead to the introduction of the plan into the general post, and perhaps effect a very great change in the post-office system, it will be deemed worth a little effort to understand it, and to act upon it.

Without disturbing the present system of the twopenny post, leaving it open to the public to receive letters by it as they have hitherto done, at the usual rates of twopence and threepence according to the distance,—the commissioners propose that those who wish to do so should be enabled to send letters under "stamped covers." "A few years ago," says Mr. Hill, "when the expediency of entirely abolishing the newspaper stamp, and allowing newspapers to pass through the Post Office for 1d. each, was under consideration, it was proposed by Mr. Charles Knight, the publisher, that the postage on newspapers might be collected by selling stamped wrappers at 1d. each. Availing myself of this excellent suggestion, I propose the following arrangement:—Let stamped covers and sheets of paper be supplied to the public from the Stamp Office or Post Office, as may be most convenient, and sold at such

a price as to include the postage: letters so stamped might be put into the letter-box as at present."

The commissioners suggest that no distinction should be made between the twopenny and threepenny-post boundaries as to letters sent under stamped covers,—that the stamp or envelope required for franking letters under an ounce should be charged 1*d.*, and from one ounce to six ounces, 2*d.*; and that the stamped covers should be sold at the receiving houses, and by the stationers who sell stamps.

Mr. Pressly, of the Stamp Office, says, "The first objection which might be started would be the forging of the stamp. It has occurred to me, however, that that might be prevented if the government manufactured a particular paper for such envelopes. There is a paper which has been produced to the commissioners of stamps for another purpose, and it is the best suggestion which occurs to me for the purpose, *viz.*, by the introduction of a silk thread into the paper which it is difficult to manufacture, and very expensive, and, with the vigilance of the Excise, would be almost impossible to forge. The silk is woven in the pulp, and is written on with the greatest facility; the manufacturer is Mr. Dickinson of the Old Bailey."

Mr. Dickinson, who is an extensive and most ingenious paper manufacturer, says, "The paper is manufactured with threads of silk, or cotton, or flax, as may be found necessary, in the centre of the sheet. I took the idea from the white strand in the government cordage, which is introduced for the purpose of distinction, and to prevent thereby the pillage of the government rope. The paper is manufactured by large and complicated machinery, for which I took out a patent; and it could not be manufactured in a clandestine way, on account of the nature of the machinery, and because the manufacture of paper is carried on under inspection of the Excise." Mr. Dickinson, in a letter to the commissioners, proposed to make the paper with ten threads of a light blue colour running across each cover, so as to exhibit upon it the appearance of faint blue lines. It would be easy to test the paper by scraping one of the lines, in which case the thread would become exposed in that which was genuine paper. The stamped covers could be so arranged as to admit of being folded in the common way, or cut to form envelopes with the four corners of the paper meeting under the seal.

The commissioners say,—“We are satisfied that, if the use of this paper was confined exclusively to stamped covers, it would be almost impossible to imitate the paper, or commit any forgery without detection.”

XVI.—GENERAL SURVEYS OF THE KINGDOM.

As the want of any general survey of the kingdom, the defective state of the existing township, parochial and estate maps, and the inconveniences of creating partial documents only adapted for the particular occasions which render them necessary, must be frequently felt both by the legislature, the executive government, and the community at large, it is surprising that no general national survey of the kingdom applicable to modern times should as yet

Number and tonnage of steam-vessels, distinguishing those employed in the coasting-trade from those engaged in foreign voyages, which entered the ports of the United Kingdom and cleared from the same with cargoes in the year 1837. (The numbers include the aggregate of repeated voyages made by the same vessels during the year, and are exclusive of vessels in ballast or with passengers only.)

	Coasting Trade.				Foreign Trade.			
	Inwards.		Outwards.		Inwards.		Outwards.	
	Ships.	Tonnage.	Ships.	Tonnage.	Ships.	Tonnage.	Ships.	Tonnage.
England . . .	9,338	1,505,186	9,189	1,465,432	1,174	237,818	1,471	258,003
Scotland . . .	3,335	561,988	2,841	481,208	5	1,450	10	2,378
Ireland . . .	2,758	604,403	2,996	658,099	4	876	4	876
United Kingdom	15,431	2,671,577	15,019	2,604,739	1,183	230,144	1,485	261,257

XII.—THE UNIFORM PENNY POSTAGE.

THE progress this question has made in the public mind gives great hope of its success. Scarcely two years have passed since its projector modestly sent the scheme in a small pamphlet to make its way in the world. Its novelty startled every one, and it seemed a thing too good to be feasible. It has been talked over by the whole country, and the result is, a conviction that it is no idle dream. The highest mercantile authorities so far pronounce judgment in its favour, that they begin to talk of forming a company to farm the postage, undertaking to reduce to a penny universally, and to guarantee the revenue from any loss, in case the Government fear to risk the present postage revenue. Mercantile committees and large subscriptions to promote the success of the plan have been made in London, Liverpool, Manchester, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and other places. The popular feeling seems in nowise behind that of the mercantile classes, for it appears that upwards of 320 petitions in favour of the plan were presented to Parliament last session; whilst it may be noted that, in the previous sessions, similar petitions only amounted to five in number. But the most important testimony in its favour is the Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, which sat during the whole of last session to inquire into its merits. The Report and evidence are highly interesting, but are so very bulky that we must content ourselves with reprinting the more important resolutions passed by the Committee, which, indeed, are the substantial groundwork of the Report.

The Committee pass the following judgment on the present rates of postage:—

The Committee are of opinion, that the evidence taken before them abundantly proves the present high rates of postage are ex-

tremely 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 and 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.

With respect to the **NON-INCREASE OF POST-OFFICE REVENUE**, the Committee are of opinion that it is mainly owing to the combined operation of the high rates of postage, and of the increased and increasing facilities for the illicit conveyance of letters, that, after a lapse of the last twenty 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 ARE NECESSARY.

The Committee are of opinion 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 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.

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Upon the important novelty of a **UNIFORM RATE** the Committee are of opinion, 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, the 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 may be their distance; and the 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.

PRE-PAYMENT OR PAYMENT IN ADVANCE.

The Committee are of opinion, 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 postages, 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 stamp 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, the payment on delivery being made considerably higher than payment in advance.

STAMPS, OR STAMPED COVERS.

The Committee are of opinion, 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. The use of such stamps or stamped paper should be made compulsory as soon as warranted by experience. This arrangement would relieve the Post-office of a considerable portion of its financial accounts, and render more secure the collection of the revenue.

WEIGHT.

The Committee are of opinion, 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.

The next resolution estimates the number of chargeable letters, counting double and triple letters as single only, which now pass through the post-offices of the United Kingdom in a year, to be between 75,000,000 and 80,000,000, of which about 57,00,000 are general-post letters, and the remainder penny, twopenny, and threepenny post letters. That the number of franks is about 7,000,000, and the number of newspapers about 44,000,000.

ILLICIT CONVEYANCE OF LETTERS.

The Committee are of opinion that the illicit conveyance of letters is proved to be practised systematically in all parts of the kingdom to an extent it would be difficult to estimate: that the illicit conveyance is on the increase, and will probably continue to increase in an accelerated rate as railroads, steam-boats, and other rapid means of communication come into use: that the causes of this habitual breach of the law are principally the high rates of postage, and, in some instances, a want of sufficient opportunities for the despatching of letters through proper channels: that the law has been found altogether impotent for the prevention of the practice; and that even if it could be enforced, a most serious evil would be inflicted on society, without a corresponding benefit to the revenue, inasmuch as a large portion of letters would be suppressed altogether: and, finally, that the only mode of effectually checking the illegal conveyance of letters would be to reduce the charges to the standard of the illicit letter carrier. If this were done, the Committee are of opinion that the superior regularity and safety of the conveyance by post would, in a short time, induce the public to make use of the Post-office for the despatch of letters on all occasions. In which case the Committee are of opinion that the existing practice of corresponding through the medium of newspapers, by means of conventional forms in the address, marks under the print, concealed writing on the margin of wrapper, and other contrivances, to which the high rates of postage have given birth, would, in a great measure, be suppressed, and that an increase in the number of posted letters would result from such suppression.

INCREASE OF LETTER-WRITING.

The Committee are of opinion, that, in addition to the great increase of letters by post which would result from bringing all, or nearly all that are now written into the Post-office, a great reduction in the rates of postage, accompanied by payment in advance, stamped paper, and other facilities, would induce much more frequent communication between friends, and between persons in business, making, in the whole, a great extension of the actual correspondence of the present letter-writing class.

CORRESPONDENCE OF THE POORER CLASSES.

The Committee are of opinion, that, in addition to the important sources of increase which have already been noticed, the industrious and poorer classes, whose correspondence is now almost altogether suppressed by the high rates of postage, would, on a very considerable reduction of the rates, accompanied by the previously

proposed arrangements, avail themselves, for the first time, of the Post-office; and that although their contributions might be small individually, yet, taking their number into consideration, the aggregate amount would be most important.

GENERAL REVENUE IMPROVED BY REDUCTION OF POSTAGE.

The Committee are of opinion, that the cheap, speedy, and more frequent communication by means of post, which it is the object of Mr. Hill's plan to establish, would greatly facilitate all commercial transactions, and lead to a great extension of trade, both foreign and domestic. That this extension of trade would, in no inconsiderable degree, improve the general revenue of the country, and thus, in all probability, fully compensate for any small diminution which might take place in the revenue of the Post-office.

TEMPORARY TWOPENNY RATE.

The Committee are of opinion, 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 cases of prices current, the letters of soldiers and sailors, and others, where *1d.* only is now charged, and of such short inland rate as is hereinafter recommended to be charged on a distance of fifteen miles.

UNIFORM RATE OF ONE PENNY.

The Committee are of opinion, that, as 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.

PENNY POSTAGE EMBRACING FIFTEEN MILES.

The Committee are of opinion, that, considering the strength of concurrent evidence on the evasion of postage chargeable between neighbouring towns, and also that the present system of penny-posts is partial and unequal, a uniform rate of *1d.* per half ounce ought immediately to be established for all distances not exceeding fifteen 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.*

The subsequent resolutions are comparatively of minor importance, though all tending to give great advantages to the public. It is recommended that—

All rates of **PACKET-POSTAGE** be immediately reduced to the uniform rate on ship-letters.

FRANKS be abolished.

There be an option on the payment in advance on **FOREIGN LETTERS**.

The **LONDON RECEIVING-BOXES** be increased in number, and the **METROPOLITAN POST-RANGE** enlarged.

FEES AT PROVINCIAL RECEIVING-BOXES be abolished by increasing the number of such boxes.

The **TWELVE HOURS DETENTION OF CORRESPONDENCE PASSING THROUGH LONDON** be remedied if possible.

The DETENTION OF LETTERS ON SUNDAY IN LONDON, "though they are actually sorted and made ready for despatch by officers kept on duty at the Post-office on Sundays for the purpose," be remedied.

RAILWAYS OF GREAT BRITAIN.

These works, to a description of which so much space was allotted in the Companions for 1837 and 1838, are proceeding with a degree of spirit at least equal to that shown at any former period. Each line or portion of a line of road as it is successively opened for public traffic seems to give an additional impulse to the system of which it forms a part, and by the success that attends its operations to attest the reasonableness of the expectations that have been formed in regard to the benefits which the community will reap from the more extensive carrying out of that system.

It may be in part attributed to the check given to all transactions of a speculative character by the monetary derangement experienced in 1837, that no *new* projects of this kind have been undertaken during the past year, and that many schemes already proposed, but which on further investigation would not bear out the sanguine promises of success with which they were ushered forth to the world, have been, at least for a time, abandoned. It is perhaps well, for many reasons, that this should be the case. Abundant as capital is in this country, there is a limit to the amount ready for employment in any one direction; and if by reason of the abandonment of a part of the projected lines of railroad, those which are continued are carried forward with a greater degree of zeal and spirit, their proprietors and the country at large will equally benefit. It is besides hardly to be desired that by the multiplication of these works in simultaneous progress, any temporary derangement should be made in the labour market. The railroads now in the course of construction give employment to as many hands as could probably be spared from other occupations without creating inconvenience, and without raising the rate of wages in a manner which would not be to the lasting benefit of the labourers, while it would add inconveniently to the cost of construction. Besides this, our experience in railway engineering is yet but recent. Every year, nay, every month, serves to suggest economical improvements which may be adopted with advantage in beginning new lines, although they might not be available for such as should be already begun. A considerable part of the capital expended on the Liverpool and Manchester line would be saved if the work had now to be performed. Mr. Booth, the principal manager of that work, in writing to the Secretary of the Irish Railway Committee, more than six years after the opening of the railway, says upon this subject:—"Some explanation seems requisite of the ground of my expectation that a more economical working will obtain in future undertakings. In the original formation of the road, imperfect rails, insufficient sleepers, and inadequate draining, have been, and still are, the cause of heavy and constant expenditure. Gradually these defects are in course

C. T. B. A. 1839

Brawford 1224 (3)

here, the loss of life by small-pox, within the bills of mortality, was 5000 annually; but since vaccination has superseded inoculation, the number of deaths has decreased gradually, until it amounted to only 200 in the year 1837. In the course of the year which has lately terminated (during which the small-pox prevailed epidemically), there have died 800 of this disease, not one more, after all, than one-sixth of the number of those who died annually during the prevalence of inoculation, notwithstanding the increased population of the metropolis and its neighbourhood. Surely this implies some general protective influence, and our confidence in the efficacy of good vaccination remains unimpaired, unabated. We are, indeed, convinced that the indiscriminate vaccination which has been practised in this country, by ignorant and unqualified persons, with but little or no regard to the condition of body of the person to be vaccinated, to the selection of the vaccine lymph, or to the progress and character of the vesicle to be formed, are to be regarded as amongst the main causes of the occasional failure of vaccination; and we are sorry to hear an anxiety expressed that a recurrence should often be made to the disease of the cow, which first supplied the genuine protective matter: for, in the first place, it is not in the nature of any other communicable virus to degenerate and lose its influence; and, in the next, we have the opportunity of bearing our most ample testimony to the continuance of the efficiency of the original vaccine lymph introduced by Dr. Jenner, through nearly a million of subjects successively, of whom many thousands have been exposed, with entire impunity, to small-pox in its most malignant form; and though we ourselves have taken a good opportunity, more than once or twice, of recruiting our stores with fresh genuine matter from the cow, yet we think it right to discourage an indiscriminate, imprudent resort to this expedient, because the animal is subject to more than one eruptive disease, and a mistake might, possibly, be made in the selection of the proper pustule by an inexperienced hand."

PART II.

GENERAL INFORMATION ON SUBJECTS OF CHRONOLOGY,
GEOGRAPHY, STATISTICS, &c.

VII.—THE HISTORY OF THE POST-OFFICE.

APART from the interest which every one must feel in the welfare of an establishment so universally beneficial as the Post-office, recent and coming events give the subject at this moment a peculiar demand upon our attention. An important experiment is about to be made; important—whether viewed in connexion with the national industry, trade, or commerce—with its literature, morality, or religion—or with its social or domestic relations: therefore, whilst with no unnatural anxiety we anticipate the future, it may not be altogether uninteresting to take a short survey of the past.

The early history of the Post-office is obscure, in so far as regards our knowledge of particular events or their chronology; but we know that it arose like most other institutions, slowly and from very small beginnings, and can perceive with tolerable accuracy the modes of its progression. Gale, in his history of Croyland, informs us that Edward the Fourth, in his war with Scotland in 1481, introduced an establishment of riders with post horses to be changed at every 20 miles, and who, by handing letters from one to another, forwarded them the whole extent of their course, 200 miles, in two days. The Scottish parliament in the same year issued an ordinance for the expediting of couriers to every part of the kingdom, without, however, expressing the means. In 1543 arrangements of a similar kind must have existed in England, and doubtless with the same object, the conveyance of the despatches, &c. of the king and his government, for it is stated in "Sadler's Letters and Negotiations," that letters were received in Edinburgh on the fourth day after their despatch from London. The conveniences thus obtained would naturally in the course of time be extended to the public, both as respects individual travellers and the occasional transmission of important correspondence either by the Government couriers or by special messengers. Accordingly the establishment gradually became of so much consequence, that in an act for the direction of the purveyor of the household of Edward the Sixth, passed in 1548, the rate to be charged for post horses was fixed at 1*d.* per mile. It seems highly probable that the first general post would be the Government courier, whose gratuities, at last swelling into a considerable regular sum, would be noticed by Government, and thus lead to its taking the matter into its own hands, and to the appointment of a superin-

tending officer. The first chief post-master of England was Mr. Thomas Randolph, (appointed by Queen Elizabeth in 1581,) an individual who had been previously much employed by the queen in her Scottish affairs. In the reign of Elizabeth's successor, James the First, the office of foreign postmaster was established, and the management confided to Matthew de l'Equester. The facilities afforded by Government for the transmission of correspondence up to the period of the reign of Charles the First must have been confined to one or two of the principal roads, and have been even, upon these, very irregular, as we shall see in noticing the act passed in that king's reign for the establishment of a General Post-office; consequently special messengers would be continually in requisition for the necessities of particular individuals, and for the more regular service of large towns, the universities, &c. With the increase of correspondence the duties of the messengers would gradually grow into a regular and profitable business, and thus produce the class known under the name of private Undertakers or Adventurers, who seem to have given the impulse to every early Post-office reform, and who were deprived, whether justly or no, of the business they had in a great measure created, just as it became most profitable. And it is a curious fact in the history of the Post-office that every considerable reform by which its progress has been accelerated and its advantages increased and made more universal, down to that now ensuing in accordance with Mr. Hill's proposals, owes its origin to the capital, industry, or skill of private individuals. In the very first ordinance of Charles the First, connected with the subject of the private carriers, we find the king accompanying the appointment of William Frizell and Thomas Witherings, in reversion, to the management of the Foreign Post-office in 1631, with denunciations against the private adventurers; and he particularly enjoins that none but his own foreign postmasters do presume to exercise that office. In 1635 the Act we have alluded to was passed. In the preamble it states that "whereas to this time there hath been no certain intercourse between the kingdoms of England and Scotland, he now commands his postmaster of England for foreign parts to settle a running post or two to run night and day between Edinburgh and London, to go thither and come back again in six days." We may observe in passing, that for the period in question the speed here indicated is remarkable, if indeed the injunction were strictly obeyed. Letters in places lying near the road were to be taken, and bye posts to and from the high road established with Lincoln, Hull, and other important places. Similar arrangements were directed for the post between London and Dublin through West Chester and Holyhead, and for the post between London and Plymouth through Exeter, &c. Oxford, Bristol, Colchester, and Norwich were to have corresponding advantages as soon as possible. The postmasters in each road were required to furnish horses at 2½*d.* per mile. The rates of postage, the earliest of which we have any cognizance, were fixed at 2*d.* for a single letter for distances under 80 miles, 4*d.* for distances under

140 miles, 6*d.* beyond, and 8*d.* to or from Scotland or the borders. Double letters were to be charged double postage. Such were the outlines of the first Government measure in relation to the establishment of a general Post-office. It concluded with the order that no other messengers nor foot posts should carry any letters but those alone employed by the king's Postmaster-General except to places to which they did not go, *and with the exception of common known carriers*, messengers particularly sent on purpose, or persons carrying letters for a friend. This is decisive as to the pre-establishment of a comparatively efficient system by private parties, who were apparently too popular to be summarily put down, and therefore for the present the Government satisfied itself by a vague enactment (that could have had but an arbitrary application) against "other messengers," &c. Owing partially perhaps to the rivalry here indicated, but still more to the general confusion attendant on the breaking out of the civil war, the establishment failed, and for a considerable period great difficulty was experienced in the safe and speedy transmission of letters. In 1640 Witherings, who by the Act of 1635 had been appointed inland, and was previously foreign, postmaster, was superseded by the Long Parliament for abuses in the execution of his office. One of these abuses was the endeavour, on his part, to stop the private adventurers, by forcibly depriving one of their servants of the letters he carried, and which was voted to be "against the liberty and freedom of the subject." Witherings' offices were sequestered into the hands of Philip Burlamachy, to be exercised thenceforth under the superintendence of the king's principal secretary of state; and thus was the first step taken as to the making the Post-office authorities responsible to the public. Soon after this, a committee was appointed, with Mr. Edmund Prideaux as its chairman, to consider the subject of the Post-office; and in 1644 we find this Mr. Prideaux exercising the office of postmaster, to which he was appointed by both Houses of Parliament, with a view doubtless to the improvements he had projected, and which he afterwards carried into effect. The gross revenue at this period is supposed not to have exceeded 5000*l.* In 1649 Prideaux established a weekly conveyance to all parts of the kingdom, and by his judicious arrangements immediately saved the entire amount of the previous loss in the management of the establishment, namely, 6000*l.* or 7000*l.* a-year. The common council of the city of London endeavoured to impede the operation of Prideaux's scheme of confining the carriage of letters to the Post-office, but this attempt was checked by a resolution of the House of Commons of the 21st of March, 1649, that "the office of postmaster is and ought to be in the sole power and disposal of Parliament." The motive to the change here indicated in the opinion of Parliament since the vote of 1640, is to be found in the preamble to an ordinance passed in 1657, where it is stated, as a recommendation in favour of the institution of government posts, that "they will be the best means to discover and prevent many dangerous and wicked designs against the commonwealth." In spite,

however, of the decision above mentioned, the private carriers flourished; they not only established more frequent posts than the government, but carried letters at cheaper rates. Accordingly, in 1652, the postmasters of the kingdom presented a petition to Parliament begging to be allowed to give "unto the people the same ease in their rates of letters which is by others declared." Every kind of obstacle was now thrown in the way of the obnoxious rivals to Government: Prideaux issued handbills stating that, if letters were sent by "those who style themselves the 'New Undertakers,' their passage will be interrupted." This was immediately answered by the parties concerned, who, after referring to the vote of 1640, stated that they were resolved "by the help of God to continue their management," and they at the same time announced that places not previously supplied would now be included in their arrangements, and that, in addition to the posts they had already established to leave London on Tuesdays and Saturdays, an additional one would thenceforth depart on Thursdays. So that they had three weekly posts, whilst the Government had but one; and, as we learn from a petition they afterwards presented to Parliament, they only charged 3*d.* where Government charged 6*d.* Determined, however, to put them down, the Government empowered Prideaux to lower the rates of postage to the "Undertakers," prices, though it does not appear that equal facilities were also afforded for the speedy transmission of letters by frequent posts. In addition to the motive before stated for making the Post-office a Government monopoly, the amount of net revenue derived from it began to be an object of some importance; for in the same year, 1653, it was farmed to John Manley, Esq., for 10,000*l.* per annum. The "New Undertakers" were now forcibly overpowered by the seizure of the correspondence in their hands, and after an ineffectual petition to Parliament on the subject of the injustice with which they conceived themselves to have been treated, we hear no more of them. During the Protectorate, the establishment was still further improved and consolidated, and became, as a natural consequence, more and more productive. In the first year of the Restoration the Post-office arrangements were confirmed nearly upon the same basis as before, and some improvements introduced. An Act was now passed with the view, as its title quaintly expresses, of "Quieting the Postmaster-General in the execution of his office," by which private carriers were once more forbidden, and all justices of the peace, constables, &c. were empowered to seize all letters so conveyed, and were directed to inform against the offenders. In 1663 the revenue was farmed to Daniel O'Neale, Esq., for 21,500*l.* per annum, and the amount settled upon the Duke of York, the king's brother. So anxious were the parties concerned to keep this revenue from the public, that express provision was made against any portion of the receipts being paid into the Exchequer. In 1674 the revenue was farmed at 43,000*l.* per annum, and two years after Sir William Petty calculated that since 1635 the number of letters had increased in the proportion of 20 to 1. In 1683 the Metropolitan Penny Post was set up by

an upholsterer named Murray, who assigned his interest to a Mr. Dockwra, from whom Government took it, settling upon him in return a pension of 200*l.* a-year.* In 1685 the net revenue had increased to the estimated sum of 65,000*l.* per annum, so that if 22 years before it had been an object to keep it from the use of the public, it was now more so than ever. Its possessor, the Duke of York, was now James the Second, and lost no time in ensuring it to himself personally, by obtaining an Act in the first year of his reign, with the additional proviso, *that the revenue should hereafter be to him, his heirs, and successors, one entire and indefeasible estate in fee simple, and therefore that its revenues were not to be accounted for to Parliament.* Truly, the sovereign who could ask, and the Parliament that could make such a grant, must have been worthy of each other. In 1688 the revolution took place, and the Parliament, by resuming the grant, nominally did away with so flagitious an arrangement, yet the king still received the revenue, and left the country without any authentic knowledge of its amount. In the following year the Act for the establishment of a General Post-office in Scotland was passed, though of course the system must have been previously in operation to some extent, most probably under the management of private individuals. This office appears to have been remarkably unproductive in the first few years of its existence; for in 1698 Sir Robert Sinclair received a grant from King William of the whole revenue, *free*, with a pension of 300*l.* a-year in addition to keep up the establishment. Sir Robert, however, thought the grant disadvantageous even on these terms, and gave it up.

The Act of Queen Anne is the next important event in the history of the Post-office. The rates for the United Kingdom were now advanced in order to obtain increased means for the war then existing. It was thought that the several rates might with "little burden to the subject be increased;" accordingly the 2*d.* letters were raised to 3*d.*, and others in proportion. The revenue appears to have been still settled on the sovereign, but was declared to be inalienable beyond his or her life. Seven hundred pounds weekly was ordered to be paid into the Exchequer towards the supplies for the war from the 1st of June, 1711, until 1st of June, 1743, from the increase now anticipated, and a third of the remainder, if there should be still a surplus, was placed at the disposal of parliament. By the same Act the former laws for the establishment of separate Post-offices in England and Scotland were repealed, and one general office and officer created for the whole kingdom. Additional chief letter offices were established at the same time in Edinburgh, Dublin, New York, and the West Indies. Dr. D'Avenant, in his "New Dialogues," makes the average net revenue for the years 1707, 8, and 9, to be 56,664*l.* 19*s.* 10*d.*, which deducted from the gross receipts, as stated by the Act just mentioned, at 111,461*l.* 17*s.* 10*d.*, leaves 54,796*l.* 17*s.* 11½*d.* for the cost of management, or nearly 100*l.* per cent. In Act 1 Geo.

* This department of the Post-office has been already noticed in our publication for 1838, consequently we omit further mention of it here.

In 1715, it is declared that the entire revenue, with the exceptions before mentioned, "shall be for the support of his Majesty's household, and of the honour and dignity of his crown." In 1717 the weekly payments of 700*l.* were made perpetual. In the following year, the net revenue, according to the Commissioners of the Equivalent, was 62,050*l.* for England, and 2,000*l.* for Scotland. The year 1720 was distinguished by a new reform in the Post-office arrangement: this was the improvement of the cross-posts by Mr. Allen, who farmed them at a certain sum, with the understanding that whatever new profits might be realized by his plans should be his own during his lifetime. It is stated that he was so successful in his schemes as to make an average profit of nearly 12,000*l.* a year during 42 years. In 1724 the regular official accounts of the net revenue commence; in that year it was 96,339*l.* 7*s.* 5*d.* Upon the demise of George I. the revenue was settled as before upon the successor to the throne, in the sixth year of whose reign, an attempt was made, remarkably illustrative of the want of a proper knowledge of the boundaries of legislation, or even of common justice. It was enacted that bills of exchange were not to be sent with a letter upon the same piece of paper, and still further, that persons were not to write different notes upon the same sheet! It is a pity we have not recorded, for the benefit of future legislators, the means by which this precious law was to be carried into effect. There could be but one way, namely, a wholesale opening of letters, a measure, the parliament that passed the law, would not have dared to recommend. So that the only effect of this regulation must have been, that persons scrupulously regardful of the law would be taxed for their honesty, whilst all other persons would escape free from the charge. A similar law was passed with respect to writs. These acts were passed in 1732, and existed till the beginning of the present century. In 1735, the House of Commons agreed that the privilege of franking was coeval with the establishment of the Post-office it regulated at the same time the limits of the weight to be franked, namely two ounces; made it imperative that franks should be signed with a member's name, and confined the privilege to the period during which Parliament was sitting, or within 40 days before and after. In 1764 and 1765, the entire subjects of franking and rates of postage were again reviewed, and important alterations made. The abuses of the former had become very flagrant. Up to this period, members were simply required to write their names in the corner. Their servants accordingly were in the habit of begging numbers of these franked covers, and making a trade of their sale. The injury thus done to the revenue was most serious. The amount of franked packages at the regular rates of postage amounted about this time to the enormous sum of 170,000*l.*, a considerable portion of which was added to the revenue by the regulation we are about to notice. Forgeries also, it appears, were very common, owing to the simplicity of the requisite imitation, and the many facilities afforded for their sale. It was now declared that the entire superscription should be written by the member, and for-

gery was made punishable with seven years' transportation. The principal alterations made in the rates of postage were in connexion with letters transmitted short distances. The postage previously had been 3*d.* for letters to places under 80 miles, it was now enacted that letters transmitted only one post stage were to be charged but 1*d.*, and two stages 2*d.* By the same act postmasters were empowered to establish penny posts in any town of the British dominions; ship letters were directed to be brought to the Post-office; and embezzlement of letters, or taking notes or bills out of them, or robbing the mail, were each made felonious acts. Lastly, the post boys were rendered punishable by imprisonment and hard labour for neglect or improper conduct.

We have now to notice one of the most important of the events connected with the Post-office history; we allude to the improvements of Mr. Palmer. The circumstances connected with this affair are deeply interesting, partly from the importance of the effects resulting from Mr. Palmer's arrangements, but still more from the unparalleled difficulties he had personally to encounter at every step in his progress, and from the cruel injustice with which he was treated, when success was no longer doubtful. We have neither space nor inclination to enter fully into the painful details, but to a certain extent the history of the plan is the history of its author, and must be noticed accordingly. At the time the management of the Post-office attracted Mr. Palmer's attention, he was the manager of the theatres of Bath and Bristol, and in the enjoyment of a considerable income. The first circumstance that particularly struck him was the great length of time consumed in the transmission of a letter from London to Bath, a distance of 110 miles. A letter posted in London on Monday evening was seldom delivered earlier than Wednesday afternoon, frequently much later, whilst at the very same time coaches were leaving London on Monday afternoon and reaching Bath by breakfast time the following morning. The postage of a letter was 6*d.*, the carriage of a parcel 2*s.*, yet Mr. Palmer discovered that the tradesmen continually made parcels of their letters, the extra speed being of more consequence than the extra expense. From this individual specimen of the existing arrangements, Mr. Palmer carried his inquiries farther: he found that the Post-office was as irregular as it was slow; that its robbery was a matter of continual occurrence; that the grossest mismanagement, and the most flagrant abuses pervaded every department; and, in short, that a thorough reformation was required, both for the sake of the public accommodation, and the government revenue. He immediately devoted himself to the consideration of the remedy, and presented the first rude sketch of his plan to Mr. Pitt, the minister, in 1782, with an intimation that he was willing to devote his entire time and attention to the carrying it into operation; that if he failed, he should not expect a shilling for his services, but that, if he succeeded, he expected 2½ per cent. upon the increase on the net revenue. His proposal pleased the sagacious premier, who returned it to him in order that it might be further developed, stating at the same time that the

pecuniary proposition was fair, and would not be objected to. Early in 1783 the plan, prepared as desired, was again presented and about to be acted upon, when the administration was dissolved. The new ministers, however, took up the matter, but for the time did no more than transmit the plan to the Post-office for the opinion of the authorities. In the interim Mr. Palmer travelled through the country to clear up fresh doubts that had been expressed, and from this period appears to have determined to pursue the affair at every personal risk, satisfied that success was feasible, and that a magnificent fortune would ultimately be his reward for all the difficulty, anxiety, and pecuniary danger he had to undergo. In July following, the Post-office authorities furnished their opinion in the shape of three volumes of objections! declaring generally that the plan was impracticable, and would be prejudicial to revenue and to commerce. Some of the objections offered show the extreme absurdities into which selfishness or bigotry may lead men, even upon matters with which above all others they ought to be the best acquainted. One declared that the coaches went too fast for the proper transaction of the business of the Post-office in the different towns, whilst another could not even see why the Post-office *should* be the swiftest conveyance in England. It was asserted that the time for the transmittal of the mails from London, namely, from midnight until two or three o'clock in the morning, could not be altered without throwing the whole correspondence of England into confusion. As to the appointment of a guard, one gentleman observed pleasantly as well as shrewdly, that "he might be waited for at every ale-house he should pass by," whilst another could not "think a guard to each mail would add to its safety;" but the climax of the argument was reached by a third, who, evidently thinking there was danger in too much security, lest the robbers should grow outrageous at such unfair conduct, observed, "that when desperate fellows had once determined upon a mail robbery, the consequence would be murder in case of resistance!" In conclusion, it was stated generally with respect to the affairs of the Post-office, "that the constant eye that has long been kept toward their improvement in all situations, and under all circumstances, has made them now almost as perfect as they can be without exhausting the revenue arising therefrom." Seeing all this, we may excuse the merriment apparently produced among these gentlemen at the absurdity of Mr. Palmer's idea, that the Bath mail could be brought to London in 16 or 18 hours. At all events, whether the plan was or was not practicable, there was no denying the firmness of its author. Instead of listening with humble conviction to the objections urged, he refuted them all, and decided government in his favour. Again delay was caused by a change of administration, but it was Mr. Pitt who came into power, and who lost no time in visiting the Post-office with Mr. Palmer to make the necessary arrangements. Fresh objections were here presented to the minister, the authorities were more than ever convinced that the scheme was impracticable and destructive. Nearly seven more anxious

months were spent by Mr. Palmer in collecting information to overcome these new obstacles : at last a meeting took place, at which the Postmasters-General and their principal officers were confronted with Mr. Palmer, who triumphantly answered all their objections; a trial was peremptorily ordered to be made. On the 2nd of August, 1784, the first mail coach left London for Bristol, and others to different parts followed, and, before many days had elapsed, it became evident to every unprejudiced person that the plan would be greatly successful. What was the conduct of the Post-office authorities at this period? Were they anxious to atone for their previous mistaken opposition by the most cordial assistance now? Let the Treasury minute of the 21st of the same month answer, which Mr. Palmer was necessitated to obtain, before he could proceed any further. It was to the effect "that every assistance be afforded, and such power furnished him [Mr. Palmer], as will effectually secure the obedience of the several postmasters to his direction." Scarcely any attention was paid to this command. Upon the introduction of the system upon any new line of road, every conceivable difficulty was thrown in the way; the contractors in particular were rendered unable to fulfil their engagements, and were in consequence terribly harassed in mind, as well as seriously injured in circumstances. In July following, therefore, Mr. Palmer, whose spirit no opposition, however malignant or unceasing, could subdue, no injustice, however flagrant, turn aside from the path he had chosen, was again compelled to appeal to the Treasury for assistance. Their Lordships in consequence issued a peremptory order to *enforce the further extension of the plan*; and circular letters were addressed to the principal postmasters of the kingdom, requiring that all directions from Mr. Palmer or his agents should be obeyed as their own, and threatening punishment, should they in future be neglected or misconstrued. By the autumn of the same year, that is within twelve months of the commencement of the plan, it had been carried into execution with complete success on the principal and direct cross roads. Mr. Palmer now asked for his reward; he applied for the legal instruments of the appointment which had been promised to him, and received a draft thereof, by which he was declared Surveyor and Comptroller-General of the Post-office during life, with full authority to suspend any officers for neglect of his own or the Postmaster-General's instructions. His salary was fixed at 1500*l.* a year, with a commission of 2½ per cent. upon the surplus of the net revenue beyond 240,000*l.* And now commences that part of the affair which is nationally disgraceful. This appointment was delayed upon different pretexts from time to time and was ultimately done away with altogether, and an annuity large in itself, but which was infinitely below the amount Mr. Palmer was entitled to, settled upon him in professed compensation. The first objection to the legal instrument required, was that the appointment must be under the Post-office, or require a new act, consequently a Treasury warrant was issued for the time to prevent any cessation of Mr. Palmer's endeavours. Now the very

reason here given proves decisively Mr. Palmer's position as independent of the Postmasters-General, and establishes beyond question the injustice of the subsequent treatment he experienced. The plan was now successful, in some points even more so than its author had ventured to anticipate: will it be believed, then, that the Post-office authorities had by this time grown so desperately shameless as to come forward once more, in 1786, and declare their opinion that, from the trial which had taken place, the plan was and must be prejudicial to the revenue and to commerce? However, they appear now to have been entirely unsupported in the position they had so pertinaciously defended;—the government treated the opinion with the contempt it deserved. The Treasury warrant we have mentioned was now sent to the Post-office, but it was not ratified, because the Postmaster-General, Lord Tankerville, had "doubts about the per centage." His doubts were ultimately removed, but too late to produce any beneficial effect, for he quitted office, leaving the appointment unsigned. Lord Clarendon, his successor, had also his doubts, and endeavoured to induce Mr. Pitt to authorise a different arrangement, but the minister wisely as well as justly refused, observing, that it would be a spur to exertion, and equitable and beneficial to both sides. On the 11th of October, 1786, Mr. Palmer received a limited appointment, which ultimately proved to be as worthless as it was limited. He now introduced the plan into Scotland. He next went to France to arrange a better system of communication between that and our own country. From this time until 1792 he continued his exertions, perfecting and consolidating the plan he had already brought into operation, and preparing new ones, when he was suddenly suspended by the Postmasters-General, Lords Carteret and Walsingham. He denied their authority over him, but discovered that their influence at all events was paramount. It would be useless entering into the details of the alleged causes of this proceeding, for it is evident that, from the very commencement of his exertions, his true opponents were the Postmasters-General. It is perfectly inconceivable that any officer of the establishment would have dared for one moment to thwart Mr. Palmer, if there had not been generally understood impunity for so doing, although, on the other side, there is no doubt Mr. Palmer was somewhat captious and irritable. In fact, when it was discovered that Mr. Palmer was determined there should be no longer such impunity, by his discharging Mr. Bonner, his deputy, for *writing letters against his plan*, the Postmasters-General restored the contumacious officer, on the plea that Mr. Palmer had given them no reasons for his suspension. They had written to him on a Thursday morning, requiring his reasons, but stating no particular time for the answer; within a few hours he was called away into the country by the dangerous illness of a son, he returned harassed and ill on Monday night, and on Tuesday was waited upon by Mr. Bonner, who came to demand his key, for—he was restored! Mr. Palmer now demanded his per centage, and had this been given cheerfully, he would still have experienced great injustice in being

compelled to depend for his profits on the exertions of individuals in the highest degree hostile to him. Perhaps the Treasury saw this, and being unwilling to do what it ought to have done, that is, restore him with full power to his position, it settled upon him an annuity of £3000 a year. Was this a just remuneration? The per centage in that very year would have amounted to above 3700*l.* exclusive of his salary; and the annual progressive increase upon this would have been very large. Mr. Palmer strove in vain to induce the Lords of the Treasury to reverse this iniquitous decision; in 1797 he petitioned Parliament. A committee was appointed; the evidence in favour of his claim was complete; but nothing further resulted from it. And thus the matter ended, to the shame of the Government, who could thus break faith with a helpless individual, and to the people, who failed to remonstrate in favour of so great a public benefactor. We conclude our notice of this important era in the history of the Post-office with a short summary of the beneficial effects of Mr. Palmer's arrangements, incomplete as he was compelled to leave them. First, as to the revenue: for the nine years ending 1774, the average net amount was 162,534*l.* 6*s.*; for the nine years ending 1783 (prior to the commencement of the new system), the net amount was only 149,333*l.* 18*s.*, showing a decrease of 13,198*l.* 13*s.* This was the state of the revenue when Mr. Palmer commenced operations; what was it afterwards? In 1793, that is, the year immediately following that of his suspension, the net revenue was 391,508*l.*; and in 1797, the year in which he petitioned Parliament, it was 541,833*l.*! The facilities afforded for the speedier transmission of correspondence is no less remarkable: generally speaking, the mails were conveyed in one-half of their previous time; in many cases, in one-third of the previous time; and in some of the cross posts, in one-fourth! Posts were made daily to above 500 places, which had before only received them thrice a week! Lastly, the delivery of letters became as conspicuous for its regularity and adaptation to the public convenience, as it had been previously notorious for the opposite qualities. The safety enjoyed by correspondents contrasts in an equally extraordinary manner with the previous insecurity. Robberies had been of continual occurrence, and the mere cost of the pursuit and apprehension of the offenders amounted in a single year to several thousand pounds. There is no mystery as to the cause of so wretched a state of things. Mr. Palmer states, in the plan presented to Mr. Pitt, that "the mail is generally intrusted to some idle boy without character, mounted on a worn-out hack, and who, so far from being able to defend himself, or escape from a robber, is much more likely to be in league with him." Mr. Palmer did indeed "reform this altogether," for up to 1797 not a single robbery of his mails had taken place, and therefore not a shilling had been lost by the public or expended by the Post-office in this way. Most important alterations were made in the domestic management of the Post-office. Many gross abuses and equally gross frauds were checked or destroyed for ever; the health and comfort of the clerks were incalculably improved by the abolition of 50

much midnight employment; and, generally, the entire system was simplified and improved. Lastly, whilst the revenue had increased as we have seen, the number of newspapers carried free had increased from 2,000,000 to 8,000,000.

One part of Mr. Palmer's plan had been to raise the rates of postage. This was probably proposed as much with the idea of recommending the scheme to the minister as from any other motive. The rates were in consequence raised in 1784 to 2*d.* for the letters which had been previously 1*d.*, 3*d.* for those which had been 2*d.*, and so on generally through the scale. A suggestion of Mr. Palmer's as to remedying the abuses of franking was adopted: it was made imperative that members should write the name of the place where they then were, and the date, in words at full, and that the letter should be posted only as a frank in the post-office of such place and on the day thereon named. In the same year the Irish Post-office was established independent of that of England, but the two have been now for several years consolidated. In 1795 the abuses of franking again attracted the attention of the Legislature; franked letters were now only to carry one ounce, and they were only to pass free when posted within 20 miles of the place where the members concerned were on that or the preceding day. No more than 10 also were to be sent or 15 received daily. Soldiers and sailors were allowed by this act to send letters countersigned by their officers on payment of 1*d.*, and patterns, with covers open at the ends, and containing no writing but the prices, and the name and address of the sender, were to be charged only single postage. Two years after, by the 37th Act of George III., the rates of postage were again raised, an additional 1*d.* being levied upon the lower priced classes of letters, 2*d.* on the higher. In 1799 the postmaster was empowered to send foreign letters by any vessels; to charge 4*d.* upon ship letters received, for which the shipowner was to be allowed 2*d.* In 1801 the rates of the higher priced classes of letters were considerably increased: 8*d.* had been hitherto the maximum, even for distances of 500 miles; the maximum was now made 1*s.* Soon after this, some inconveniences or losses appear to have been incurred by postmasters giving back letters to the professed writers; this was to be done no longer, on any pretence. Members of Parliament were authorised at this period to send or receive letters, printed votes, proceedings in Parliament, and printed newspapers free, and the postage on such votes and newspapers was reduced to 1*d.* to the public. The former part of this enactment was probably to legalise a privilege then existing—not to create a new one. It should seem that government thought the continual increase of the net revenue was owing to the continual increase of the rates of postage, rather than, as was most probably the truth, in spite of them; so it went on levying additional charges every few years, till its rapacity defeated itself. In 1805 an additional 1*d.* was charged upon all classes of letters; and again, in 1812, on all but the two or three lowest priced classes. The following table, illustrative of the progressive increase in the rates of postage from 1765 to 1812, applies strictly to England and Wales

only, but shows also with sufficient accuracy the progress of the different rates of postage for Ireland and Scotland:—

	1765	1784	1797	1801	1805	1812
Not exceeding 15 miles.	d. 1	d. 2	d. 3	d. 3	d. 4	d. 4
Above 20 and not exceeding 30 miles .	2	3	4	4	5	6
.. 50 .. 80 ..	3	4	5	6	7	8
.. 170 .. 230 ..	4	6	8	9	10	11
.. 400 .. 500 ..	4	6	8	12	13	14

In 1816 the gross revenue amounted to 2,418,741*l.*, the charges of collection of which amounted to 704,639*l.*, leaving a net revenue of 1,619,196*l.*, since which time no increase has taken place. By the 6th of George IV. the postage of 1*d.* on votes, proceedings in parliament, and newspapers, was virtually done away with by the repeal of the regulation requiring that a member's name should be written on the covers. In 1837 the entire body of acts relating to the Post-office were repealed, and their chief provisions consolidated into one general statute, 1st of Victoria. We conclude our paper with a brief notice of the great measure which is about to come into operation, and which, as we before observed, gives a peculiar interest to the subject of the Post-office at this moment.

"Postage," observed Mr. Palmer, "is really no tax, but a fair and reasonable price for so much labour, *which Government by its monopoly is enabled to do cheaper than any individual*, and should do with greater expedition and safety, or submit to the loss of the public employing other carriers in preference." He does not here positively say the Post-office should be as economical as he says it should be expeditious and safe; but the passage shows clearly enough that it was not for want of perception of the truth, but that the time was not ripe for its practical development. Accordingly, since his time economy has been the great essential requisite. For want of it the revenue has been stationary since 1816, in spite of the enormous increase in the population and in the trade and commerce of the country; in spite, too, of the general demand for facilities of communication. We are, however, on the eve of a thorough reformation. A worthy successor to Mr. Palmer has arisen in the person of the author of the well-known pamphlet on Post-office Reform; and through his endeavours the establishment is about to assume for the first time the rank to which its powers and capabilities entitle it, and become one of the greatest of the mechanical agencies in the promotion of the civilization of mankind. The history of Mr. Hill's plan is most cheering: a more striking instance of a proposed national good being suddenly and universally appreciated by the people for whose benefit it was intended does not perhaps exist; and this, too, in connexion with a plan, the details of which were unquestionably rather startling at the first glance. In 1837 the pamphlet in question appeared. It commenced with a view of the state of the Post-office revenue, and showed that the cause of its stationary condition was the enor-

mous rate of taxation charged upon letters, which was proved to be several hundred per cent. The great extent and univereal prevalence of the custom of sending letters by private carriers and by parcels was also shown to be the natural result of the same heavy rates of postage, and that a very low charge, by including all these, would tend in a great measure to make up the loss to the revenue from such low charge being made general. Attention was also called to the certain increase of correspondence, commercial, literary, and domestic, that must result, if the postage were thus reduced. Lastly, the almost incredible fact was stated, that the cost of transit for a letter from London to Edinburgh was only the 36th part of a penny, consequently that there was no coin small enough to denote the difference that should be made between letters transmitted the longest and shortest distances. From all this was deduced the conclusion that 1*d.* should be the general charge for letters throughout the country. The statements and propositions were illustrated by a great amount of various and interesting information, and by details evidently well calculated for the safe and effectual operation of the plan. The public were at first surprised: some small portion of it, perhaps, thought the scheme simply ridiculous; another, that it was practicable and excellent; but the larger proportion, we may safely conclude, looked upon the idea as too good to be true. Three editions were called for in the space of a few months; objections were made, but so successfully answered that they forwarded rather than retarded the measure; public bodies began to petition; the press gave its cordial assistance; a committee of the House of Commons was appointed, and the report was highly favourable, though it did not venture to recommend for the time more than a partial adoption of the scheme. Government accordingly prepared to make a partial trial, but by this time the nation had become thoroughly satisfied of its entire excellence and practicability, and the Houses of Parliament and the Government were at last fairly petitioned into its complete adoption. At this period (October), the necessary arrangements are being made, under Mr. Hill's own superintendence; a fact as honourable to the Government—from evincing, as it does, the cordiality of its approbation—as it must be gratifying to the public, to see its benefactor so justly and appropriately rewarded. We append a brief tabular view of the progress of the

POST OFFICE REVENUE.

Years.	Net Receipts.	Years.	Net Receipts.
1653 . . .	10,000	1749 . . .	88,323
1663 . . .	21,500	1774 . . .	164,077
1674 . . .	43,000	1799 . . .	657,388
1718 . . .	64,050	1824 . . .	1,400,080
*1724 . . .	96,339	1837 . . .	1,511,026

* Prior to this period there were no regular and exact official accounts kept, consequently the figures attached to the previous years must be considered as indications only of the truth.

The gross proceeds of the General Post in 1838, were	
England	£1,858,459
Scotland	223,491
Ireland	254,434
	2,336,384
Deduct return letters and overcharges,	
England	£84,035
Scotland	11,948
Ireland	24,954
	120,937
Parliamentary pensions. . .	17,012
	137,949
	2,198,435
Expenses:	
England	£436,990
Scotland	72,359
Ireland	101,310
	610,659
Net produce	£1,587,776
Two-penny Post, Gross produce . . .	£130,831
Expenses	59,096
	71,735

Total net produce of Post Office revenue, year } £1,659,511
 1838. }

[Since this was printed a Treasury Minute has been issued for regulating the postage, which we have given at the end, p. 230.]

VIII.—RAILWAYS OF GREAT BRITAIN.

THE general adoption of Railway communications in England, between all places which through their populousness or the extent of their manufactures offer a reasonable prospect of profitable returns, is no longer a question of doubtful result. The works of this kind which have been recently completed, or which are now in progress, through every quarter of the island, have been so well supported through times of no ordinary trial with respect to the raising of capital, as to exhibit in the most unequivocal manner the opinion of the public concerning their utility and the gains that will result from their operations.

Before resuming the description of these aids to commerce and civilization upon the plan pursued in the last three volumes of the Companion, that of giving an account of such railways as have been wholly or partially completed and put to use since our publication of last year, it may be well to take a retrospective glance at some of the more important of those works which have already been described, in order to ascertain how far they have answered the expectations of their projectors, and to what extent the experience which they afford justifies the confidence with which the system is still pursued.

STATE OF SAVINGS' BANKS in each COUNTY in ENGLAND on the
20th of November, 1838.

Counties.	Deposits of Sums not exceeding £20, and Amount of their Deposits.		Total Number of Individual Depositors.	Total Amount of Money Invested by Individual Depositors		Average Amount Invested by each Depositor.	Charitable Institutions.		Friendly Societies.	
	No.	£.		No.	£.		No.	£.	No.	£.
Bedfordshire . .	1,194	8,813	2,325	78,402	34	38	2,033	96	8,458	
Berkshire . . .	5,254	37,720	9,639	301,980	31	149	7,872	66	10,487	
Buckinghamshire . .	2,092	13,743	3,718	104,290	28	50	1,843	67	8,147	
Cambridgeshire . .	1,165	9,135	2,447	83,192	34	76	4,378	84	11,136	
Cheshire	5,352	41,709	12,077	449,110	37	116	7,433	171	33,975	
Cornwall	3,784	30,950	9,630	386,051	40	68	3,042	87	19,417	
Cumberland . . .	2,914	23,023	5,776	174,554	30	41	2,523	25	3,424	
Derbyshire	3,270	24,573	7,093	246,199	35	61	3,182	180	21,187	
Devonshire	21,890	132,421	38,017	1,164,459	31	329	24,558	379	59,972	
Dorsetshire	3,815	29,647	8,335	317,681	38	114	5,421	108	21,170	
Durham	2,823	21,263	5,466	152,324	28	30	2,121	56	3,303	
Essex	6,084	42,533	10,962	338,850	31	264	11,890	188	20,701	
Gloucestershire . .	9,844	72,261	19,522	661,813	34	194	11,332	204	24,540	
Hampshire	7,226	50,509	13,516	415,883	31	155	8,060	156	26,682	
Herefordshire . . .	3,787	26,123	6,325	162,880	26	78	4,360	29	4,846	
Hertfordshire . . .	1,276	10,119	2,595	84,179	32	118	6,915	65	9,036	
Huntingdonshire . .	782	6,130	1,319	37,694	29	41	1,848	46	4,627	
Kent	13,290	91,016	23,494	664,377	28	321	16,883	201	26,657	
Lancashire	22,391	169,407	44,969	1,424,585	32	433	30,596	772	28,156	
Leicestershire . . .	2,464	18,683	4,445	130,389	27	119	3,506	88	7,804	
Lincolnshire	6,780	48,460	12,399	349,017	28	143	6,473	90	11,720	
London	20,628	95,862	31,180	678,844	22	46	2,689	15	1,467	
Middlesex	52,742	331,334	91,379	2,424,229	27	286	16,090	179	17,472	
Monmouthshire . . .	1,396	9,468	2,505	62,315	25	81	1,051	103	15,061	
Norfolk	6,630	46,049	12,118	349,500	29	155	5,644	144	11,772	
Northamptonshire . .	3,378	23,598	6,084	188,742	31	121	9,586	121	9,714	
Northumberland . . .	3,937	33,703	9,361	356,716	38	57	3,540	73	11,330	
Nottinghamshire . . .	7,099	48,954	11,813	322,367	27	32	4,168	234	20,554	
Oxfordshire	4,163	27,530	7,353	206,265	28	122	5,908	109	12,342	
Shropshire	6,445	49,184	13,330	473,637	36	151	12,458	127	28,850	
Somersetshire	8,300	60,778	16,527	568,043	34	310	25,920	125	21,628	
Staffordshire	6,043	47,026	11,512	345,457	30	151	8,068	209	39,862	
Suffolk	4,259	31,529	7,880	226,730	30	155	6,994	162	16,622	
Surrey	13,426	83,680	21,700	544,528	25	117	8,407	120	15,286	
Sussex	7,234	45,540	12,202	322,945	26	157	8,263	70	8,944	
Warwickshire	7,926	42,803	12,438	275,388	22	112	5,139	117	12,528	
Westmoreland	475	3,388	897	26,471	30	..	..	4	794
Wiltshire	4,236	34,727	9,112	333,029	37	189	7,524	93	12,186	
Worcestershire	4,848	36,198	9,640	328,531	34	117	6,972	88	8,180	
Yorkshire	26,727	204,272	52,942	1,700,822	22	365	25,780	505	78,926	
Total, 1838	317,369	2,163,871	584,042	17,458,507	30	5,627	330,390	5,766	777,593	
“ 1837	296,898	1,961,776	534,358	16,177,699	30	4,909	287,727	5,187	712,615	
Increase	30,481	212,095	49,689	1,280,808	..	718	42,663	569	64,978	

SUMMARY of the NUMBER of DEPOSITORS and AMOUNT of DEPOSITS as they existed on the 20th of November, 1838, in Savings' Banks in the United Kingdom.

	Number of Depositors.	Amount of Investments.	Average Amount invested by each Depositor.
		£.	£.
Not exceeding £ 20	374,433	2,558,881	7
„ 50	194,418	5,953,983	31
„ 100	78,529	5,398,411	69
„ 150	25,800	3,105,171	120
„ 200	13,898	2,362,823	170
Exceeding . 200	3,060	753,513	246
	690,138	20,132,782	20
Charitable Institutions	6,568	389,029	59
Friendly Societies	6,530	871,501	133
Total	703,236	21,393,312	30

VI.—Miscellaneous.

ABSTRACT of the TOTAL NUMBER of LETTERS; distinguishing the General Post from the Penny Post; also Privileged Letters and Packets from Taxed Letters; with the Number of Newspapers Posted; together with the Sum Total and Average Rate of Postage, during One Week, from 29th January to 4th February, 1838.

	General Post Letters.		Halfpenny, Penny, Twopenny, and Threepenny Post Letters.	
	Paid.	Unpaid.	Paid.	Unpaid.
England and Wales, } excluding the Lon- don Twopenny Post }	138,565	663,169	9,218	75,551
Scotland	13,348	80,395	3,235	42,958
Ireland	24,107	100,073	1,399	22,070
	176,020	843,637	13,852	140,579
The London Two- } penny Post . . . . }	..	..	53,427	187,794
Total	176,020	843,637	67,279	328,373

	Privileged Letters and Packets.	Total Number of Letters of all descriptions.	News-papers.	Sum Total of Postage.		
England and Wales, excluding the London Twopenny Post	107,123	993,626	667,788	£. 34,636	s. 3	d. 0½
Scotland	6,569	146,505	76,412	3,590	18	7½
Ireland	21,619	169,268	104,038	4,923	6	4
	135,311	1,309,399	848,238	43,150	8	0
The London Twopenny Post . . . . .	..	241,221	10,689	2,358	12	2
Total	135,311	1,550,620	858,927	45,509	0	2

ABSTRACT showing the NUMBER of LETTERS that passed through the General Post-Offices and the Local Posts in the Week beginning 5th March, 1838; distinguishing Single Letters from those which were either Double, Treble, Ounce Letters, and of greater weight than an Ounce; distinguishing also the Number of Franked Letters.

	Total Number of General and Bye Letters.					Total Number of Franks
	Single.	Double	Treble.	Ounce.	Above an Ounce.	
England and Wales, not including the London Post	499,550	26,259	7,791	1,055	1,250	58,614
Scotland	89,053	4,547	1,328	293	303	6,486
Ireland	110,579	7,756	2,239	560	894	19,437
The Three Kingdoms	609,182	38,562	11,358	1,908	2,447	84,537

	Total Number of Local Penny Post Letters.				
	Single.	Double.	Treble.	Ounce.	Above an Ounce.
England and Wales, not including the London Post	71,904	5,375	1,291	186	472
Scotland	31,468	3,156	801	166	281
Ireland	17,658	3,350	333	79	226
The Three Kingdoms	121,030	11,881	2,425	431	279

Total of the General and Bye Letters	753,457
Total of the Local Penny Letters	136,746

Gross Total of Chargeable Letters, Franks excluded, 890,203

STATEMENT showing the NUMBER of LETTERS that passed through the Post-Offices of the United Kingdom, in each of Three Weeks during the First Quarter of 1838; with the Amount of Postage Money collected in the Second of those Weeks.

	The Number of Letters for one Week; first return commencing 15th January, 1838.	The Number of Letters for one Week; second return commencing 29th January, 1838.	The Number of Letters for one Week; third return commencing 5th March, 1838.	Amount of Postage for the second Week, commencing 29th January, 1838.	Estimate showing the Number of Letters for one Year, as per second Week.
<i>England and Wales.</i>					
Total chargeable Letters, excluding London Twopenny Post.	820,019	896,503	822,781	£. 34,636	46,098,156
The London Twopenny Post	231,900	241,221	231,900	2,348	12,543,492
Total chargeable Letters, including London Twopenny Post	1,051,919	1,127,724	1,054,681	36,984	58,641,648
<i>Scotland.</i>					
Total chargeable Letters	122,101	139,936	131,396	3,590	7,276,672
<i>Ireland.</i>					
Total chargeable Letters	139,913	147,649	143,674	4,923	7,677,748
Total chargeable Letters (three Kingdoms), excluding London Twopenny Post.	1,082,033	1,174,088	1,097,851	43,150	61,052,576
Total chargeable Letters (three Kingdoms), including London Twopenny Post	1,313,933	1,415,309	1,329,751	45,498	73,596,068
Total privileged Letters (three Kingdoms)	122,908	135,311	135,014	..	7,036,172
Total of Letters of all descriptions (the three Kingdoms) one Week	1,436,835	1,550,620	1,464,765	45,498	90,632,240

MILEAGE AND COMPOSITION for DUTIES on RAILWAY and STAGE CARRIAGES respectively, in the Years ended the 5th January, 1837, 1838, and 1839.

	1837. £.	1838. £.	1839. £.
Railway Composition	1,199	2,256	3,319
Ditto Mileage	9,097	14,636	36,251
	<u>10,296</u>	<u>16,892</u>	<u>39,570</u>
Stage Carriage Mileage	503,742	482,194	454,496
Ditto Composition . . . . .	..	..	71

into two bodies, one of which, under the command of Mr. John Frost, an ex-magistrate, proceeded down the principal street of Newport; whilst the other, headed by Mr. Frost's son, took the direction of Stowe Hill. They met in front of the Westgate Hotel, where the magistrates were assembled with about 30 soldiers of the 45th regiment and several special constables. The rioters commenced breaking the windows of the house, and fired on the inmates, by which the Mayor, Sir Phillips, and several other persons were wounded. The soldiers now made a sortie, and succeeded in dispersing the mob, which, with its leaders, fled from the city, leaving about 20 rioters dead and many others dangerously wounded. A detachment of the 10th Royal Hussars having arrived from Bristol, the city became tranquil. Frost was apprehended on the following day, together with his printer, and other influential persons among the Chartists.

9. Sir Chapman Marshall assumes the office of Lord Mayor; the customary procession and dinner being provided.

XXI.—MINUTE OF THE TREASURY FOR THE REGULATION OF THE POSTAGE.

12th November, 1839.

My lords read the act, 2d and 3d Vict., cap. 52, for the further regulation of the duties on postage until the 5th October, 1840.

Since the prorogation of Parliament, my lords have turned their unremitting attention to the measures necessary for carrying into effect the intention of the legislature.

The powers with which this Board are invested by the act were recommended to Parliament, not only for the purpose of enabling my lords to adopt such mode of payment as might, on consideration, appear the most advisable, but also to enable my lords to carry into practical effect this great alteration in the manner which might be least liable to derange the regularity and the dispatch of the correspondence of the country, as now executed by the Post-Office.

My lords have always been aware that the contemporaneous adoption of the charging letters by weight, and the reduction of postage to a uniform rate of one penny, would be attended with much practical difficulty. The time occupied now at the large offices and at the forward offices in charging and sorting the letters has been reduced, for the public convenience, to as narrow limits as possible. To alter the mode of charge from that to which the officers of the Post-Office have been long accustomed, must of itself, for a time, be accompanied with some inconvenience, and my lords apprehend it would be imprudent to increase that difficulty by adding at the same moment so large a number of letters as must naturally arise from the immediate reduction to the penny rate. My lords fear that, for a time at least, great irregularities would prevail, and much public inconvenience result. However satisfactory, therefore, and however desirable in many points of view it might be to carry into execution contemporaneously the

complete plan, their lordships, upon a full consideration, have come to the conclusion that, by adopting some intermediate measure, and bringing into operation the mode of charging the letters by weight, previous to the entire reduction of the rate of postage, their lordships will not only avoid the risk to which the other course is liable, but materially facilitate the introduction of the remaining parts of the plan.

With these opinions, their lordships have, in communication with the authorities of the Post-Office, turned their attention to the framing such regulations as may introduce, with as little delay as possible, the charge by weight.

Their lordships propose to accompany this arrangement with such reduction of postage as will be a material relief to the public, and not interfere with the proper discharge of the duties of the officers of the Post-Office as at present arranged.

By the regulations which, in conjunction with the Post-Office, have been matured, and which this board propose to sanction, my lords apprehend material advantages will be secured. A considerable relief will be given to the public as regards the charge of letters. One of the great departmental difficulties in introducing the penny rate will be removed, and such information be obtained as will enable my lords to adopt with more security, and consequently at an earlier period, the remaining part of the system.

In giving their sanction to the proposed arrangement, my lords consider it as a temporary measure only, and as a step to the introduction of the uniform penny charge; and their lordships will continue their anxious efforts to give effect to the whole of the intentions of the legislature with as little delay as is consistent with the due consideration of the public convenience. Their lordships are pleased to direct that all letters posted on or after the 5th December next shall be subject to the following regulations:—

General post letters shall be charged by weight as follows:—

1. Letters not exceeding $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce, one postage.
- Do. 1 ounce, two postages.
- Do. 2 ounces, four postages.
- Do. 3 ounces, six postages.

and so on, adding two postages for every ounce up to 16 ounces, beyond which no packet subject to postage shall be received.

2. All single postage rates between places within the United Kingdom, which now exceed 4*d.*, shall be reduced to that sum; inferior rates to remain undisturbed, but the letters to be charged by weight. Additional charges to which general post letters are now liable if posted or delivered beyond the limits of the general post free delivery, as also the additional halfpenny on Scotch letters, and the additional penny for passing the Menai and Conway bridges, to cease.

3. All letters and packets exceeding the weight of one ounce to be pre-paid and delivered in at the window—if not so pre-paid and delivered, to be charged double postage.

Foreign letters and packet letters will be charged according to the preceding scale of weights.

Letters to and from the British West Indies to be charged 1s. per single rate; the same charge to attach to letters from and to Gibraltar, Malta, and the Ionian Isles conveyed by packet, and not transmitted through France.

My lords reserve for future consideration the whole question of the rates on foreign letters, as their lordships consider that it will be a proper subject for communication with foreign powers, in the hope that such foreign powers may be induced to make a corresponding reduction in their charges on letters to and from this country.

All ship letters between parts of the United Kingdom, including the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man, to be charged by weight and according to the rates chargeable on inland letters. Other ship letters to be charged by weight, according to the foregoing scale, the single sea postage remaining as at present, and the inland rate being regulated as for inland letters.

London District Post, including 2d. and 3d. delivery:—

1. All letters not exceeding $\frac{1}{2}$ oz., provided the postage be prepaid, to be charged one penny.

2. The twopenny charge on general post letters delivered in the London district to cease.

3. No further alteration to be made in the charges leviable in the London district post. My lords have no intention, by the present arrangement, to make any alteration with respect to newspapers, franked letters, or parliamentary papers, which will still continue to enjoy the same privileges, and be subject to the same charges, as at present.

Transmit copy of this minute officially to the postmaster-general, and desire his lordship will give the necessary instructions to his officers to carry the directions of my lords into effect.

Desire also that he will direct the solicitor of the post-office to prepare a draft of a warrant in conformity with the provisions of the postage acts, to be signed by my lords, and inserted in the Gazette.

opened on the 1st of September, and it is expected that by November trains may run the whole distance. The works at Bishop-ton, which are the most formidable on the line, consist of a tunnel, divided into two portions of about 1,000 feet by a central opening 300 feet long, and some deep excavation. These are in solid whinstone rock. The railway is to be connected with the harbours of Greenock and Port Glasgow by branches, which are intended in the first instance to be formed on the surface of the ground, the danger of crossing streets being avoided by the use of horse power for working them. It is also proposed to connect Dumbarton with the railway by means of a ferry.

The *Northern and Eastern Railway*, which was originally projected to extend by Lincoln to York, was limited in 1836 to a length of fifty-three miles, between London and Cambridge. Pecuniary difficulties having impeded the progress of the works, the company obtained powers, by the Acts of 1839 and 1840, to abandon the line north of Bishop's Stortford, and to divert the London end from its original course towards Islington to effect a junction with the Eastern Counties railway, near Angel Lane, Stratford. By these alterations the length of line to be formed is limited to about thirty miles, and three miles and a half of the Eastern Counties railway will be used by the company, for which they pay about 7,000*l.* per year for station room, and 4*d.* per head for passengers. The railway was opened to Broxbourne, sixteen miles from the junction, and nineteen and a half from the terminus at Shoreditch, on September 15th, since which time trains have passed six or seven times a day in each direction, conveying three classes of passengers at 3*s.* 6*d.*, 2*s.* 6*d.*, and 1*s.* 6*d.* each for the whole distance. Intermediate stations are established at Lea Bridge, Tottenham, Edmonton, Ponder's End, and Waltham Cross. Excepting for about two miles, the road has but one track.

The *Taff Vale Railway*, which extends from the port of Cardiff to Merthyr Tydfil, with numerous branches for the conveyance of minerals, &c., was opened from Cardiff to Newbridge, a distance of about fourteen miles, on the 8th of October. The traffic and number of passengers already exceeds the original estimate.

VII.—EFFECT OF THE NEW POST OFFICE ARRANGEMENTS UPON THE NUMBER OF LETTERS.

THERE is no class of facts which the public have so strong an interest in pressing upon general notice as those which tend to prove that reductions in the price of any article in general demand do not diminish the total amount of public expenditure upon that article. This is a maxim which may be acted upon with infinite advantage to the community; and we cannot withhold two or three proofs illustrating its truth.

In 1825, the duty on coffee was reduced one-half, that is, to 6*d.*, 9*d.*, and 1*s.* 3*d.* per pound, the coffee from the East Indies, and from foreign possessions, being charged at the latter rates; and in three years, the amount of duty realized was greater than it had been under the higher rates. In 1820 the total consumption of

tea and coffee was 29,599,930 lbs., the duty on which amounted to 3,428,592*l.*, being at the average rate of 2*s.* 3*d.* per lb. In 1839, the consumption of these articles was 61,968,500 lbs. The duty averaged only 1*s.* 5*d.* per lb., and yielded 4,439,863*l.* The increase in the consumption of tea and coffee has more than doubled since 1820, while the population has not increased to one-third the extent; and not only has the revenue been benefited, but incalculable advantages have arisen from cheapening an agreeable beverage which supersedes in many cases the consumption of others of an objectionable kind. In this way taxation influences the manners and habits of a community.

The next instance of increased consumption and use from reduction of price is in newspapers and advertisements. In 1832 the number of advertisements charged with the duty of 3*s.* 6*d.*, in Great Britain, was 888,004; and in 1839, the number charged had increased to 1,523,361, the duty being 1*s.* 6*d.* In 1836, the number of newspapers printed in Great Britain, was 30,431,474, costing the public 7*d.* each. The subsequent reduction of the duty enabled newspaper proprietors to charge 4*d.* and 5*d.* for each newspaper, and the numbers printed rose in the course of three years to 58,516,862, which was the quantity of stamps consumed in the year ending 10th of October, 1839.

We give one more illustration of the truth of the principle which produced the above results. It exhibits the effects of successive reductions in the price of admission to the Armoury at the Tower, from 3*s.* to 2*s.*, and from the latter sum to 6*d.*

Period.	Fee.	No. of Visitors.	Receipts.
Ten months ending March 1st 1838	3 <i>s.</i>	9,508	£950
" " " 1839	1 <i>s.</i>	37,431	£1891
Nine months ending Jan. 31st, 1840	6 <i>d.</i>	66,025	£1650

In the above examples the demand and use have invariably increased in a greater proportion than the price had been diminished.

The object of Mr. Rowland Hill in putting forth his plans of Post-office reform, was to secure the application of the principle we have here illustrated to the revenue of the Post-office, which had been for many years in an unsatisfactory state. From 1815 to 1820, the annual average gross revenue of this department was 2,190,597*l.*; from 1832 to 1837, it amounted to 2,251,424*l.* The positive increase in seventeen years was 60,827*l.*, averaging only 3578*l.* yearly, or little more than one and one-half per thousand, although in these seventeen years the increase of population had at least been 250 per thousand, and the advance in trade, industry, intelligence, in short of every species of material and intellectual activity was still greater.

Mr. Rowland Hill found that, taking all the correspondence which passed through the Post-office, the average postage on each letter was 6½*d.* The Select Committee of the House of Commons on Postage reported the following as the average rates.

Average RATES, Multiple Letters being included and counted as Single.	
Packet and ship letters	23.1582 = nearly 23½ <i>d.</i>
— and inland general-post letters	9.7065 = nearly 9½ <i>d.</i>

Ditto, ditto, and London 2d. and 3d. post letters	8·4006 = nearly 8½d.
Ditto, ditto, ditto, and country 1d. post letters	7·6074 = little more than 7½
Inland general-post letters only	8·6502 = nearly 8½
Ditto and London 2d. and 3d. post letters	7·4688 = nearly 7½
Ditto, ditto, and country penny-post letters	6·7414 = nearly 6½
AVERAGE RATES, Multiple Letters being excluded.	
Single inland general-post letters	7·7445 = nearly 7¾
Ditto and London 2d. and 3d. post letters	6·8202 = little more than 6¾
Ditto, ditto, and country 1d. post letters	6·2166 = nearly 6¼

The Commons' Committee, after a very careful examination of the best data, estimated the number of documents annually passing through the Post-office to be as follows:—

Chargeable letters—

General Post, inclusive of foreign letters, and reckoning double and triple letters as single	57,000,000
2d. and 3d. post letters	12,500,000
Country penny-post letters	8,000,000
	<hr/>
	77,500,000
Franks	7,000,000
Newspapers	44,500,000
	<hr/>
	129,000,000

A more detailed estimate, the result of very elaborate calculations, is appended to the Report of the Commons' Committee which we subjoin:—

Description of Letters.	Yearly Number of Letters.	Average rate per Letter. d.	Yearly Revenue. £.
Packet and ship letters.	6,523,572	23·1562	369,340
General Post inland letters above 4d.	46,378,800	9·2224	1,782,191
Ditto, not exceeding 4d.	5,153,200	3·5	75,151
London local post letters	11,837,852	2·3266	114,753
Country penny-post letters	8,030,412	1	33,483
	<hr/>		
Total	74,923,836	7·6074	2,374,923
Parliamentary franks	4,813,448	..	..
Official franks, for public purposes	2,109,010	..	..
Public statutes	77,542	..	..
Newspapers	44,500,000	..	..
	<hr/>		
Total of documents transmitted by post	126,423,836	..	2,374,923
Unappropriated			4,641
			<hr/>
Total revenue from letters, 1837			2,379,564

The privileged letters, reduced to the standard of single letters, amounted to above 30 per cent. of the whole number of letters transmitted by the general post. The average weight of a single

chargeable letter was about three-tenths of an ounce; the average weight of a parliamentary frank about forty-eight hundredths of an ounce; that of an official frank 1·9376 oz., or nearly two ounces; and that of a copy of a public statute 3·1129 oz. Had they been liable to the then existing rates, they would have contributed in the following proportions to the revenue:—

	Number.	Rate per Letter. <i>d.</i>	Revenue. <i>£.</i>
Parliamentary franks . . .	4,813,448	17·392	348,814
Official franks	2,109,010	70·209	616,965
Statutes distributed . . .	77,542	112·795	36,443
Totals	7,000,000	..	1,002,222

On the 5th of December, 1839, as a preparatory measure to accustom the department to the new practice of charging by weight, the inland rates of postage were reduced to a uniform charge of 4*d.* per half ounce, except those which had previously passed at lower rates, which continued to be charged as before. The London district post was reduced at the same time from 2*d.* and 3*d.* to 1*d.* On the 10th of January, 1840, the uniform rate of 1*d.* per half ounce came into general operation, the scale of weight for letters advancing from a single rate for each of the first two half ounces, by an increase of 2*d.* per ounce, or for any fraction of an ounce, up to sixteen ounces. If the postage were not paid on posting the letter, the charge was made double. On this day parliamentary franking ceased. The use of stamps, which formed one of the means suggested by Mr. Rowland Hill for facilitating the dispatch of letters, was introduced on the 6th of May.

The following abstract of a Parliamentary return, gives the number of letters delivered from the post-offices of the United Kingdom for three several weeks, the first when the rates of postage were in operation; the second during the existence of the four-penny rate; and the third after the penny rate was established.

	Week ended 24 Nov. 1839.	Week ended 22 Dec. 1839.	Week ended 23 Feb. 1840.
England and Wales:—			
Country Offices	764,938	963,616	1,658,002
London, Inland, Foreign and Ship Letter Offices.	229,292	279,457	431,298
Total, excluding Two- penny Post	994,230	1,243,073	2,089,300
Twopenny Post, including chargeable Newspapers.	258,747	340,693	406,476
Total, England and Wales	1,252,977	1,583,766	2,495,776
Ireland	179,931	225,889	349,928
Scotland	153,065	199,032	353,933
Gross Total	1,585,973	2,008,687	3,199,637

Franks are included in this return, and it therefore does not show the exact increase of chargeable letters. Deducting franks, which on an average, amounted to 135,000 per week, distributed as follows* (country offices 56,000, London 51,000, Ireland 21,000, and Scotland 6,500,) the increase is as follows:—

	Increase per cent. (deducting Franks) under the	
	Fourpenny Rate.	Penny Rate.
England and Wales:—		
Country Offices	28	134
London, Inland, Ship and Foreign	28	142
London District Post	31	57
	—	—
Total England and Wales	29	118
Ireland	29	121
Scotland	31	142
	—	—
United Kingdom	24	121

* It is stated* that the number of official letters which have become chargeable since the abolition of official franks is about 40,000, per week; and hence 3 per cent. must be deducted from the total increase, making the actual increase of all other descriptions of letters 118 instead of 121 per cent.

The introduction of the penny postage was not calculated to affect letters circulated by district posts, as they were already subject only to a rate of 1d. or 2d. Deducting this class of letters, which were estimated to amount to 504,747 per week, (namely, London district post 258,747, country districts 158,000, with 88,000 for Ireland and Scotland,) and having also deducted franks, only those letters are comprised which have been most affected by the reduction.

	Increase per cent. (deducting Franks and District Post Letters), under the	
	Fourpenny Rate.	Penny Rate.
England and Wales:—		
Country Offices	36	172
London, Inland, Ship and Foreign	28	142
	—	—
Total, England and Wales.	34	164
Ireland	35	149
Scotland	53	234
	—	—
Total, United Kingdom	40	169

Deducting as before the 40,000 official letters which have become chargeable†, the increase for the United Kingdom will be 165 instead of 169 per cent. Chargeable letters of all kinds including district post letters increased 24 per cent. under the 4d. rate, and 118 per cent. under the 1d. rate. Excluding district post letters, and reckoning only those sent by the general post, (still excluding

* Paper read by Mr. Rowland Hill Journal of Stat. Soc. vol. iii. part 7. p. 103.

† An account of all sums charged or paid by each public department on account of postage, from Jan. 10th to Feb. 20th, 1840:—Total, Great Britain, £15,034; Ireland, £676. The departments which contributed most largely to this amount were, Foreign Office, £5851; War Office, £1526; Colonial Office, £976; Post Office, £950; Ordnance Office, £806; Adjutant General's Office, £385; Admiralty, £567; Tithe Commissioners, £484; Audit Office, £460; the Treasury, £425.

government letters) the increase was 40 per cent. under the 4d. rate and 165 per cent. under the 1d. rate.

The following returns are also interesting as showing the working of the penny postage plan.

1. Return of the Number of LETTERS for the London District Post, exclusive of all General Post Letters, during the following Periods of four weeks each.

Four Weeks, ending	Paid.	Unpaid.	Stamped.	Total.
4 January, 1840	825,282	477,273	..	1,302,555
1 February ,,	1,207,985	331,589	..	1,539,574
29 ,, ,,	1,312,379	312,757	..	1,625,136
28 March ,,	1,308,100	214,863	..	1,522,963
25 April ,,	1,368,100	202,390	..	1,570,490
23 May ,,	1,198,613	197,922	285,079	1,681,614
20 June ,,	1,001,088	182,914	518,342	1,702,344

In the last period of the above return 89 per cent. of the letters were paid, and 11 per cent. unpaid; of the paid letters, 51 per cent. were stamped.

2. Return of the Number of CHARGEABLE LETTERS passing through the General Post (London) Inwards and Outwards, during the following Periods of four weeks each; with a similar Return for corresponding Periods under the old rates of Postage.

Four Weeks, ending	Paid.	Unpaid.	Stamped.	Total.
4 January, 1840	505,847	1,596,434	..	2,102,281
1 February ,,	2,217,127	787,139	..	3,004,266
29 ,, ,,	2,875,427	462,647	..	3,338,074
28 March ,,	2,986,517	386,150	..	3,372,667
25 April ,,	2,980,970	423,930	..	3,404,900
23 May ,,	2,630,895	410,399	419,984	3,461,278
20 June ,,	2,354,932	367,831	942,430	3,665,193

The paid letters in the four weeks ending June 22 were 90 per cent.; the unpaid letters being 10 per cent.; the stamped letters were 40 per cent. on the paid letters.

Four Weeks, ending	Paid.	Unpaid.	Total.
5 January, 1839	201,127	1,299,789	1,500,916
2 February ,,	217,071	1,326,304	1,543,375
2 March ,,	212,175	1,345,725	1,557,880
30 ,, ,,	217,041	1,387,315	1,604,356
27 April ,,	226,541	1,429,775	1,656,316
25 May ,,	236,712	1,383,053	1,619,765
22 June ,,	265,314	1,383,706	1,649,020

When the rate of postage was not affected by prepayment, only 16 per cent. of the letters were paid, 84 per cent. being unpaid.

3. Comparative Statement of the Number of LETTERS delivered in the United Kingdom in the weeks ending as follows:—

	Penny Rate.		
	Week ending 26 April 1840.	Week ending 22 May 1840.	Week ending 21 June 1840.
ENGLAND AND WALES.			
Country Offices	1,505,609	1,588,809	1,629,123
London, Inland, Foreign } and Ship Letter Offices. }	410,270	449,333	454,376
London District Offices . .	390,989	418,926	441,948
Total England and Wales.	2,306,868	2,457,068	2,525,347
Total Ireland	328,074	338,407	343,761
Total Scotland	319,924	342,560	352,098
Gross Total United Kingdom	2,954,866	3,138,035	3,221,206
Estimated No. per annum.	..*	163,177,820	167,502,712

The influence of the uniform rate of 1d. upon the revenue of the Post-office is not accurately set forth in the Parliamentary returns, most of them referring only to the number of letters. The following abstract, however, shows "as far as practicable," the number of letters and total amount of postage collected in the London district during the establishment of the fourpenny rate (5th Dec., 1839, to 9th Jan., 1840, inclusive); and also for a corresponding period under the old rate; and subsequently for a similar period (Jan. 10th to Feb. 13th,) under the penny rate. Franks, both parliamentary and government, are excluded from the return, but deductions require to be made for postage from government departments.

	Old Rate.	Fourpenny Rate.	Old Rate.	Penny Rate.*
Inland;				
No. of Letters	776,862	1,555,262	767,997	2,104,468
Postage	£38,896	£21,978	£40,260	£12,869
Ship and Foreign;				
No. of Letters	147,055	173,731	162,218	181,917
Postage	£18,403	£16,714	£19,800	£35,754
Total;				
No. of Letters	923,917	1,328,993	930,215	2,286,385
Postage	£57,300†	£38,692‡	£60,060§	£40,627¶
London District;				
No. of Letters	1,280,637	1,667,532	1,372,929	1,991,134
Postage	£12,938¶	£10,382**	£13,714††	£10,368
London District, General and District Letters;				
No. of Letters	2,204,604	2,996,525	2,303,144	4,277,519
Postage	£70,234	£49,075	£73,774‡‡	£50,896§§

* The return for this week does not afford a fair average, the occurrence of the Easter holidays having checked the activity of correspondence. In Mr. Rowland Hill's Paper read at the Statistical Society, to which reference has been already made, he remarks:—"The number of letters on any particular day is influenced very much by circumstances. In London, the average number of General Post Letters is about 30 per cent. greater on a Monday than on any other day of the week. On Christmas-day, 1839, the number of London General Post Letters (outwards) fell about 70 per cent., and the number of district post letters about 80 per cent. On the 10th of February (the day of her Majesty's wedding) the first fell about 40 per cent., and the second, about 25 per cent.; while on the 14th February (St. Valentine's day) the first rose about 5 per cent., and the second about 30 per cent."

† For Notes †, ‡, §, ¶, **, ††, ‡‡, §§, see p. 104.

The average charge on general post inland letters (London district) exclusive of Government letters, is almost exactly 1½d. per letter, and the average charge on the district post letters is almost exactly 1½d. per letter.

The following abstract also from the parliamentary returns shows the amount of postage collected in the Dublin and Edinburgh districts for corresponding periods during the existence of the old rates of postage, under the fourpenny rate, and lastly under the penny rate:—

	Old Rate.	Fourpenny Rate.	Penny Rate.
Dublin . . .	£6,850	£4,418	£2,843
Edinburgh . .	4,426	3,132	2,478

In Dublin the loss on the gross revenue was 30 per cent. under the fourpenny rate, and 59 per cent. under the penny rate; and in Edinburgh the loss under the fourpenny rate amounted to 30 per cent., and to 56 per cent. under the penny rate. These two cities, however, receive more than the average proportion of foreign and ship letters, on which the reduction has been smaller.

There is another return which shows the amount of postage collected in the United Kingdom during the month commencing 5th December, 1838, and 5th December, 1839. For the former of these periods the amount was 200,587*l.*, and for the latter, (during which the fourpenny rate was charged,) 136,680*l.*, a decline of 68 per cent. on the gross revenue. The revenue tables for the quarter ending 5th January, 1839, give the net revenue of the Post-office at 365,000*l.*; and for the corresponding quarter ending 5th January, 1840, at 351,000*l.* The fourpenny rate was charged during one month of this quarter, and the diminution amounted to 14,000*l.* During the quarter ending 5th April, the fourpenny rate was charged for four days at the commencement of the quarter, after which the penny rate came into operation. For each of the three quarters ending 10th October, the net revenue was as follows; and comparing it with the corresponding quarters of the preceding year, the difference amounts to 825,000*l.* or 71 per cent., which on the average revenue of the Post-office for the three years ending 10th October, 1839, will amount to a loss of 1,079,138*l.*

Quarters ending	1839	1840
April 5 . . .	£392,000	£120,000
July 5 . . .	369,000	100,000
Oct. 10 . . .	407,000	123,000
	<u>£1,168,000</u>	<u>£343,000</u>

The *expenses* of conducting the Post-office business for the United Kingdom amounted to 741,677*l.* for the year ending 5th

† £3637 received from government departments.

‡ £1316 from ditto.

§ £4624 from ditto.

|| £11,903 postage paid by government departments.

¶ Deduct £625 for rated general post letters.

** Deduct £79 for rated franks.

†† Deduct £625 for rated general post letters.

‡‡ Deduct £4624 for government departments.

§§ Deduct £11,903 for ditto.

January, 1840; and as it is admitted that postage is not a proper source of revenue, all that can be expected is that it should pay its expenses, and with the *present* number of letters this object is accomplished, and a surplus accrues besides to the public revenue.

It is not necessary to dwell upon the advantages of the reduction of the rates of postage to a low uniform rate. The change is appreciated too cordially to need this. That the revenue would be no gainer, was of course anticipated; but setting aside the benefits likely to arise from extended facilities for correspondence, and which far more than counterbalance the defalcation which will occur, the principle to which we alluded at the commencement of the present notice, leads us to believe that even as regards the state, the loss will only be temporary. A reduction of the price of articles in general consumption is invariably followed by their increased use; but the reduction of postage applies to a habit of a different kind from that which is founded upon mere animal wants; and this habit must be formed before certain classes of the people can contribute much to the amount of national correspondence. From the Second Annual Report of the Registrar-General, it appears that forty-one out of every hundred persons married in England and Wales in 1838-9, were unable to write their names. This large proportion of the population is therefore, in a considerable degree, shut out from the advantages of the Post-office. We may expect, however, that the proportion of uneducated persons will be gradually diminished, when of course the number capable of profiting more extensively by a low rate of postage, will be proportionally increased. The penny postage is in fact a bonus on education.

The return exhibiting the aggregate correspondence of the United Kingdom shows that the number of letters was gradually increasing, and we believe that this will be still more apparent when we shall be able to compare quarters and years instead of weeks. The various improvements which are taking place in the general management of the Post-office are calculated to multiply the correspondence of the country. At the present time upwards of a fourth of the whole correspondence of the kingdom is carried on the Birmingham railroad. A letter which leaves the railway station in London at half-past eight at night, is received next morning soon after eight o'clock at Lancaster, 241 miles from the metropolis; and letters dispatched at the same hour may by similar means be received in Southampton, seventy-seven miles from London, the same night, reach Dublin in twenty-four hours, and Edinburgh and Glasgow in thirty. Mr. Palmer's plans consisted chiefly in accelerating the Post-office correspondence, and when his improvements were introduced the average net revenue of the department for the preceding twenty years had averaged about 150,000*l.* per annum. In ten years after they had been in operation, the net revenue had increased to 400,000*l.* In proportion also, as the railways offer increased facilities for travelling, they lead to more extended personal intercourse, and this again creates the necessities of more frequent correspondence. This has

been the case between Manchester and Liverpool as a Parliamentary return shows, and the same result will without doubt generally take place under similar circumstances.

VIII.—RECORD OFFICES.

In 1838 (*Companion to the Almanac*, page 93), we gave "a short directory for searching the public records in the metropolis," which described the several record offices, their contents and the administration generally. We there alluded to a Bill as being in progress for effecting certain changes. This Bill passed into law in the following year, and an abstract of it was given in the "Companion" for 1839. We have now to make known the important advantages which the public has obtained from this Act, so far as it has been carried into execution.

So long as the records remain scattered in offices in all quarters of the metropolis, it is clear no perfection of management can be obtained. Certain inconveniences and imperfections will exist until a general office is prepared. The paramount necessity for such a building is now admitted as a *sine quâ non* in Record Reform. The recommendation of the House of Commons to build a general record office was last session strengthened by similar advice from a Committee of the House of Lords. And we believe that the preliminary investigations requisite before a building can be commenced, are being actively prosecuted.

But though no general building is ready, very great ameliorations have been already effected. The greater part of the public records are now subject to uniform custody and administration. And when a comparison is made between the old and new system, we think the public will admit that the Master of the Rolls has executed the reform intrusted to his guidance with a vigorous hand.

The first step taken was to establish a central office and authority at the Rolls House for the general superintendence of the branch offices and transaction of business. Sir Francis Palgrave has been appointed the deputy-keeper of the public records, and Mr. F. S. Thomas the secretary.

The following offices have been constituted branches of the chief office.

The TOWER.—(Mr. Thomas D. Hardy, assistant-keeper.)

The CHAPTER HOUSE.—(Mr. F. Devon, assistant-keeper.)

The ROLLS HOUSE.—(Mr. Palmer, assistant-keeper.)

CARLTON RIDE (as respects the Common Pleas records,) and WHITEHALL YARD where the records of the Exchequer of Pleas and the records of the Custos Brevium (chiefly Fines from William and Mary to the present time), of the Common Pleas are kept.—(Mr. Henry Cole, assistant-keeper.)

The KING'S BENCH RECORDS are deposited in the Rolls House.

These offices are now subject to the following rules and regulations:—

C. F. B. A. 1841

3.—Table exhibiting each successive Fluctuation of the Duty regulating the Importation of Foreign Wheat from the passing of the Act 9 Geo. IV. c. 60 (July 1828), to November 1841. The date is given for the week when the duty was altered.

1828.	s. d.	1830.	s. d.	1834.	s. d.	1837.	s. d.	1839.	s. d.
July 17	30 8	Nov. 11	24 8	Jan. 2	37 8	Jan. 5	26 8	July 11	16 8
Aug. 14	29 8	Dec. 2	23 8	Jan. 16	38 8	Jan. 12	27 8	Aug. 8	13 8
28	28 8	9	22 8	23	37 8	Feb. 9	28 8	22	10 8
Sept. 4	26 8	16	21 8	Feb. 20	38 8	23	29 8	Sept. 5	6 8
11	25 8			April 3	39 8	Mar. 9	30 8	3	10 8
Oct. 2	26 8	1831.		May 22	38 8	May 4	31 8	Oct. 3	16 8
9	25 8	Jan. 6	20 8	June 5	39 8	June 1	32 8	Nov. 7	18 8
16	24 8	13	18 8	July 10	38 8	July 8	31 8	21	20 8
23	22 8	27	16 8	Sept. 11	39 8	July 6	30 8	28	18 8
30	18 8	Feb. 3	13 8	18	40 8	Aug. 3	29 8		
Nov. 6	18 8	10	10 8	25	41 8	17	28 8	1840.	
13	2 8	17	6 8	Oct. 2	42 8	Sept. 21	29 8	Jan. 2	20 8
20	1 0	24	2 8	9	43 8	Oct. 12	30 8	Feb. 6	21 8
1899.		Mar. 3	1 0	23	44 8	26	31 8	Mar. 19	20 8
Jan. 1	1 0	31	2 8	Nov. 6	45 8	Nov. 2	32 8	26	18 8
Mar. 12	6 8	April 14	6 8	Dec. 11	44 8	9	33 8	April 9	16 8
19	10 8	May 19	10 8	25	45 8	16	34 8	30	13 8
26	13 8	21	13 8	1835.		Dec. 21	33 8	May 7	16 8
April 2	16 8	June 9	16 8	Jan. 1	45 8	1839.		June 18	18 8
30	13 8	16	18 8	Jan. 15	46 8	Jan. 4	33 8	July 23	16 8
June 18	10 8	July 7	20 8	Feb. 19	45 8	11	34 8	Aug. 6	13 8
July 16	13 8	Aug. 4	21 8	Mar. 12	46 8	25	33 8	13	10 8
23	16 8	18	22 8	April 9	47 8	Feb. 15	32 8	20	6 8
30	18 8	Sept. 15	23 8	May 14	48 8	Mar. 8	31 8	Sept. 3	2 8
Aug. 13	20 8	Oct. 6	24 8	28	47 8	April 5	30 8	10	6 8
Sept. 24	21 8	Nov. 3	26 8	July 2	46 8	19	29 8	17	10 8
Oct. 1	22 8	24	25 8	30	45 8	May 3	28 8	24	13 8
8	23 8	1832.		Aug. 13	44 8	17	27 8	Oct. 1	18 8
15	24 8	Jan. 5	26 8	Sept. 10	45 8	June 7	26 8	8	20 8
22	25 8	12	27 8	17	46 8	15	25 8	15	21 8
29	27 8	Mar. 29	28 8	Oct. 1	47 8	23	23 8	22	22 8
Nov. 5	28 8	April 5	27 8	8	48 8	28	22 8	29	23 8
12	29 8	May 3	26 8	22	49 8	July 5	22 8	Nov. 19	24 8
19	30 8	17	25 8	Nov. 19	50 8	12	21 8	Dec. 3	25 8
1830.		June 28	24 8	1836.		19	20 8	17	26 8
Jan. 7	30 8	Aug. 2	23 8	Jan. 7	50 8	26	18 8	31	27 8
Mar. 4	29 8	Sept. 6	24 8	Feb. 4	49 8	Aug. 9	16 8	1841.	
18	28 8	13	25 8	18	48 8	16	13 8	Jan. 8	26 8
25	27 8	20	26 8	25	47 8	23	10 8	29	25 8
April 1	26 8	27	27 8	Mar. 10	45 8	30	6 8	Mar. 12	24 8
8	25 8	Oct. 4	28 8	17	44 8	Sept. 6	2 8	26	23 8
15	24 8	11	29 8	31	43 8	13	1 0	April 16	22 8
22	23 8	18	30 8	April 7	42 8	20	2 8	23	23 8
29	22 8	25	31 8	14	41 8	27	10 8	April 16	22 8
May 6	21 8	Nov. 1	32 8	21	40 8	Oct. 4	16 8	23	23 8
13	20 8	8	33 8	May 5	39 8	11	20 8	May 28	24 8
27	21 8	15	34 8	19	38 8	18	21 8	July 9	23 8
July 1	20 8	Dec. 6	33 8	June 2	37 8	25	22 8	30	21 8
15	18 8	1833.		23	36 8	Nov. 8	21 8	Aug. 6	20 8
29	13 8	Jan. 3	32 8	Aug. 18	37 8	15	18 8	13	18 8
Aug. 5	10 8	10	33 8	Sept. 15	38 8	22	13 8	20	13 8
12	6 8	Feb. 7	34 8	Oct. 6	39 8	29	10 8	27	6 8
19	2 8	April 18	33 8	Nov. 3	38 8	Dec. 6	6 8	Sept. 3	2 8
Sept. 9	6 8	Aug. 1	32 8	17	37 8	13	1 0	10	1 0
15	13 8	8	31 8	24	35 8	1830.		17	2 8
23	18 8	Sept. 19	32 8	Dec. 1	32 8	Mar. 22	2 8	24	10 8
Oct. 7	21 8	Oct. 17	33 8	8	30 8	April 11	6 8	Oct. 1	16 8
14	24 8	31	34 8	15	29 8	18	10 8	8	20 8
21	25 8	Nov. 14	35 8	22	27 8	May 30	6 8	15	22 8
		Dec. 12	36 8	29	26 8	June 13	10 8	23	24 8
						27	13 8	Nov. 5	23 8

4.—Quantities of Barley, Oats and Oatmeal, Rye, Pease, and Beans imported and entered for Home Consumption from July 15th, 1828, to 5th June, 1841.

	Imported.	Home Consumption.
Barley	2,665,224 <i>qrs.</i>	2,596,368 <i>qrs.</i>
Oats and Oatmeal	4,024,342	3,521,920
Rye	437,503	317,155
Pease	861,990	828,730
Beans	815,650	830,741

VIII.—EFFECT OF THE PENNY POSTAGE ON THE NUMBER OF LETTERS AND ON THE REVENUE OF THE POST-OFFICE.

IN presenting the following Tables, showing the operation of the Penny Postage, we have to congratulate those who supported this great measure on its increasing success. An inspection of Table No. I. shows that for the week ended 22nd March, 1840, the total number of letters passing through the post-offices of the United Kingdom was under 3,070,000, and for the corresponding week of 1841 upwards of 3,700,000, being an increase of upwards of 650,000, or somewhat more than 21 per cent. Comparing March,* 1839, with March, 1840, the increase was 100 per cent.; and comparing the former period with March, 1841, the increase is 140 per cent.: so that 40 per cent. on the old number, accruing between March, 1839, and March, 1840, may be assumed as the present annual rate of increase. The estimated *annual* number of letters, including franks, transmitted by post in the United Kingdom, taking the first week in Table I. as an average, was 82,470,596. If the number for the week ended 22nd March, 1841, be taken as an average, the estimated number is 193,515,660 per annum, making an increase of nearly two and a half fold. Mr. Rowland Hill anticipated a threefold increase in the first year in case the *whole* of his plans were carried into effect. But besides the reduction of postage, he relied upon other causes of increased correspondence, which have only been partially brought into operation, such as greater frequency and despatch in the transmission and delivery of letters; the effect of which no one can doubt. For example, previous to the establishment of day-mails, letters passing through London were detained fourteen hours in the London office, and this class of letters then amounted to about 36,000 per week, whereas the number is now 170,000, being nearly a *five-fold* increase.† By adding together the returns for twelve corresponding weeks ending April, 1839, 1840, and 1841, in Table No. II., it will be seen that the letters of all kinds passing through the London General Post-office (inwards and outwards)‡ were, in round numbers, 4,800,000 in 1839; 10,100,000 in 1840; and 15,000,000 in 1841. The increase was 102 per cent. in 1840 as compared with 1839; and 49 per cent. in 1841 compared with 1840; and this latter proportion, or more than 100 per cent. as

* This month is taken as being freer from disturbing causes than any other.

† Owing in part, probably, to letters having been diverted from other channels.

‡ More than one-third of the whole number of letters for the United Kingdom pass through the London office.

1. — Comparative Statement of the Number of Letters (including Packages) delivered in the United Kingdom in one Week of each Calendar Month, beginning with November, 1839, and ending with July 25, 1841 :—

Week ending	ENGLAND AND WALES.				Total Ireland.	Total Scotland.	Gross Total United Kingdom.
	Country Offices.	London, Inland, Foreign, and Ship.	London District Post.	Total England and Wales.			
24 November, 1839	764,938	929,292	258,747	1,252,977	179,931	153,065	1,585,973
22 December	963,616	979,457	340,693	1,583,766	225,889	199,032	2,008,687
23 February 1840	1,659,002	431,298	406,476	2,495,776	349,928	363,933	3,199,637
22 March	1,607,431	416,887	386,689	2,411,007	321,163	337,326	3,069,496
26 April †	1,505,609	410,270	390,989	2,306,868	328,074	319,924	2,954,866
24 May	1,588,809	449,333	418,926	2,457,068	338,407	342,560	3,138,035
21 June	1,629,123	454,376	441,848	2,525,347	343,761	352,098	3,221,206
19 July	1,674,410	452,448	400,753	2,527,611	338,495	356,817	3,222,923
23 August	1,746,257	461,639	343,347	2,551,293	345,831	369,436	3,266,560
20 September	1,811,213	450,871	340,232	2,602,316	350,318	366,419	3,319,053
25 October	1,821,711	472,801	387,848	2,682,361	369,297	366,121	3,417,779
22 November	1,805,325	492,574	387,282	2,685,181	385,672	385,262	3,456,115
20 December	1,782,579	491,264	405,153	2,678,996	381,306	376,024	3,435,326
24 January, 1841	1,929,661	519,625	467,940	2,917,226	386,555	380,242	3,684,023
21 February †	2,133,197	547,621	504,147	3,184,965	460,330	444,819	4,090,164
21 March	1,950,501	531,960	447,766	2,930,227	389,877	401,351	3,721,455
25 April	1,899,485	511,064	454,601	2,865,150	389,939	389,568	3,644,707
23 May	1,908,188	546,170	452,864	2,907,222	391,322	400,531	3,699,125
20 June . . . . .	..	..	..	..	..	..	3,773,136
25 July . . . . .	..	..	..	..	..	..	3,746,008

* These Tables (with the exception of some later additions) are taken from a paper read by Mr. Rowland Hill before the London Statistical Society. (Journal of Stat. Soc. for July, 1841, vol. iv. part 2.)

† Easter week.

‡ The increase in this week is owing to the Valentines. In a paper read before the Statistical Society in March, 1840, by Mr. Rowland Hill, he remarks:—"The number of letters on any particular day is influenced very much by circumstances. In London, the average number of General-post Letters is about 30 per cent. greater on a Monday than on any other day of the week. On Christmas-day, 1839, the number of London General-post Letters (outwards) fell about 70 per cent., and the number of district-post letters about 80 per cent. On the 10th of February (the day of Her Majesty's wedding) the first fell about 40 per cent., and the second about 25 per cent.; while on the 14th February (St. Valentine's Day) the first rose about 5 per cent., and the second about 30 per cent."

II.—Return of the Number of Chargeable Letters which have passed through the London General Post, inwards and outwards, since the first general Reduction of Postage, on the 5th December, 1839, dividing the time (as far as practicable) into periods of four complete weeks each, and distinguishing, as regards each period, the Unpaid, Paid, and Stamped, and Total Number of Letters; also a similar Return of the estimated Numbers of Letters for the Year immediately preceding the Reduction.

1839.				1840.					1841.				
Four weeks ending	Unpaid.	Paid	Total.	Four weeks ending	Unpaid.	Paid.	Stamped.	Total.	Four weeks ending	Unpaid.	Paid.	Stamped.	Total.
5 Jan. .	1,999,789	201,127	1,500,916	4 Jan. .	1,566,434	2,505,847	..	2,102,281	2 Jan. .	333,433	1,974,684	2,047,120	4,355,237
2 Feb. .	1,326,304	217,071	1,543,375	1 Feb. .	787,139	2,217,127	..	3,004,266	30 Jan. .	370,080	2,204,919	2,108,074	4,683,072
2 Mar. .	1,345,725	212,175	1,557,899	29 Feb. .	462,647	2,875,427	..	3,338,074	27 Feb. .	406,173	2,349,958	2,275,321	5,031,452
30 Mar. .	1,387,315	217,041	1,604,356	28 Mar. .	386,150	2,986,517	..	3,372,667	27 Mar. .	435,388	2,249,080	2,375,659	5,060,127
27 April .	1,429,775	226,541	1,656,316	25 April .	423,930	2,980,970	..	3,404,900	24 April .	449,338	2,191,941	2,325,650	4,966,929
15 May .	1,383,053	236,712	1,619,765	23 May .	410,399	2,630,895	419,984	3,461,278	22 May .	464,697	2,284,045	2,478,459	5,236,201
22 June .	1,383,706	265,314	1,649,020	20 June .	367,831	2,354,932	942,430	3,665,193	19 June .	485,986	2,340,37	2,516,304	5,342,669
20 July .	1,365,343	339,634	1,704,977	18 July .	337,176	2,288,040	1,188,229	3,813,					
17 Aug. .	1,317,668	302,745	1,620,413	15 Aug. .	351,234	2,181,296	1,439,334	3,971					
14 Sep. .	1,412,277	299,994	1,712,271	12 Sep. .	291,973	2,229,952	1,535,137	4,057,062					
12 Oct. .	1,344,819	298,041	1,642,860	10 Oct. .	308,686	2,201,756	1,671,736	4,182,178					
9 Nov. .	1,307,244	285,587	1,592,831	7 Nov. .	267,743	2,110,278	1,910,581	4,297,602					
7 Dec. .	1,359,439	323,473	1,682,912	5 Dec. .	296,295	2,096,097	1,992,219	4,385,301					

compared with the old number, may be assumed as the present annual rate of increase. In the letters posted in London, the average annual increase since the reduction of postage is 70 per cent., and of those delivered in London about 65 per cent.; but on that class which merely passes through London, and which, instead of being detained 14 hours, are immediately forwarded by the day-mails and by railway, the increased frequency of transmission and greater despatch, combined with other circumstances, have caused an increase of about 200 per cent. With the facilities afforded by the railways, such a place as Brighton might be, as it were, included within the London district post. There might be three deliveries of letters daily, and London and Brighton, or any other town at a similar distance, having a communication by railway with the metropolis, might be brought in as close a relation with it as are the eastern and western parts of London. So recently as 1837 the average time which was required before an answer could be received to a letter put into the twopenny post receiving houses was 14½ hours; but the time is now somewhat shortened. Still, for purposes of epistolary communication, Brighton might be brought nearer to London than Whitechapel is to Whitehall; and the effect would be, as in all similar cases, to increase the amount of correspondence.

The real value of the measure is to be tested by the number of letters, which, it will be seen, have increased in a proportion equal to all rational expectation. Mr. Hill held out the expectation that the adoption of his plan would occasion a five-fold increase in the number of letters, but he did not attempt to fix the time when this point would be attained. If the present rate of increase is maintained, the five-fold increase predicted will be realised in less than five years from the reduction of the rates, or during the year 1844; and it will be recollected that some parts of Mr. Hill's plan are only partially in operation. The illicit transmission of letters, and the evasions practised under the old system to avoid postage, have entirely ceased. It is impossible to doubt that the domestic, social, moral, and commercial effects of the change have been as extensive as they are beneficial—as productive of public advantage as they have been conducive to individual happiness.

The use of stamps in pre-payment of the postage has, it will be seen, been attended with the most successful results. It is convenient both to the public and to the Post-office, and the number of stamped letters has gradually risen until it exceeds the number of letters paid in coin: this is the case in respect to the large number of letters passing through the London office, but in the country the proportions are probably reversed. When the rate of postage was not affected by pre-payment, only 16 per cent. of the letters were paid, 84 per cent. being unpaid; but in the four weeks ending 2nd January, 1841, the proportion of paid letters in the London general post was 92 per cent.; the unpaid-letters were 8 per cent.; and of the paid letters 51 per cent. were stamped. In November, 1840, the proportion of unpaid letters was as low as 6 per cent., the paid letters being 94

III.—Return of the Number of Letters which have passed through the London District Post (exclusive of all General Post Letters) for the periods following:—

1839.		1840.					1841.				
	Total.	Four weeks ending	Paid.	Un-paid.	Stamped.	Total.	Four weeks ending	Paid.	Un-aid.	Stamped.	otal.
Total Number of Letters for four weeks, ended 1 Jan., 1839 . .	970,953	4 Jan. .	825,282	477,273	..	1,302,555	2 Jan. .	810,052	140,328	619,166	1,569,546
.. four weeks, ended 29 Jan., 1839	1,067,358	1 Feb. .	1,207,985	831,589	..	1,539,574	30 Jan. .	926,264	157,242	752,134	1,835,640
.. two weeks, ended 12 Feb. ..	572,742	29 Feb. .	1,312,379	312,757	..	1,625,136	27 Feb. .	884,822	207,265	771,041	1,863,128
.. .. 4 May ..	577,273	28 Mar. .	1,308,100	214,863	..	1,522,963	27 Mar. .	833,849	142,766	789,543	1,766,158
.. .. 30 Nov. ..	510,693	25 April .	1,368,100	202,390	..	1,570,490	24 April .	821,807	138,618	777,210	1,737,635
		23 May .	1,198,613	197,922	285,079	1,681,614	22 May .	851,513	144,177	855,387	1,851,070
		20 June .	1,001,088	182,914	518,342	1,702,344	19 June .	906,152	140,299	837,724	1,884,275
		18 July .	990,157	175,927	565,145	1,661,229					
		15 Aug. .	814,873	159,153	536,197	1,510,223					
		12 Sep. .	752,423	152,441	458,658	1,363,523					
		10 Oct. .	790,919	151,106	501,069	1,443,094					
		7 Nov. .	830,235	150,499	577,598	1,558,262					
		5 Dec. .	812,559	148,632	596,997	1,557,918					
The above Returns are all that can be furnished for 1839, and these are partly taken from the Returns dated 13th March, 1840, and from some weekly accounts that were kept in May and November, 1839.											

per cent.: of which 47 per cent. were stamped. In the return for May, 1841, the proportion of unpaid letters had risen to 9 per cent., but this must not be understood as indicating the decline of the habit of paying in advance, for in the London district post (see Table No. III.) the proportion of unpaid letters has diminished pretty constantly and gradually. The explanation of the increase alluded to is to be found in the following circumstances:—"Owing to the reduced rates and more prompt conveyance, especially as regards North America and India, a large increase has taken place in the number of foreign and colonial letters inwards; on none of which is there any inducement to pay the postage in advance, and on great part of which such payment is impossible. If it be asked why this increase did not manifest itself earlier, the answer is, first, that in the earlier part of 1840 the increase was much more than counterbalanced by the rapid diminution in the number of unpaid inland letters; and, secondly, that the reduced rates on the inward foreign and colonial letters could not be in full operation until time had been allowed for a passage to and from the distant colonies and remote foreign countries."*

The rate of postage in the London district (which includes the limits of the old twopenny post) averaged 2½d. for each letter before the recent changes, previous to January, 1840; at present the postage of each letter averages about 1½d., and the gross revenue already equals that of the year 1835. The gross receipts in 1838 (the last complete year under the old rates) were (after deducting certain receipts for general-post letters) 118,000*l.*, and the gross revenue for 1840 (the first complete year under the new system) was 104,000*l.*, showing a deficiency of only 14,000*l.*, or 13 per cent. A reference to Table No. III. shows that in February, March, and April of 1841, compared with the same months in the previous year, the rate of increase was 14 per cent.; so that before June, 1842, there is every prospect of the complete restoration of the gross revenue of this department. The facilities of correspondence within the London district have been increased at a considerable cost since 1835, but the net revenue of 1840 is only 12,000*l.* less than in the former year.

Table No. IV., showing the gross and net revenue of the Post-office, and the cost of management, includes the last year in which the revenue was totally unaffected by the reduction of postage, namely, 1838. The fourpenny uniform rate came into operation on the 5th of December, 1839; and on the 10th of January, 1840, the penny rate was adopted. It will be perceived that in the first year's trial the gross revenue fell, in round numbers, from about 2,350,000*l.* to 1,350,000*l.* The deficit, amounting to 1,000,000*l.*, is 74 per cent. on the gross revenue for 1840; but at the rate of increase of letters at present going on, which is 21 per cent. per annum (comparing March, 1841, with March, 1840), the gross revenue will be restored to its former amount by the end of 1844. The net revenue (for in spite of the enormous reduction of postage there is a surplus after pay-

* Paper read by Mr. Rowland Hill at the Statistical Society.

ing every expense of the Post-office establishment) realised something under 500,000*l.* in 1840, having fallen from upwards of 1,600,000*l.*, the net produce for 1839; the loss to the state being nearly 1,200,000*l.*, or 75 per cent. Mr. Rowland Hill says:—"An opinion has indeed been expressed that the diminution is in effect yet greater; inasmuch as the government is paying for the transmission of its letters probably as much as 100,000*l.* per annum. As a set-off, however, against this, it is to be observed—first, that, under the old system, the government payments to the Post-office amounted to about 60,000*l.* per annum; and secondly, that, in the statement made above, the remaining 40,000*l.* is within a small sum allowed for; so that the real deduction is, as I have said, about 1,200,000*l.* out of 1,600,000*l.* or three-fourths."

IV.—Account showing the Gross and Net Post-Office Revenue, and the Cost of Management, for each of the Years ending 5th January, 1839, 1840, and 1841, distinguishing the Revenue of Great Britain from that of Ireland.

Year ending 5 Jan.	GREAT BRITAIN.			IRELAND.			UNITED KINGDOM.		
	Gross Revenue. <i>a</i>	Cost of Management. <i>c</i>	Net Revenue. <i>e</i>	Gross Revenue.	Cost of Management.	Net Revenue.	Gross Revenue.	Cost of Management.	Net Revenue.
1839	£ 1,116,798	£ 585,459	£ 531,339	£ 229,480	£ 101,310	£ 128,170	£ 3,346,478	£ 698,768	£ 2,647,710
1840	2,168,914	647,257	1,521,657	227,848	109,472	118,376	2,390,768 <i>g</i>	756,999	1,633,769
1841	1,245,447 <i>b</i>	{ 741,848 27,000 <i>d</i> 18,000 <i>e</i> }	466,598	124,156 <i>f</i>	118,227	7,329	1,369,604 <i>f</i>	{ 836,677 27,200 <i>d</i> 18,000 <i>e</i> }	465,977

a Namely, the gross receipts after deducting the Returns for "Refused Letters," &c. *b* This includes the receipts by the Stamp Office for postage stamps in Ireland as well as in Great Britain; the amount for Ireland was 15,029*l.* 5*s.* 5*d.* *c* Cost of Management. These sums include the charges other than those of management.

d Advance to Ireland. *e* Advance to the Money-order Office in London. *f* This sum includes 27,000*l.* received from England, and is included in charges other than management for Great Britain, but it does not include the proceeds of postage stamps sold by the Stamp Office in Ireland, which amount to 18,029*l.* 5*s.* 5*d.* *g* This includes one month of the Fourpenny rate.

The Cost of Management has increased from about 750,000*l.* in 1839 to about 850,000*l.* in 1840; and in 1839 was greater than in 1838 by 70,000*l.* The most important item in the increase is in the transit of the mails, the cost of which, for Great Britain alone, was greater in 1839 by about 34,000*l.* than in 1838; and has again advanced by about 33,000*l.* in 1840. The payment for railway conveyance has increased in that period from about 10,000*l.* to 51,000*l.*;* while the expense of conveyance by mail-coaches, instead of diminishing as the railway charge increased, actually increased with it. Mr. Rowland Hill says, "The explanation of this apparent anomaly is to be found partly in the establishment of the day-mails, but chiefly in the fact that the opening of the railways, by diminishing competition on parallel lines, has produced an augmentation in the charges for mail conveyance, amounting in some instances to even double the previous cost."

* The Post-office pays 32,000*l.* per annum to the London and Birmingham and Grand Junction Railways alone.

The increase in the transit postage paid to foreign countries (about 13,000*l.*) has nothing to do with Penny Postage, and the charge for conveying the letters of the office itself (about 10,000*l.*) is a mere matter of account, and no real increase of expense. Deducting, therefore, these two sums, together with the 33,000*l.* mentioned above, we have a remainder of 44,000*l.*, which is probably about the amount of increased expenditure fairly chargeable on Penny Postage. This increased expenditure is about 6 per cent. on the previous amount. Of the whole increase of 70,000*l.* in the expense of transmitting the mails, no appreciable part is referable to the reduced rate of postage; though of course, so far as the increase in the number of letters is concerned, the new day-mails, however few in number, must have their just credit assigned them. The increase of expenditure (with the exceptions alluded to) has clearly no further connexion with the subject of Penny Postage than as it tends to explain that diminution in the net revenue for which, at the first view, Penny Postage appears responsible. Mr. Rowland Hill further remarks:—"Another fact which partly explains the non-increase of the Post-office revenue is, that the number of letters which, from not being paid in advance, are subject to double postage, has been gradually diminishing ever since the period of the great reduction. In the outset the proportion of such letters was about 20 per cent.; the present proportion is probably about 5 per cent.; showing therefore a diminution of about 15 per cent. As this diminution would require, to counterbalance it, an increase of 15 per cent. in the number of letters (an increase, be it remarked, of at least 30 per cent. on the old number), it manifestly forms an important item in the account. It should also be remarked that while this change, in combination with the increased expenditure referred to above, fully accounts for the non-increase in the net revenue, at the same time, seeing that this source of diminution is nearly exhausted, it can produce no serious effect on the revenue of future years."

We may advert to the increase of business in the Money-order Office as an illustration of the soundness of the principle on which the success of the Penny Postage is founded. Three or four years ago, a commission of 5 per cent. was charged on the transmission of sums under 5*l.* 5*s.*, but it was necessary to enclose the order in another sheet, which rendered it liable to double postage. To send 10*s.* to an individual residing 160 miles from London could not have been accomplished at a less cost than 2*s.* 2*d.* Afterwards the order was given on a sheet of letter-paper, and only a single postage was necessary. Next the commission was reduced to a fixed charge of 1*s.* 6*d.* for sums exceeding 2*l.* and not exceeding 5*l.*, and to 6*d.* for all sums not exceeding 2*l.*; and in November, 1840, the charges for the same amounts were reduced from 1*s.* 6*d.* to 6*d.*, and from 6*d.* to 3*d.*; and any sum under 40*s.* may now be sent to the farthest corner of the United Kingdom for 4*d.* Notwithstanding these repeated

reductions, such has been the increase of Money-orders that the amount of commission since received is far greater than at any former period.

V.—Return of the Amount of Money-orders issued in London, and of the Pounds received thereon, in each of the three months ending the 5th day of February, 1839, 1840, and 1841; also a Return of the Amount of Money-orders paid in London in each of the same three months.

Months ending	Issued	Pounds	Paid
5th Feb. 1839	£2,623	£53 13 0	£3,343
” 1840	5,854	123 15 6	8,141
” 1841	26,524	215 13 9	59,422

IX.—STATISTICS OF CRIME IN ENGLAND AND WALES IN 1840.—(OFFICIAL STATEMENT).

THE Tables for 1840 have been prepared in the same form which has been adopted for the last seven years. During that period the number of persons charged has increased from 22,451 to 27,187; or, on comparison of the average of the three first years with the last, above 27 per cent. The actual numbers in each of these seven years, were:—

1834 . . .	22,451	1838 . . .	23,094
1835 . . .	20,731	1839 . . .	24,443
1836 . . .	20,984	1840 . . .	27,187
1837 . . .	23,612		

The increase in the last year, as compared with 1839, was 11·22 per cent., a large increase, especially when it is considered that it follows an increase of 5·8 per cent. in the preceding year. This increase extends to 29 English and 6 Welsh counties, and amounts to 3,103 persons; while the decrease, amounting to 359 persons only, is confined to 11 English counties, and 4 Welsh. Among the counties in which there has been an increase, all the manufacturing and mining counties are included, except 2; and 17 of the 23 counties which may be classed as agricultural. The counties in which there has been a decrease are the large metropolitan counties of Middlesex, Surrey, and Kent; the manufacturing and mining counties of Stafford and Durham; and the agricultural counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, Buckingham, and Dorset. The following has been the rate per cent. of increase or decrease in ten counties which have proportionally the largest agricultural and the largest manufacturing or mixed population.

Bedford . . .	34·3 inc.	Middlesex . . .	2·0 dec.
Hereford . . .	9·7 inc.	Lancaster . . .	17·3 inc.
Lincoln . . .	5·1 inc.	Surrey . . .	2·7 dec.
Cambridge . . .	0·5 inc.	Durham . . .	17·5 dec.
Buckingham . . .	2·0 dec.	York . . .	13·2 inc.
Essex . . .	20·6 inc.	Northumberland . . .	29·1 inc.
Suffolk . . .	8·1 dec.	Stafford . . .	0·7 dec.
Wilts . . .	7·3 inc.	Warwick . . .	22·3 inc.
Oxford . . .	14·3 inc.	Chester . . .	25·6 inc.
Northampton . . .	13·8 inc.	Gloucester . . .	10·5 inc.

C. 15 B A. 1842

Down to the spring of 1850 there were about 1000 miles of electric telegraph in the Austrian empire. During the summer another 1000 miles have been added; and it is expected that the year 1851 will increase the length to 3000 miles. The plan now adopted in that country is to place the wires underground. On Oct. 1, 1850, a telegraphic union was formed between Austria, Prussia, Saxony, and Bavaria, whereby extensive intercommunication is established, and the rates of charge greatly reduced. The high charge made in England is a great bar to the use of the Electric Telegraph. France is progressing less rapidly in this invaluable system than is befitting so important a country. The other countries of Europe have, as may be supposed, made but little progress in electro-telegraphy.

One of the most astonishing results of this system has lately occurred in America, where the telegraph may also be said to have run a race with Time, and beaten him. New Orleans is westward of New York, and the clocks are thus later in the former city than the latter, in proportion to the difference of longitude. When the 'Atlantic' made her first return voyage from Liverpool, a brief abstract of her news was telegraphed to New Orleans at a few minutes *after* noon (New York time): it reached its destination at a few minutes *before* noon (New Orleans time), and was published in the New Orleans papers on the evening of the very day when the ship arrived at New York: the evening papers of New York and New Orleans gave the same news at the same hour!

The *Railway Insurance* principle, which at first had an air of such strangeness to many persons, is gradually becoming understood. The Railway Insurance Company have an interest in meeting honourably all claims upon them arising out of railway accidents. In a recent report of the company, the particulars of thirty claims and awards are given, in which sums varying from 2*l.* to 210*l.* have been paid to the sufferers. The pain, the loss of time, the medical expenses, the permanent or temporary disablement, all are taken into account in determining the amount paid. The highest sum was paid in a case where permanent loss of the sight of an eye is apprehended. The insurance of railway travellers is in every respect as legitimate and sound in principle as the "underwriting" or insurance of a ship, or as life or fire insurance. If the company be commercially sound, the system will work well.

OCEAN STEAMERS—FOREIGN MAILS.

"In 1833," says a recent writer in the *Edinburgh Review* (Oct. 1850), "a select committee of the House of Commons was appointed to inquire into the means of promoting communication with India by steam. The evidence taken by it contains the views and suggestions of probably as able a body of witnesses as have ever been brought before those celebrated tribunals. Engineers, men of science, military and naval commanders, merchants, travellers, diplomatists, geographers, and antiquaries, all contributed to its instruction. It is true, seventeen years' experience has displaced many of the considerations relied on by the advocates of the line by the Euphrates in preference to that by Suez and the Red Sea. But if we can obtain a still more safe and expeditious communication, and at the same time equally regular, by the Euphrates, Suez in its turn must share the fate of Cape Town; and if again the mighty project of a continuous railway from Ostend to Calcutta should be actually carried out, Antioch and Aleppo would have to resign the stream of traffic to Constantinople. In the mean time the commercial interest will not cease employing the shortest and most profitable path; and there are certain undisputed facts in favour of the line of the Euphrates, which must always keep alive our interest in any additional information respecting it."

INDIA MAIL—EUPHRATES ROUTE.

In respect to actual mileage, the distance from England to India is much less by the Euphrates than by the Red Sea. Scanderoon is the Mediterranean port of departure for the Euphrates; Alexandria for the Red Sea; it is a few additional hours of steaming to the former; but the onward route more than counterbalances it. From Scanderoon to Bombay is 2,574 miles; from Alexandria to Bombay is 3,255 miles; the former has only 800 miles of sea voyage; whereas the latter has 1,725 miles. These were the two points of preference which led Captain Chesney to suggest the Euphrates route for the India mail, independently of the road-side traffic (so to speak) which might be picked up on the way. In 1831 he had descended 962 miles of the Euphrates in boats; and in the next following year he had visited the river 300 miles higher up. He proposed to the committee an exploring expedition on the Euphrates, by means of two small iron steamers and a corps of scientific assistants. His plan was, that the iron steamers should be sent out in pieces; that they should be landed either at Scanderoon or Antioch (at the extreme eastern end of the Mediterranean, southward of Asia Minor); that the pieces should be conveyed by land carriage a distance of 122 miles to Bir on the Euphrates; that they should be there put together; and that the whole expedition should steam down the Euphrates from Bir to its mouth at the Persian Gulf, a distance of about 1,200 miles. The Government assented; the expedition was made in 1835-6 and 7; but the volumes which describe the details have only lately been published—indeed only two out of the proposed four volumes have yet (Nov. 1850), ap-

peared; although shorter sketches of the results were published in 1838.

The two steamers prepared were of 50 and 20 horse power, respectively. When they reached Antioch, in April 1835, so many difficulties were imposed by the Turkish authorities and others, that several months passed before the pieces of the steamers could reach the Euphrates at Bir; and it was not till March 1836 that all was ready for the river voyage. As they proceeded, each day's labour comprised a careful series of soundings, bearings, and trigonometrical measurements, tending to give an exact knowledge of the river and its shores. After descending 509 miles, a hurricane suddenly foundered one of the steamers, the *Tigris*; many officers and men were drowned, and the expedition lost the boat best fitted of the two for the intricate navigation of the river. Captain Chesney proceeded, however, in the other boat, the *Euphrates*, and reached the Persian Gulf in safety on June 19. The steamer was then repaired at Bushire; and Captain Chesney proceeded to explore the river Tigris as far up as Bagdad, and the smaller channels which connect the Tigris with the Euphrates. On returning to Kornah, at the junction of these two great rivers, he took charge of the homeward India mail, and ardently hoped to bring it safely to England by the Euphrates route; but in this he was disappointed; his steamer was too large and heavy, her engines became useless, and he had the mortification of taking back the mail again to Bombay.

The expedition was broken up in January, 1837; about 30,000*l.* had been expended on it; and the possibility of descending the Euphrates in a steamer had been demonstrated; although the means of braving the difficulties of the route had yet to be devised. It had been ascertained, also, that good fuel was procurable on the banks, and that the natives were willing to cultivate a trade in any commodities which they had to sell. The point of the Euphrates which is soonest and most easily reached from Scanderoon or Antioch, whether at Bir or at Balis, is several hundred feet higher than the sea; and this will continue to be one of the gravest difficulties connected with the route. The country from Alexandria to Suez is almost a dead flat; and this has had much to do with the adoption of the Suez route. Balis is in 36° 1' N. lat., 38° 7' E. long.; 101 miles from the Mediterranean in a straight line, 118 miles via Aleppo and Scanderoon, and 123 miles via Aleppo and Antioch; the river course from Balis to Bussorah (near the Persian Gulf) is 1096 miles. The Euphrates at Balis is half a mile in width, with a minimum depth of seven feet in the middle at the low season. There are only two really formidable obstacles in the 1100 miles of the Euphrates' course from Balis downwards; viz. hidden rocks at Karabla, and shallows at Lam-lum. The former might be removed by blasting with gunpowder; the shallows would require either transshipment into very small boats, or the cutting of a canal 23 miles long.

The writer in the *Edinburgh Review* admits the possibility of the Euphrates route being made more expeditious than the Suez route;

and this opinion is pretty generally entertained; but the arrangements must be very gigantic to prepare for this result. If a railway were formed from the Mediterranean to Balis, the rocks cleared away at Karabla, and the shallows superseded by a canal at Lamlum, the distance from Southampton to Bombay might perhaps be traversed in 21 days (= Southampton to Antioch 12, Antioch to Bassorah 4, Bassorah to Bombay 5); and if the Trieste route were adopted between Southampton and Antioch, the time would be still shorter. But if the land transit be by horse or dromedary, if the Karabla rocks so remain that the steamers cannot travel by night, and if transshipment take place at Lamlum—the advantages are lost, and the Suez route becomes quicker and easier than the Euphrates route. The latter will, in this case, be important rather in a commercial than a postal sense; for it is the transmission of mails which is here under consideration.

INDIA MAIL—RED SEA ROUTE.

The same Committee of the House of Commons which recommended the Euphrates expedition, also recommended the establishment of a monthly mail to India, viâ Alexandria and the Red Sea. The government accordingly arranged for a mail steamer to begin to start in January, 1835. Mail packets had been accustomed to arrive at Malta from Falmouth, about the 20th of each month; and it was proposed that the new steamer should meet the packet at that island, and carry the mails on to Alexandria: the steamer would thus be employed in carrying mails to and fro between Malta and Alexandria. The government at the same time suggested that the East India Company should provide steam conveyance for the mails from Suez to Bombay; and sought the good offices of the Pacha of Egypt to facilitate the transit across the Isthmus of Suez. The East India Company shrank from the burthen of bearing the whole expense of the transit from Suez to Bombay, and suggested that the government should bear part of it. Two new steamers were built by the East India Company, of about 600 tons burthen each, to assist the *Hugh Lindsey* steamer in performing the service of the Suez-Bombay route. The Company still required the government to bear half the net cost of the system; but the government hung back from this arrangement.

A new system arose out of an offer made by a proposed company in 1836, afterwards the *Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company*. They offered to despatch monthly from England a steamer of competent size and power, to Cadiz, Gibraltar, Malta, and Alexandria, with the Peninsular, Mediterranean, and India mails; that they would also send a monthly mail from Suez to Bombay, in connexion with the former, and would make arrangements for the land transit over the Isthmus; that they would raise a capital of 250,000*l.* in building the requisite steamers; that they would bear the whole expenses of conveying mails, despatches, and passengers; that they would look for a return for their capital from three sources—passengers' money paid by the public, and fixed specified sums paid annually by the government

and by the East India Company; and that they would expect to have the monopoly of the Anglo-India mails placed in their hands, in return for the great risk incurred by them. Correspondence ensued during 1837 between the government and the East India Company, respecting this proposition; but the Company declined to place the Suez-Bombay route in the hands of a private company, and repeated the former offer, that the government and the East India Company should perform the service between them, and share the cost. The Post Office authorities were then consulted, and conferences held between all the official bodies interested. After much negotiation, a plan was adopted nearly on the basis of the East India Company's proposal; and thus the mail service was performed throughout 1838.

In 1839 the Admiralty proposed to expedite the mails by an overland route through France, on the following basis: that a mail should leave London on the 4th of every month, reach Calais on the 5th, and arrive at Marseilles on the 9th; that a steamer should start from Marseilles between the 9th and the 11th, making allowance for detention; that she should reach Malta on the 13th (if starting from Marseilles on the 9th), and Alexandria on the 19th; that a return mail should leave Bombay at such a time as to reach Alexandria about that date, and that the two mails should be there exchanged; that the return mail would leave Alexandria on the 23rd, and would reach England about the 9th of the following month. The Peninsular Company was at the same time pressing on the government the consideration of a plan of considerable magnitude. A capital of one million sterling was to be raised; steam ships of 2,000 tons burthen were to be built; the whole service was to be performed by that company; and Calcutta and Madras were to be brought within the range of operations. A steamer was to start from England on the fourth Saturday in every month, call at Gibraltar and Malta, and leave the mails at Alexandria; after crossing the Isthmus, the mails would be taken by other steamers belonging to the same company from Suez to Calcutta; the mails to Bombay would be taken by smaller branch steamers from Aden; and the Ceylon and Madras mails would be left at those places by the Calcutta steamers as they passed by. The company undertook to carry out fully these very comprehensive arrangements; and engaged to do it for a period of ten years, for a stipulated payment of 100,000*l.* a year from the government and the East India Company jointly. It was calculated by the company that the time from London to Bombay would be 35 days, to Ceylon 37 days, to Madras 40 days, to Calcutta 45 days.

The East India Company declined at that time to enter upon this plan; but in 1840 the Peninsular Company contracted with the government for the line from England to Alexandria; and this service was performed by powerful steamers, which ran the distance in an average period of 13 days. In 1841 the company made renewed offers to the East India Company in respect to the Calcutta route; and this was followed by an offer from the latter, that if the former would maintain a monthly steam communication be-

tween Suez, Bombay, and Calcutta, the East India Company would contribute 20,000*l.* per annum for five years towards the expenses; the vessels to be of 1,600 tons burthen, and about 500 horse power. This offer, with a few modifications, was accepted, and was acted upon till 1847: the steam ships *Hindustan* and *Bentinck* being soon afterwards placed upon the route. The first voyage under the new regulation was made in December, 1842. In 1844 the Steam Company proposed a new arrangement, which would have relieved the East India Company of the responsibility of maintaining the Suez and Bombay steamers (which they continued to do throughout these negotiations). According to this plan, the homeward India mail would arrive at Suez from Bombay in 15 days, Suez to Alexandria 3 days, Alexandria to Marseilles 6 days, Marseilles to London 4 days—or 28 days from Bombay to London. The *Oriental* and the *Great Liverpool* performed the distance from England to Alexandria; the *Hindustan*, the *Bentinck*, and the *Precursor*, were proposed for the Red Sea route; while the *Lady Mary Wood* and the *Pacha* were to be subsidiary steamers. The outward mail would leave on the 6th of the month, leave Marseilles on the 10th, arrive at Alexandria on the 17th, Suez on the 20th, and Bombay on the 6th of the following month. But the East India Company still refused to give up the Bombay and Suez route.

The provisional agreement with the East India Company with respect to the Calcutta route was for a mail every two months; but the Steam Company in 1844 proposed a new arrangement for a monthly mail. According to this plan the outward mail, reaching Suez on the 20th, would reach Calcutta on the 15th of the following month. Government about this time received favourably the proposals of the Steam Company to extend the mail line from Ceylon to Singapore and Hong Kong. After much complicated negotiation, in which the East India Company showed a disinclination to bear so large a portion of the expense as the government deemed desirable, a plan was at length agreed upon, and a contract signed. By this contract the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Ship Company undertook to maintain a monthly mail between England, Ceylon, Calcutta, Singapore, and Hong Kong; receiving 90,000*l.* per annum from government, and 70,000*l.* per annum from the East India Company. This agreement was signed towards the close of 1844, and was acted upon in the spring of 1845: the duration of the contract being for seven years.

The mail contracts in force with the Peninsular and Oriental Company in the beginning of 1849 were three. 1st, Southampton to Vigo, Oporto, Lisbon, Cadiz, and Gibraltar, three times a month; distance of the voyage 2,400 miles; annual payment 20,500*l.* 2nd, Southampton to Malta, Gibraltar, and Alexandria, twice a month; distance of the voyage 6,084 miles; annual payment 44,025*l.* 3rd, Suez to Aden, Ceylon, Madras, Calcutta, Penang, Singapore, and Hong Kong, once a month; distance of the voyage 15,590 miles; annual payment 160,000*l.* The Southampton and Alexandria contract expired in January, 1849; where-

upon a new tender was sent in by the company, and another tender by a newly formed company, the *India and Australia Mail Company*. The government eventually made a new contract with the old company, on lower terms than before.

It may be interesting to note the duration of the voyages of this company, under ordinary circumstances:—

	Days.		Days.
Southampton to Vigo	3	Southampton to Aden	27
Oporto	4	Bombay	35
Lisbon	6	Ceylon	41
Cadiz	7	Madras	45
Gibraltar	8	Penang	46
Malta	11	Calcutta	48
Constantinople	16	Singapore	49
Alexandria	16	Hong Kong	55
Suez	19		

Besides the steamers on the main or Alexandrian route, this company also keeps up a monthly communication with Constantinople, Samsoun, Sinope, and Trebizond, on what may be termed the Black Sea route.

The steamers on the register in January 1849, belonging to the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, were the following. Although London is the place of registry, Southampton is the port of departure from England:—

Names.	Years built.	Length.	Tonnage.
Iberia	1841	155 feet	516
Cairo	"	99 "	71
Lady Mary Wood	1842	161 "	554
Hindustan	"	218 "	2,018
Liverpool	"	137 "	400
Tagus	"	182 "	782
Bentinck	1843	217 "	1,974
Precursor	1844	230 "	1,817
Braganza	"	188 "	856
Achilles	1845	206 "	992
Madrid (iron)	"	163 "	479
India	"	183 "	870
Montrose	1846	166 "	559
Erin (iron)	"	199 "	798
Pottinger (iron)	"	205 "	1,401
Haddington	"	217 "	1,648
Pekin (iron)	1847	214 "	1,182
Indus (iron)	"	208 "	1,386
Pacha (iron)	"	160 "	592
Sultan (iron)	"	224 "	1,091
Euxine	"	225 "	1,165
Jupiter	1848	158 "	600
Ripon (iron)	"	231 "	1,426
Oriental	"	220 "	1,787
Malta (iron)	"	206 "	1,218
Canton (iron)	"	173 "	348

These steamers have been employed, and most of them are still employed, in maintaining the mail service between England and Gibraltar, Gibraltar and Malta, Marseilles and Malta, Malta and

Alexandria, Malta and Constantinople, Suez and Ceylon, Ceylon and Calcutta, Ceylon and China. The large steamers of this company are from 400 to 520 horse power; they cost from 50,000*l.* to 90,000*l.* each. The *Bombay*, the *Ganges*, and one or two other steamers, have been added to the list since the date above given.

The passage to Bombay, on account of the resistance of the East India Company to all other plans, is thus performed: the Peninsular Company's steamers start from Southampton on the 29th of each month to Malta, whence her Majesty's packets take the mail to Alexandria, and the East India Company take it onward from Suez to Bombay.

AUSTRALIAN MAIL—RIVAL ROUTES.

In proportion as the Australian colonies have risen in importance, so has the wish extended to establish steam communication with the mother country, for mails and wealthy passengers, if not for goods and emigrants. How best to establish such a system, became a question of some difficulty. In order the better to solve it, the Admiralty, towards the close of 1849, advertised for tenders for the despatch of a monthly steam mail between Singapore and Sydney, in connexion with the India mail between Southampton and Singapore. The Peninsular and Oriental Company sent in a tender, in which they undertook to perform the distance in 27½ days outwards and 31 days homewards, by the western or Swan River route. Proposals were also received from the General Screw Steam Shipping Company (Cape of Good Hope route), and from the Pacific Steam Navigation Company (Panama route). The Screw Ship Company offered to stop with mails at St. Helena and Cape de Verde Islands, if required. There were also proposals from Messrs. Beamish, for the Singapore route by way of Torres Strait.

If the comprehensive plan of the Peninsular Company had been accepted, there would have been fortnightly mails from London to Bombay, Ceylon, Madras, Calcutta, Singapore, and Hong Kong; monthly mails from Calcutta to Singapore and Sydney; and monthly mails from England and Ceylon to Sydney. But the East India Company have, throughout the correspondence of 1850, refused acquiescence in this plan. Their alleged reasons are two; first, that as they must keep up a navy in India, they would prefer to use their own steamers and officers, as they have hitherto done, in conducting the mails from Bombay to Suez; and secondly, that the proposal of the Peninsular Company would have given them a complete monopoly of the Indian seas, which is not deemed advisable. As this plan has been rejected, two years at least must elapse before any arrangement to this end can be made in conjunction with the East India Company; and unless some independent course is followed, Australia and New Zealand will remain without steam mail communication for that period. Hereupon has arisen a large amount of newspaper controversy, concerning the most available route. The bearings of the question must be here briefly touched upon, without involving any partizanship in the various conflicting schemes.

There are four available modes of reaching Sydney and New Zealand by steam. 1st, round the Cape of Good Hope; 2nd, by the Red Sea and North Australia; 3rd, by the Red Sea and South Australia; 4th, by Panama and the Sandwich Islands.

The route to our Australian colonies via the *Cape of Good Hope* would involve the following distances and times, nearly:—

	Miles.	Days.
Southampton to the Cape	6,700	.. 30
Cape to Adelaide . . .	6,100	.. 28
Adelaide to Sydney . . .	1,080	.. 5
Sydney to New Zealand	1,200	.. 6
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	15,080	69

The Screw Ship Company (noticed above) offer to perform the distance from Southampton to the Cape at the rate of 223 miles per day; and from the Cape to Adelaide at 217 miles per day; but it is doubted in many quarters whether the latter could be performed, without an intervening coaling-station; and the objectors urge that the time is more likely to be 80 days than 69. One advantage which this route possesses over that by the Red Sea is, that merchandize as well as mails and passengers could be conveyed the whole way, without transshipment. A contract has already been made by the government with this company, for the establishment of a monthly mail to the Cape only, by screw steamers; and this contract will afford valuable experience in respect to the capabilities of screw steamers for ocean service. A difference of opinion has, however, arisen, concerning the prudence of establishing these Cape steamers. The mail packets to Brazil, it has been urged, call at Cape Verde Islands, nearly half-way to the Cape of Good Hope; if a branch mail were established from these islands to the Cape, it might also accommodate Sierra Leone and the western colonies of Africa. The inhabitants of Cape Colony and Natal naturally advocate the Cape route to Australia, as it would give them a monthly steam communication both to the east and the north. These screw steamers will leave England about the middle of each month: the first voyage is intended, we believe, to be made in the middle of December in the present year (1850).

The *Suez* and *Singapore* route to Australia is made up of the following distances (some of the distances are differently estimated by different authorities):—

	Miles.
Southampton to Gibraltar	1,150
Gibraltar to Malta	1,030
Malta to Alexandria	860
Alexandria to Aden	1,600
Aden to Ceylon	2,150
Ceylon to Penang	1,200
Penang to Singapore	500
Singapore to Batavia	600
Batavia to Torres Straits	2,400
Torres Straits to Sydney	1,800
Sydney to New Zealand	1,200
	<hr/>
	14,490

The Peninsular and Oriental steamers now perform the distance from Southampton to Singapore (including the overland course at Suez) in 48 or 50 days; and it is supposed that about 30 days would be necessary from Singapore to New Zealand, allowing for several stoppages: thus making about 80 days from Southampton to New Zealand. The main feature relied upon in the advocacy of this plan, is that it would render available the whole of the existing arrangements in respect to the India mail. The steamers from Southampton to Alexandria, the transit through Egypt, and the steamers from Suez to Singapore, would all be used for the new route as well as the old. Another point is, that England, the whole of India, China, and the Australian colonies, would be placed in mutual connexion, so that each place could receive mail steamers from all the others once a month; and commercial relations would spring up which do not now exist. So great are these advantages, that it is doubtful whether England and her colonies would consent to abandon the hopes of realising them, even though another mail route were established. The Panama route may be *geographically* the best; but the Singapore route seems as if it might claim the title of being *colonially* the most advantageous: which has the balance of advantages, under all modes of view, is a question yet to be decided. A committee appointed by the legislative council of New South Wales in 1846 to investigate this subject, reported in favour of the Singapore route, stating:—"That the least expensive, the most expeditious, and the most convenient and advantageous plan would be to join the China line at Singapore by the inner route through Torres Strait, calling at the projected settlements of North Australia, or Port Essington, and by the usual route thence to Singapore." Two circumstances have here, however, to be borne in mind; viz. that the North Australian settlement has been tried and abandoned; and that the wonderful commercial activity of the Panama regions, in relation to Oregon and California, had not yet commenced.

Allusion is made above to the "inner route" from Singapore to Sydney. There is also another route which has its advocates. By the inner route, or Torres Strait, a ship from Singapore would visit North Australia first, then New South Wales, and would leave the rest of the Australian continent to be accommodated by some other means. But by the southern route, a ship from Singapore would touch Australia first on the western side, then south, and afterwards south-east; by which the colonies of Western Australia, South Australia, Port Philip, Van Diemen's Land, and New South Wales, might all be visited in succession, and a monthly mail communication kept up between the respective colonies, as well as between England and the colonies collectively. It is also said that the route is less dangerous than that by Torres Strait. This route would certainly lengthen the period of the voyage from Singapore to Sydney and New Zealand; but it is not without certain advantages in other respects.

The *Panama* route to Australia has been brought into notice since the impetus given to American commerce by the discoveries

in California. We shall have to speak presently of Pacific steaming generally; we here notice it simply in connexion with the Australian plan.

The calculated distances by the Panama route are as follow:—

Southampton to St. Thomas (West Indies) ..	3620 miles.
St. Thomas to Panama	1100 "
Panama to Tahiti	4490 "
Tahiti to New Zealand	2280 "
New Zealand to Sydney	1200 "
	12690

By this route New Zealand is less distant than Sydney; but by the Singapore route Sydney is less distant than New Zealand. The difference in favour of the Panama route is 600 miles in respect to Sydney, and about 3000 miles in respect to New Zealand. The West India Mail steamers, under the new contract, make the voyage from Southampton to Chagres (in the Isthmus of Panama) in about 19 days; and it has been calculated that about 45 days would be required from thence to Sydney—making a total time of about 64 days: 16 or 18 days less than by the Singapore route, and from a week to a fortnight shorter than the Cape route. The Panama route would establish a communication between England and the South Sea Islands, with Tahiti as an admirable port of call. It would also connect the Australian Colonies with California and the whole western coast of America. Unless the Singapore route can be rendered much cheaper than it has yet been, it will be too costly for general commercial passengers to Australia; whereas the Panama route is placed in the heart of such an enterprising scene of competition, that cheap fares may reasonably be expected, independent of the effect of the shorter distance. The same reasoning would apply in respect to the freight of merchandize. The chief disadvantage of the Panama route, in comparison with the Singapore route is, that the latter is already supplied to a distance of 8,490 miles; whereas the former is, as yet, supplied to a distance of only 4,720 miles—the Pacific line of steamers being yet to be supplied. There is also the transit of the Isthmus of Panama (presently to be noticed) to be taken into account.

NORTH AMERICAN MAIL.

A Committee of merchants and others was formed at Bristol in 1835, for the purpose of getting up a Steam Ship Company, for a mail line to New York; and Captain Claxton was desired to report on the practicability of such an enterprise. He had visited all the principal ports, and made frequent voyages across the Atlantic. He advised that the vessels for such a line should not be less than 1,200 tons. He found that the fine American 'liners' have an average homeward passage of 24 days, and an average outward passage of 36 days; and he anticipated

that such steamers as he recommended might make the journey in 13 days and 20 days, respectively. The Company was formed; the *Great Western* steam ship was built; and the year 1838 witnessed the first transit of a steamer across the Atlantic. In the meantime an Irish company, the St. George's Steam Packet Company, embarked in the same enterprise; and the *Sirius* left Cork in the same month as the *Great Western* left Bristol, both bound for New York, and both reaching the place of destination in safety. Never was a boldly conceived plan more successfully carried out against the predictions of many scientific men. The *Sirius* left Cork on April 4, and arrived at New York April 23, equal to 161 miles per day; on her return voyage she averaged 167 miles per day. The *Great Western* left Bristol April 8, and arrived at New York April 23; her average speed was 208 miles per day, while the average speed homeward was 213 miles. In eighty-four passages, made between 1838 and 1844, the *Great Western* ran the outward route in an average time of $15\frac{1}{2}$ days, and the homeward route in an average time of $18\frac{1}{4}$ days.

The Great Western Steam Ship Company received a small postage for all letters conveyed by the *Great Western*; but as this sum was inadequate, they memorialised the government, in September, 1838, to consent to a new arrangement. In November of the same year, the government advertised for tenders for the conveyance of the mails from England to Halifax: the steamers to be ready in six months, and the contract to be for one year. The Company, in making a tender, stated that three large steamers would be necessary for this service; that they would have to be built for the purpose (two new ones as companions to the *Great Western*); that they would require 18 to 24 months for building; and that the contract ought to be for 7 years, for which a sum was named. The government declined this offer. From this time the Company remained, as they have ever since been, a most luckless one, in a commercial point of view. They have failed to secure any government contract; and their private running of steam boats has not been remunerative. The *Great Britain* was built with a view to increase the net profits, by carrying larger cargoes of goods and passengers; but she ran upon the sands at Dundrum Bay; and although released a year afterwards, has never since earned a shilling for her proprietors. The *President* and the *British Queen* belonged to another Company; the former was lost, and the latter was sold to the Belgian government. The *Sirius*, too, was taken off the Atlantic route. After the proprietors of the *Great Western* had been running that vessel for four years, they memorialised the government for some contract or other, some remuneration for the services which they had been the first to render to transatlantic communication; but competition had done its work; another contractor had been agreed with; and the government had nothing to give, or would give nothing, to the *Great Western* and its owners. The *Great Western*, however,

continued to run to New York: the contract with other parties extending (in the first instance) only as far as Halifax.

We must now speak of this competitor. Mr. Cunard came to England from America with the view of improving the communication between the two countries; and a tender which he made was accepted by the government. The contract was for three steamers, which should maintain a monthly communication in each direction between Liverpool and Halifax, starting on fixed days from each end. The contract sum was 55,000*l.* per annum; but it was soon found that four ships were necessary; and the terms were then increased to 60,000*l.* The tonnage was fixed at 1,200 tons. The contract was signed in May, 1839; the first Cunard steamer ran in July, 1840; and the contract was for 7 years. A further change was afterwards made, on account of again increasing the number and tonnage of the steamers, and making fortnightly voyages instead of monthly. The three first built steamers were smaller than those afterwards constructed; they were the *Britannia*, the *Acadia*, and the *Caledonia*. The custom has been for the vessels of this Company to carry coals enough for 20 days' consumption, to make allowance for detention; and the vessels have thus never run short of coals. Mr. Cunard for some time held the whole property in this contract in his own hands; but he subsequently sold three-fourths to other parties at Glasgow, retaining the chief management himself. Mr. Robert Napier, of Glasgow, supplied the whole of the engines for this fine fleet of steamers.

When the contract with the Cunard line was about approaching its termination, the American government offered inducements for the establishment of a new line of steamers from New York to Liverpool. This would have seriously damaged the Cunard Company, whose American ports were Halifax and Boston; and Mr. Cunard came to England expressly to urge upon the English government the necessity of extending the operations, both as to the frequency and the length of the voyage. A clause had been introduced into the former contract, making provision for some such contingency as this; and the government, on the pressing representations of Mr. Cunard, consented to enter upon new arrangements. The *Great Western*, meantime, had regularly carried on the steam traffic between England and New York; but this new contract startled her proprietors. It was in the autumn of 1845 that the negotiations were going on; and in the spring of next year the new contract was completed, by virtue of which the Cunard Company undertake to despatch a mail steamer once a fortnight from Liverpool to Halifax and Boston, and another mail steamer once a fortnight from Liverpool to New York: the price being 145,000*l.* per annum, and the contract to remain in force till 1858. The American Company, with whom an agreement was entered into by the United States government, planned a line from Bremen to New York, calling at Cowes to accommodate English traffic; but this was soon found to be an inefficient mode as far as England is concerned.

The steam vessels belonging to the British and North American Royal Mail Steam Packet Company (Cunard's), on January 1, 1849, were the following:—

Names.	Year built.	Length.	Tonnage.
Britannia	1840	204 feet. . . .	1155 tons.
Acadia	"	203 "	1136 "
Caledonia	"	203 "	1139 "
Margaret	1842	185 "	600 "
Hibernia	1843	218 feet. . . .	1422 tons.
Cambria	1847	218 "	1423 "
America	1848	249 "	1826 "
Niagara	"	249 "	1825 "
Europa	"	249 "	1834 "
Satellite	"	108 "	157 "
Canada	"	249 "	1832 "

Two of the above were subsidiary: the other nine were ocean steamers. One or two have since passed into other hands, (the *Hibernia* has been purchased by the Spanish Government, to run between Cadiz and Cuba); and new ones, of which the *Asia* and the *Africa* are fine specimens, have been placed upon the route.

The Cunard Company have been recently making redoubled efforts, on account of the energetic proceedings of the Americans. The present competition between the Cunard and the Collins steamers, the British and the American build, is highly interesting and important. Much newspaper controversy has been going on respecting the September voyages (in the present year) of the *Asia* and the *Pacific*: the former belonging to the English and the latter to the American Companies. The *Asia's* outward voyage from Liverpool to New York was made in $10\frac{1}{2}$ days; and the homeward voyage in $10\frac{1}{4}$ days. The *Pacific* made the voyage from Liverpool to New York in about $10\frac{1}{4}$ days. After making allowance for direction of currents, detention of the *Asia* at Halifax, &c., the Americans claim the victory, in having made the quickest voyage ever known from Liverpool to the United States; but it is admitted to have been nearly a "neck and neck affair." The first experiment made by the Americans in Atlantic steaming was in 1849, on the Bremen route; and the *Atlantic*, the first of the Collins line, made its first voyage to England in July 1850; so that the United States ship-builders are naturally gratified with the success of their labours; while the Cunard party feel as though there had been a little loss of national honour on the part of England.

The United States government, desirous to encourage the formation of a steam navy, have entered into contracts for the building of four lines of mail steamers, so constructed that by a little modification they could be employed as war-steamers. One of these lines is from New York to Liverpool, and is to be served by five splendid ocean steamers. Four of these are now upon the station, and will start from either end of the route once a fortnight. They

are named the *Atlantic*, the *Pacific*, the *Arctic*, and the *Baltic*; and the fifth will be the *Adriatic*. These noble vessels will inevitably take some of the commercial profit from the Cunard company, and some of the postage revenue from the British government. The United States steamers are all nearly alike in size and power. The tonnage is upwards of 3,000 tons. There are two cylinders of 8 feet diameter and 9 feet stroke. The paddle-wheels are 34 feet diameter by 12 feet deep. The breadth of beam, 45 feet; depth of hold, 32 feet. There are four boilers, each about 22 feet long, 14 wide, and 13 high; and these are so fitted with vertical tubes, that there are no fewer than 5,032 tubes in the whole of the boilers. The interior of the vessels is arranged more in the American than the English style. The dining saloon is before the engine-room, while the main saloon and the ladies' saloon are abaft; and all three are fitted up in a most sumptuous style. The *Pacific* is said to have cost 115,000*l.*; and the others are probably not less costly. Mr. Collins originated the company, and planned the general build and arrangements of the steamers; Mr. Farrar superintended the construction of the machinery; Mr. Jacob Bell built the vessel; the Allaire Company built the engines, from the designs of Mr. Copeland; and Mr. Pratt designed the interior fittings. All these parties are, we believe, resident in the United States; so that these magnificent vessels may consistently be viewed as exemplifications of what the energetic republic can effect.

Taking into view the operations of the two companies, therefore we find that there are noble steamers leaving Liverpool for New York every week, and for Halifax and Boston every alternate week.

It has been stated that the Cunard steamers have machinery of so ponderous a character as to weigh 1,000 tons per vessel, including engines, paddle-wheels, boilers, water in the boilers, and coal-boxes: this, for 800 horse power, gives $1\frac{1}{4}$ tons weight of machinery for each horse power. The United States steamers are not so heavy in this respect. Some engineers are of opinion that $0\frac{3}{4}$ ton weight of machinery per horse power would possess all the requisite strength; but about 1 ton is the usual average in this country.

CANADIAN MAIL.

Of the Canadian mail, it is unfortunate that nothing yet can be said worthy of the enterprise of the country; nothing at all analogous to the United States mail. It is a subject which will ere long demand attention. It may be desirable to explain how the shipping arrangements between England and that colony have been hitherto conducted; for although these arrangements do not involve the postal system, they are likely to be influenced by many circumstances which will also affect the latter.

Before the repeal of the navigation laws, though foreign vessels could trade up the St. Lawrence, they were prohibited from bringing the produce of Canada to this country; they might take car-

goes or emigrants thither, but had to return in ballast. Hence few foreign ships thought the Canadian trade worth attending to. British ships alone could bring cargoes from Canada; but as the merchandise sent from England to Canada is much less bulky and weighty than the timber, &c., brought from Canada to England, more than three-fourths of the ships went out in ballast. The consequences of these regulations were, that foreign vessels could scarcely be employed at all in the trade; and that British vessels had to charge a high freightage, on account of having very little cargo outwards. The Canadian trade consequently took another route; cargoes and emigrants went out by way of New York, because the ships could readily obtain return freights from thence; and the United States agriculturists sold their corn to the exclusion of the Canadians, on account of the high freightage which the latter had to pay. The emigrants and cargoes shipped to Canada *viâ* New York, were conveyed inland by the Hudson and Erie routes; and the noble St. Lawrence was left comparatively deserted.

But the repeal of the navigation laws has altered this unnatural state of things. Ships, whether British or foreign, will now select the St. Lawrence or the New York routes, according to their relative fitness, without being hampered by such absurd restrictions. Around the great Canadian lakes there is rapidly growing up one of the largest and most intelligent agricultural communities anywhere to be met with; and these States will communicate with Europe and Eastern America, either by the Welland Canal and the St. Lawrence, or by the Erie Canal and New York. It behoves the British legislature to do all that enlightened measures can effect, to keep a legitimate share of this stream of traffic upon the St. Lawrence route. Steam vessels have run, and do now run, the whole distance from Chicago (at the head of Lake Ontario) to Quebec, a distance of 1,600 miles, in 10 days, by way of the Lakes and the St. Lawrence. The water distance from Chicago to New York is also 1,600 miles; but of this there are 364 miles of canal, against only 70 miles of canal in the St. Lawrence route; the time employed is 18 days, and there is transshipment of the goods both at Buffalo and at Albany. The voyage from Quebec to England is longer and more exposed to ice in winter, than that from New York to England; hence it has to be determined on which side the balance of advantages lies.

There is now in course of construction a railway from Montreal to Portland in the State of Maine, which will by and bye form another outlet for Canadian traffic. The British government, also, have been endeavouring to ascertain whether a railway might be constructed from Halifax to Quebec by way of St. John's, thereby accommodating the three colonies of Nova Scotia, Canada, and New Brunswick. Commissioners were appointed to examine the country thoroughly; but their report, published in 1849, was quite sufficient to stagger the government. The commissioners examined five routes, the distances of which were as follow :

	Miles.
From Halifax by way of Torcadi River . . .	595
" " Bay of Fundy . . .	600
" " Miramichi . . .	635
" " Bay Verte . . .	652
" " Pictou . . .	695

They named the route of 635 miles as being the least objectionable, and as passing 124 miles through Nova Scotia, 234 miles through New Brunswick, and 277 miles through Canada; but the estimated cost amounts to the startling sum of 5,000,000*l.*!

Canada has hitherto had but little to say on the question of ocean mail steamers; but when her population and industry have had a fair field for development, by liberal commercial arrangements, we shall possibly see the St. Lawrence laden far more than at present with the produce of the west; while the Montreal and Maine railway will probably be a medium for postal communication.

WEST INDIA MAIL.

Until 1841, the mail arrangements with the West Indies were exceedingly defective. Sailing mail packets went twice a month from England to the West Indies, and once a month to Mexico; but there was no packet communication between Mexico and the West Indies, and very inefficient communication between the West Indies and America generally. Under these circumstances the government made a contract with the *West India Mail Company*, to establish a fortnightly mail to the West Indies in steamers of 400 horse power; the route being so planned as to accommodate the whole of the islands, as well as the adjacent American territories. The contract was made for 10 years, from 1842 to 1851 inclusive; for a payment of 240,000*l.* per annum.

The main voyage contracted for was a circuit, starting from Southampton, calling at Corunna, Madeira, Barbadoes, St. Vincent's, Grenada, Santa Cruz, St. Thomas, Turk's Island, Nassau, Bermuda, and Fayal, and returning to Southampton, a total distance of 9,208 miles. A second route, taking the mails from Barbadoes, went by way of Tobago, Demerara, Berbice, Surinam, Paramaribo, and back by the same route to Barbadoes, a distance of 1,300 miles. A third route, taking the mails from Grenada, went by way of Trinidad, Laguayra, Puerta Cabello, Curaçoa, Mayaquess, St. Juan, St. Thomas, Santa Cruz, Curaçoa, and back to Grenada, a distance of 2,185 miles. A fourth route, taking the mails from Barbadoes, went by way of St. Lucia, Martinique, Dominica, Guadaloupe, Antigua, Montserrat, Nevis, St. Kitt's, Tortola, St. Thomas, St. Juan, Turk's Island, and back to Barbadoes nearly by the same course, a distance of 2,066 miles. A fifth route, taking the mails from Turk's Island, went by way of Cape Nicholas, St. Jago, Kingston (Jamaica), Carthagena, Chagres, River St. Juan de Nicaragua, and back to Turk's Island, a distance of 2,520 miles. A sixth route, taking the mails (by sailing

schooners) from Curaçoa, went by way of Bahia Honda, Maracaibo, Santa Martha, Carthagena, and returned to Curaçoa, a distance of 1,075. A seventh route, taking the mails from Turk's Island, went by way of Havannah, Belize, and Nassau, returning to Turk's Island, a distance of 2,420 miles. An eighth route, taking the mails from Havannah, went by way of Vera Cruz, Tampico, New Orleans, and back to Havannah, a distance of 2,355 miles. A ninth route, taking the mails from Havannah, went by way of Nassau, Savannah, Charleston, New York, and back by the same route to Havannah, a distance of 4,050 miles.

This system is equally comprehensive and remarkable. It comprises a total distance of 27,179 miles; it arranges for stoppages at nearly sixty islands and ports; and it affords means for all these islands and ports to correspond with each other, with the mother country, and with the United States. A glance at the scheme will soon explain how the system is managed; when the *through* steamer stops at the principal stations, branch steamers are ready to take on the mails to islands which lie out of the main route; so that a large fleet of steamers is required for this service. The steamers belonging to the West India Mail Company on Jan. 1, 1849, were the following:—

Names.	Year built.	Length.	Tonnage.
Thames	1841	212 feet	1,676 tons.
Medway	1842	212 "	1,666 "
Trent	"	212 "	1,666 "
Princess Victoria	1844	71 "	69 "
Tay	"	214 "	1,858 "
Teviot	"	214 "	1,793 "
Reindeer	1845	155 "	554 "
Severn	"	215 "	1,886 "
Eagle	1846	164 "	501 "
Dee	"	214 "	1,848 "
Avon	1847	216 "	1,881 "
Conway	"	186 "	929 "
Clyde	"	213 "	1,841 "
Forth	1848	210 "	1,312 "

We believe also that the *Great Western* has passed into the hands of this Company. Besides the above, the Company have recently entered into contracts for the supply of five noble steamers, for the service of the West India line; of upwards of 3,000 tons burthen, 270 feet long, 39 feet beam, and drawing nearly 20 feet water when fully laden; the engines will be 750 horse power. The entire route which each of these vessels will follow under the new system, out and home, will be about 10,500 miles. This arises from the circumstance that the old contract with the government has been somewhat modified, in order to place Chagres (Isthmus of Panama) in quicker communication with England. A new contract has been entered into in 1850, to last till 1862: the terms are to be the same as before (240,000*l.* per annum), but the mode of conducting the arrangements is, in some respects, to be more efficient.

The Island of Bermuda is so isolated from all others and from the mainland of either continent, that the government have been obliged to make a separate contract for the conveyance of the mails to and from it. Mr. Cunard has for 30 years had a contract for a mail from Halifax to Bermuda; the distance was performed by sailing packets till 1848, when the contractor substituted steam packets, without any additional charge (4,460*l.* per annum). Mails are despatched twice a month from Halifax (on the arrival of the mails from England) to Bermuda, in steam vessels of 80 horse power; the duration of the voyage being about four days.

PANAMA AND PACIFIC MAILS.

England, the United States, and the South American republics, are all taking measures for establishing mail steamers in the Pacific, or encouraging them if established by others. The United States government contracted in 1849 for building three steamers of 800 tons burthen, to run from Panama to California and Oregon. The route from Panama southward is accommodated by other parties. A Pacific mail contract was entered into by the British government in 1845, to commence in 1846 and terminate in 1852. The service contracted for, is to carry the mails from Panama to Callao, and from Callao to Valparaiso. The service is performed monthly, for a sum of 20,000*l.* per annum. The distances are—Panama to Callao 1,410 miles, Callao to Valparaiso 2,280 miles = 3,690 miles. Many years previously the subject had been under consideration; and Mr. Wheelwright obtained privileges for 10 years, from the local governments, for a steam company to accommodate the west-coast of South America.

In 1847, when the discovery of the riches of California began to excite so much attention in America, and when the settlement of the Chinese disputes had led to the opening of many Chinese ports both to the British and the Americans, the United States government and legislature entered earnestly into the investigation of the best mode of traversing the Pacific by steam-power, to connect Panama both with California and Oregon, and also with India and China. Towards the close of that year, Lieutenant Maury, Superintendent of the National Observatory at Washington, pointed out that the route from Panama to Oregon is very nearly in the *Great Circle* route from Panama to China; so that, if steamers could navigate the Pacific from Panama to China, they might take Oregon and California in their way. This discovery (which results from a careful examination of a terrestrial globe, a map being ill-fitted to show it*) placed the steam navigation of the Pacific in

* Among the maps of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge are six maps of the World on the *Gnomonic* projection. They have a singular appearance to persons accustomed only to ordinary maps; but they have the advantage of showing *Great Circle* routes in every direction. This arises from the circumstance, that in every map on the *gnomonic* projection every portion of a great circle is represented as a *straight line*.

an entirely new point of view; which was fully illustrated by Lieutenant Maury, in a letter copied into some of the English journals in 1848.

The *Great Circle* route, in sailing across an ocean or sea, is the *shortest* distance between the port of departure and the place of destination. Under ordinary circumstances it can rarely be adopted, on account of the complexity of the calculations requisite for determining the direction of sailing at different parts of the route; commanders of vessels being in the habit of following a route longer in distance but more easily calculated on ship-board. Within a recent period, however, Mr. Towson, of Devonport, has published convenient tables, which will enable the *Great Circle* route to be followed almost as easily as the common route. So far as regards calculations, therefore, Maury's suggestion does not encounter many difficulties; and we may conclude that, other things being equal, a *Great Circle* route *can* be followed (nearly) from Panama to China.

From Panama to Shanghai in China the distance by the route usually followed, past the Sandwich Islands, is 9,500 miles; but by the *Great Circle* it is 8,200 miles; and it happens, as just remarked, that this *Great Circle* passes very near the coast of Oregon and California. It crosses the North Pacific, and skirts the Japan Islands on its way to China. Nay, more; the same line, if continued southward along the American coast, would nearly touch the shores of Peru and Chili; so that they too might be brought within the same vast commercial system. Mr. Wheelwright's line of steamers filling up the distance from Valparaiso to Callao, Guayaquil, and Panama; and Messrs. Aspinall's steamers accommodating the route from Panama to California and Oregon; Lieutenant Maury suggested that much had been thus done towards the perfection of his *Great Circle* route. From California to Japan by this route is only 3,700 miles. Between Panama and the Sandwich Islands on the old route, 4,500 miles, there is no intermediate place as a *dépôt* for coals; but about half way between California and China, on the *Great Circle* route, are the Fox or Aleutian Islands, which might possibly be available as a coaling station. Maury estimates that the distance from California to Shanghai might be steamed in 26 days.

Intimately connected with this *Great Circle* route across the Pacific is the American railway from the east to the west coasts. Many conflicting opinions have been offered as to the best route which this line of rail could follow. One such route is proposed to start from St. Louis, the great commercial metropolis of the Upper Mississippi, and to follow pretty nearly the parallel of 38° or 39° N. lat., by the valley of the Kansas to that of the Upper Arkansas. It would then enter the valley of Rio del Norte, and cross the Rocky Mountains by a pass at the head of that river. Then deflecting a little to the north, it would touch the Mormon settlement, and proceed onward to St. Francisco in California.

The distance from St. Louis to St. Francisco by this route would be about 2,000 miles. A branch, extending down the valley of the Rio del Norte, would connect the railway with Santa Fé and New Mexico; and on the Pacific side of the Rocky Mountains another branch would turn off towards Oregon. Such is an outline of this stupendous scheme, which is proposed to be carried on partly by the government and partly by private enterprise. Lieutenant Maury, however, having his ocean route in view, proposes that the land route should join it at Monterey in California: in other words, that if a person wished to travel from New York to China, he might follow a railway route across the continent to Monterey, and then take the Great Circle steamers across the Pacific. Railways are already open from all the eastern states to Memphis, near the Mississippi; the distance from Memphis to Monterey is about 1,600 miles; and Maury, with the "go-a-head" energy of his countrymen, proposes the construction of a railway for this distance. He considers that the railways and canals projected across the Isthmuses of Panama, Tehuantepec, and Nicaragua, would not be so useful to the United States as a Memphis and Monterey railway; which he also thinks would be better than any trans-American railway farther north. He proposes that the Pacific mail ships should be established in the first instance; and that horse mails should perform the distance from Monterey to the Mississippi until the railway shall be completed.

The Panama passage, so frequently mentioned, has occupied public attention, not only for years, but almost ever since the Spaniards obtained a footing in that country. The Isthmus which connects North with South America is so narrow, that many projectors have thought a passage across it might be obtained from the Atlantic to the Pacific. In former times a canal only was thought of: at present, both canals and railways are under consideration. The narrowest part is from Chagres to Panama, near South America; a little farther north is a spot where the Lake of Nicaragua occupies the middle of the Isthmus, with a river flowing from it into the Atlantic; still farther north, at Tehuantepec, a river which flows into the Atlantic springs from a point very near another river which flows into the Pacific. All these three have been proposed as sites for canal or railway communication. The Panama Railway may, indeed, be spoken of as a certainty. It was commenced in December, 1849. The company had at that time put under contract the portion of 21 miles in length from the Chagres river to Panama bay: the contractors being Messrs. Totten and Trautwine. The Mexican government, also, not to be behind-hand with their neighbours further south, have granted to a company the right of constructing a railway across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. The Nicaragua government, too, are making arrangements for a ship canal across their territory; so that it seems probable, before many years have passed, that we shall have three rapid modes of crossing the narrow strip of country which connects North with South America, and of thus placing the Pa-

cific in postal and commercial communication with the Atlantic. It is supposed that the Panama Railway will be finished in 1852. The Nicaragua route was opened in a temporary way in August, 1850. Where the Rio St. Juan enters the Atlantic, between the territories of Nicaragua and Costa Rica, is a town formerly called St. Juan de Nicaragua, but now called Greytown (the British having some control over the neighbouring territory of Mosquitia). From this town a steamer ascends 90 miles up the river to Lake Nicaragua, and 90 or 100 miles along the lake to Granada; from which town there is cart-road, about 110 miles in length, to Realajo on the Pacific.

In respect to this last-named canal, a convention has recently been agreed upon between the government of England and the United States, to settle in an amicable spirit a rivalry which might otherwise lead to disastrous results. Both governments wish to obtain a water communication from the Atlantic to the Pacific across the Isthmus at Nicaragua; and the object of the convention is to facilitate the construction of such a work—on the one hand, by providing for the removal of any local obstacles connected with rival political or boundary claims; and on the other, by affording the necessary protection and security for the outlay of capital, in the execution and maintenance of the extensive works which such an undertaking will necessitate. An American company had previously obtained from the State of Nicaragua a contract for the construction of a water communication between the two oceans; but it was not so generally made public that the neighbouring State of Costa Rica had likewise conceded rights and privileges for that purpose to British subjects. The claims of the latter, although not so clamorously urged, were not the less entitled to just consideration, and more especially so on the part of the British government. It was thereupon agreed that the two companies should be left in possession of their contracts; that the two governments should no farther interfere than to protect, each the company belonging to its own nation; that both routes should be placed open to fair competition; and that the territories of Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Mosquitia or the Mosquito shore, should be embraced in the stipulations of the convention. The principle which actuates both governments is to make the transit across from one ocean to another free to all the world, on terms as nearly approaching to equality as possible: private enterprise being left to carry out this object, as a commercial speculation.

HOME STATIONS FOR MAIL STEAMERS.

The selection of British ports for embarking the mails has been a matter of considerable difficulty, owing to the conflicting claims of rival towns. In 1837 the Peninsular and Oriental Company memorialised the government to remove the port of departure for their ships from Falmouth to Southampton, for greater facilities and for economising time. The request was not at once granted; but in 1840 the Admiralty (having been

also urged by the West India Mail Company) appointed a committee of government officers, to determine on the selection of the best port for the arrival and departure of the India mails (East and West). The committee decided in favour of Dartmouth, in preference to all other ports in the English Channel. The Post Office authorities at the same period, with reference simply to Post Office requirements, expressed a slight preference to Plymouth, as being by a few hours steaming shorter than the route from Falmouth or from Dartmouth. The committee took naval considerations into view in making their decision. In 1841 the government determined on the adoption of Dartmouth as the starting place. The inhabitants of Dartmouth were of course well pleased with this decision; but while the arrangements were in progress, a committee of the House of Commons was appointed to investigate the matter; and this committee overturned the plan, so far as regarded the West India mails. Without attempting to decide on the merits of the whole question, the committee recommended that the Falmouth route should be maintained for the West India packets, until the relative merits of the various other competing ports could be settled. The committee showed a disposition to recommend Liverpool, but it was not formally expressed in their report.

By the year 1843, the government authorities had arrived at a decision favourable to Southampton. The East India as well as the West India mails are interested in any such decision; for the progress of both sets of vessels is pretty nearly the same until they get fairly into the Atlantic. The Peninsular and Oriental Company showed that one whole day, both on the outward and the homeward route, would be saved by the adoption of Southampton instead of Falmouth. After considerable opposition from the advocates of various ports, the government finally decided, in August, 1843, that Southampton should be the port of departure for the Mediterranean, East India, and West India mails, and Southampton has continued to be used for this purpose ever since.

With respect to the North American mails, Bristol was the port of departure till the Cunard steamers took the lead; since which time Liverpool has been the port. At present, when railways are being carried across Ireland, Galway and Cork, and many other Irish ports, are putting in their claims as advantageous packet stations for the North American route. We believe that a Government Commission is at the present time re-examining the whole question of the home mail-stations.

The packet station for France and Central Europe, is now Dover; while London is the starting point for the General Steam Navigation Company's vessels, which carry the mails to Rotterdam and Hamburgh. Hull despatches the mails to Northern Europe. Harwich, however, is putting forth its advantages as a port of departure for many of these continental mails. In the spring of 1849 the Admiralty advertised for tenders for the conveyance of mails between Harwich and Hamburgh, and between Harwich and

Rotterdam, for a period of five years. The General Steam Navigation Company, who have held the contract for the Hamburg mail from London, declined to tender for the new contract, on the ground that the want of railway communication to Harwich renders it (at present) an inconvenient port for departure. A tender was, however, sent in from other parties; who proposed to employ six paddle-wheel steamers, from 237 to 374 tons burthen, and from 100 to 150 horse power, capable of maintaining a speed from 9 to 11 knots per hour. The terms named in the tender were favourably viewed by the Admiralty, and a contract was signed. The parties, however, failed to fulfil the contract; and the General Steam Navigation Company still carry the mails from London to Hamburg and Rotterdam.

When a committee of the House of Commons was employed in 1850 in collecting evidence respecting the postal communication between London and Paris, Mr. Bagshaw presented an interesting paper on a proposed route for the India mail by way of Harwich. This port has one of the best harbours in the kingdom, considered in reference to the dimensions, the depth of water, the shelter afforded by its headlands, and the easy access. Unfortunately the Essex and Suffolk railways have had so little success, that Harwich is still without a railway, although a branch from Manningtree has long been sanctioned. Supposing a railway to be completed from London to the Docks at Harwich, a new feature in regard to mail steamers might present itself. A pier is projected, which will allow packets to receive the mails direct on board.

The position of Harwich with respect to Bremen, Hamburg, and the Baltic, is certainly favourable; and it is also well situated in reference to Holland and Belgium. The distance from Harwich to Dunkirk is 65 miles, to Ostend 73 miles, to Brille 100 miles. A calculation is made by Mr. Bagshaw that the mail might reach Paris from London, via Harwich and Dunkirk, in 12½ hours; but there is no probability that Harwich could vie with Dover in respect to the French mails: it would be mails in other directions that Harwich would be better fitted to serve. The distance from Harwich to Ostend is about the same as that from Dover to Ostend, but the railway distance from London to those two ports is (or will be) 20 miles less in the former case than in the latter; and Harwich harbour is more accessible at all states of the tide than Dover harbour. The late Lieutenant Waghorn (whose meritorious exertions have been so insufficiently recognised by the Government) in his explorations connected with the overland route, thought very favourably of Harwich as a starting point.

It is certainly a question of much interest (apart from the Harwich inquiry), whether the Trieste or the Marseilles route will in future times be adopted for the India mail. We may suppose Ostend to be reached either from Dover or from Harwich. From Ostend there is now a continuous railway route to Laybach, only 60 miles from Trieste. The line is tortuous, it is true: pass-

ing by way of Cologne, Hanover, Berlin, Breslau, and Vienna; but railway speed renders this indirectness of course less important than in the past days of *diligences* and *post-wagens*. The steam boat distance from Trieste to Alexandria is about 1,320 miles, against 1,620 miles from Marseilles to Alexandria. It is said that the Austrian railway from Laybach to Trieste will be finished in the course of a few months; and that the India mail might then be transmitted from London to Alexandria in nine days by that route. Unless the French progress more rapidly than they have lately done, in filling up the railway distance between Paris and Marseilles, the Trieste route may command many passengers to India, if not the mails.

In respect of the actual steam traffic from England to France, for passengers as well as mails, we find that—without reckoning the Thames steamers to Boulogne and Havre, the Newhaven and Dieppe steamers, and the Southampton and Havre steamers—there have been, during the summer of 1850, five daily departures from Dover or Folkstone to Calais or Boulogne, and an equal number of return voyages. The night mail now regularly reaches Paris in 12½ hours. On one occasion the journey from London to Paris was made in 9 hours. Considered in relation to the overland mail, the present distance from London to Marseilles is 816 miles; of which 78 miles are *diligence* road, and 216 miles steam boat route on the Saône and Rhone. At present the time occupied by the mail is 62 hours; but when the railways are completed it will be reduced to 40.

It is an interesting feature in respect to ocean mails, that the *auxiliary-screw* has occasionally been found a great assistance to sailing vessels. If a voyage were of too long duration to render the cargo of coals sufficient for a steamer, or if the general circumstances of the case did not render a high speed indispensable, much advantage may be derived from this double system—*sailing* with a fair wind, but *steaming* when winds are adverse. A fine vessel called the *Sarah Sands*, of Liverpool, designed and fitted with her machinery by Mr. Grantham, has instructively exemplified this system. She made four voyages in 1847, between Liverpool and New York; and five in 1848; her average time outward was 18½ days, and homeward 16½ days. She is an iron vessel of 1,300 tons burthen with auxiliary engines of 180 horse power. She has accommodation for a large number of passengers, 900 tons of merchandise, and sufficient coals for the voyage.
