

error of each Province to do what the Postmaster-General had not done, and could not do. The remedy adopted has been an effort by the Postmaster-General to do it all himself. With all the former defects of the system, we at least used to have a resident Chief Officer, of active business habits, not often trammelled in matters of detail by orders from home, and having tolerably large powers to enable him to meet the public wish as to Post Office accommodation, and the minor management of his department, so far as he might see occasion. We have now one who cannot establish a new mail route, or improve an old one, or open a new Post Office,—in a word, who can scarce stir hand or foot,—with it leave asked and had from a master thousands of miles off, oppressed with the conduct of all the larger and nearer business of a vast department, and withal a perfect stranger to the peculiar wants of a new country.—By how small a share of wisdom, even in some matters of more general regulation, the interference of that master has been governed, we may soon see. How destitute of wisdom it must be in all those trifles of departmental arrangement upon which it is now understood to be perpetually busy, may be held self-evident. It is enough to state the mere fact, that, at every turn,—before opening an Office or making any other change for the public accommodation,—the Deputy Postmaster-General is now required to satisfy some Postmaster-General's factotum (whoever he may be) in London,* in place of being held, as the Commissioners proposed, to satisfy the Governor-General and his Provincial advisers, on the spot!

The second great reform urged by the Report (counting in order of importance), was the adoption of a lower and simpler scale of rates for letter postage, together with the system of charging letters, as at home, by weight. These rates had been enacted in the 5th year of George the Third, and (the Act being an Imperial Act), of course in sterling money. They were indefinitely numerous, rising 2d. sterling for every hundred miles after the first hundred; and their conversion from sterling to currency made their amounts as awkward as they had need be for convenience of calculation—4½d., 7d., 9d., 11d., 1s., 2s., and so on for ever. The Report proposed 2d., 4d., 6d., 9d., and 1s., as the only rates; recommended them especially for their simplicity and the ease with which they could be brought into account, and as rather lower than those of the United States; and strongly argued the entire safety of the two changes, if made together, as regarded the financial prospects of the Department. The weight system has been granted; so far so good. And the rates have been in a small way tinkered upon; but how, and to what end? Some one, it would seem, noticed that the conversion of some of the rates from sterling into currency, was not as nearly correct as it might have been; and so the elevenpenny rate was made into one of elevenpence-halfpenny, and that of one shilling and twopence into one of one shilling and a penny-halfpenny! After this reform, who shall say that further can be made or asked for?

The newspaper postage recommendations of the Report are understood to have been acted on; but even here there has been oversight. The Commissioners proposed low uniform rates on all printed matter passing by mail. The reformers of St. Martin's-le-Grand have left all printed matter, other than newspapers and Parliamentary papers, if mailed from or to the British Islands, to bear, in addition to a penny inland rate, full letter-postage for its conveyance over sea; forgetting, doubtless, that such letter-postage was not their English penny rate, but one of a quarter of a dollar and more on the half ounce. Publications printed in the United States, if mailed here, are also charged with letter-postage; and so is any other kind of printed matter, not strictly coming under the denomination of a newspaper, parliamentary paper, pamphlet, or printed publication. All printed matter used to pass at a penny rate, under the Deputy Postmaster-General's privilege. This, too, was probably forgotten. At all events, the reform has pretty well closed the Department now, against all manner of books, magazines, and pamphlets from home, as well as against some others, for which otherwise many might be glad to use it.

With the United States Post Office, so far as the public convenience is in question, the relations of our Post Office remain as they were. It is understood that something has been done, though no one knows what, to take from our Deputy Postmaster-General and Postmasters their former character of agents for a foreign Post Office. But no change has been wrought for the convenience of the community, as regards the collection of our postage in the United States territory. The attempt may have been made for aught we know, though it can be no sin to doubt it. But any one may see with half an eye, that so long as we cling to the barbarous scale of rates which finds such strange favor in the eyes of our Post Office Magnates, so long no foreign department, civilized enough to have only two rates of its own (for we must remember that the United States have now but two, 5 cents and 10 cents—3d. and 6d. of our currency),—will never by any chance suffer itself to be bothered with our absurdities.

* To such a pitch of absurdity is this system carried, that we believe we are correct in stating that the Deputy Postmaster-General is required to send his calculations in a prescribed form, to show that every proposed new route or office may be expected to pay its way.—Not a bad joke, truly.

The Commissioners recommended a policy of increased enterprise in the extension of the Department. The reform effected, as we have seen, has been to throw new checks in the way of such extension.

It advised effort to make the Department popular. The course taken has been to withdraw it more than ever from popular influence, and subject it more than ever to an influence which never, by possibility, can be popular, or become other than less and less popular the more it is exerted.

The Report advised that the Department should be regarded as a merely self-sustaining institution, and pointedly condemned the remittance of any surplus revenue to England. No step has been taken to this end. We believe, though here again people do not know, that the surplus remitted to England is smaller now than in 1811. We dare say its amount does not exceed the amount paid by the Imperial Government for its military postage; though, by the way, we never could understand, as the Imperial Government professes to pay all the expenses of its troops here, why any one should argue as though the Province were to pay their postage-expenses by a tax on its own correspondence. Perhaps the surplus remitted may not even exceed the fair claim of the Imperial Treasury for packet-postage, though that we greatly doubt. But however all this may be, there stands the naked fact, that the wisdom of St. Martin's-le-Grand has not yet settled any of these points, but keeps up the monstrous form of remittances of what purports to be surplus revenue.

The general establishment, and also the emoluments of the higher officers of the department, according to the Report, were to be revised; and the Provincial Government was to have a voice about them. It is understood that a revision has taken place, though not to what extent nor with what result. But it is tolerably certain that no interest or influence of the Province has had opportunity to make itself felt, while such revision has been going on.

The duties and emoluments of the Postmasters it was proposed to put on an almost entirely new footing. A variety of changes were greatly to lessen the duties of nearly all of them; their franking privilege was to be abolished; their scale of percentage raised at the same time; and for all offices where more than the average of work might be required, a graduated scale of salary, over and above the percentage, was to be laid down. It is understood that the Forward-Office system, recommended as one means of simplifying most Postmasters' duties, has been adopted. And in so far, one great internal reform has been accomplished. But the simplification of the rates was another means on which the Commissioners relied, to the same end; and here, as we have seen, the reform effected has been rather the wrong way. The franking privilege has been abolished; but, as if to prevent this change recommended by the Commission from working well, it has been cut off from the other changes that were to have borne it company. The percentage has not been raised. The rule of extra pay for extra work has not been laid down. On the contrary, incumbents having held the privilege are allowed a sort of salary in compensation for its loss, which their successors are to have after them. Beautiful system, if the object were to render it next to impossible in process of time to get qualified Postmasters to serve!

THE QUIBBLER EXPOSED.

From the time of Abraham, the father of the faithful, down to the present generation, we doubt if so eminent a quibbler has appeared as our subtle contemporary the editor of the *Gazette*.

Eugene Sue wanted just such a model for the chief Jesuit in his extraordinary work, the "Wandering Jew." The portrait is too good to be lost. Means must be taken to bring him under Sue's notice, as there may yet be time to re-touch the character of the subtle Jesuit for the next edition. Meantime we sketch a line or two of the important picture.

Our readers are aware that in our last number we gave our contemporary a lesson in arithmetic, and at the same time, to spare his feelings, good-naturedly supposed that he was only affecting the ignorance he had incautiously displayed.

Our words were: "He next affects to be unable to comprehend how a duty of six pounds sterling can be levied upon a hundred pounds currency worth of imported goods;" a proposition so plain that it strikes the senses at once as being self-evident. Yet our sapient contemporary says "the thing is so grotesquely absurd that it is almost impossible to reason upon it"!!

We have already, on several occasions, convicted our contemporary of misrepresenting us, and decency has compelled him, more than once, to make the necessary *amende*. We observe, however, that he never does it willingly or very readily. For instance, in our last number, we showed, that from his extreme eagerness to misconstrue or misrepresent he had compromised himself on various points, and we gave the following as an example:—

"He says, 'the duty on tea is raised to a point at which experience shows that there is large smuggling.' Now (we added) if there be smuggling at all (upon which we offer no opinion one way or other),