

hundred and forty-eight pounds, the object being to counteract the effects of wind on the hands of the dial. In the eastern front, facing Foster-lane, the letter-bags are received. The mechanical contrivances for the despatch of the business of the office display great ingenuity; steam-power is variously employed: two endless chains, worked by a steam-engine, carry, in rapid succession, a series of shelves, each holding four or five men and their letter-bags, which are thus raised to various parts of the building.

King James II. has the credit of having established something like an organized foreign post: when a man could more speedily receive a reply to a letter sent to Madrid than he could to one despatched to Ireland or Scotland. The home post was in the hands of carriers, and also of pedestrian wayfarers: and the former even could not convey a note to the North, and bring an answer back, under two months at the very earliest. Witherings, one of the chief postmasters of Charles I.'s days, reformed this abuse. He established a running-post, as it was called, between England and Scotland, the riders pushing forward night and day; and it was hoped, if the thing was not actually accomplished at the time, that the writer of a letter from London to Edinburgh would receive a reply within a week! When this running or rather riding, post was established, very sanguine was Witherings. "If the post," he said, "be punctually paid, the news will come *sooner than thought*." He considered that news which passed from Edinburgh to London in three days and nights, by relays of horses, whose swinging trot never ceased, was outstripping thought.

The arrangements for the Foreign Mails in the present day show, in a forcible manner, the wonderful extent of British commerce and relationships. Here are departments for Austria, Baden, Bavaria, France, Norway, Denmark, and the most northern latitudes; the Brazils, Chili, the Equator, Spain, Sardinia, Switzerland, United States of America, North America, the various districts of India, Australia, &c. Here arrangements are made for the overland Indian and other mails. The letters, newspapers, and books are secured in cases of sheet-iron, which, when full, are carefully soldered up and inclosed in wooden chests, which are branded with crosses of red or black, and marked with the name of the district, city, &c., at which its arrival is awaited. Each of the boxes referred to weighs, when filled with letters and papers, about eighty six pounds, and the ordinary Australian mail, exclusive of the portion sent overland, generally consists of four hundred and eighty boxes of books and newspapers, and one hundred boxes of letters—in all five hundred and eighty boxes. These would weigh altogether forty-nine thousand eight hundred and eighty pounds, equal to nearly twenty-two tons and a half.

The Mails were originally conveyed on horseback and in light carts, until 1784, when mail-coaches were substituted by Mr. Palmer. The first mail-coach left the Three Kings yard, Piccadilly,