

conveyance of which cost on an average twopence-halfpenny each, could ever be carried for a penny and leave a profit on the transaction! The uniform rate was pronounced by Colonel Maberley to be "impracticable;" and as to pre-payment, he was sure the public would object to it, however low the rate might be! And a Scotch journalist ridiculed the idea of persons having to stick pieces of paper upon their letters! The stamped postage-covers came into use May 6, 1840; but the idea of a prepaid envelope is as old as the time of Louis XIV. A pictorial envelope was designed by W. Mulready, R. A., but little used. A fancied value is attached to this envelope; for we have seen advertised in the *Times*:—"The Mulready Postage Envelope—For sale, an Indian-proof impression. One of six, from the original block engraved by John Thompson in the year 1840, price 20 guineas." The postage label-stamps were first used in 1841; perforated, 1854.

*Number of Letters.*—The greatest number of letters, under the old system, ever known to pass through the General Post-office in one day, was received there on July 15, 1839, viz. ninety thousand; the amount of postage being £4050 a sum greater by £530 than any hitherto collected in one day. In the third week of February the number of letters is usually highest. The ordinary daily average is four hundred thousand letters; on 19th August, 1853, it reached six hundred and thirty thousand. The number of letters which pass through the Post-office in a year is nearly four hundred million. In 1864, six hundred and seventy-nine million eighty-four thousand eight hundred and twenty-two letters passed through the post, being an increase of thirty-seven million over the previous year; and in the same period the number of book-packets and newspapers which were transmitted rose to over fifty million, or seven million more than in 1863.

"It is estimated that there lies, from time to time, in the Dead-Letter Office, undergoing the process of finding owners, some £11,000 annually, in cash alone. In July, 1847, for instance—only a two months' accumulation—the post-haste of four thousand six hundred and fifty-eight letters, all containing property, was arrested by the bad superscriptions of the writers. They were consigned—after a searching inquest upon each by that efficient coroner, the "blind clerk"—to the post-office *Morgue*. There were bank-notes of the value of £1010, and money-orders for £407 12s. But most of these ill-directed letters contained coin in small sums, amounting to £310 9s. 5d. On the 17th of July, 1847, there were lying in the Dead-Letter Office bills of exchange for the immense sum of £40,410 5s. 7d." The value of property contained in missing letters, during twelve months, is about £200,000.

There are employed in the General Post-office, including the London District letter-carriers, but exclusive of the receivers, two thousand five hundred persons, in different offices:—Secretary's, Accountant's, Receiver's, Dead-Letter, Money-Order, Inland, and