

# The Stamp Reporter.

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## The Letter-posts of Other Days.

The name Post-office originated in the posts that were placed at intervals along the roads of the Roman empire, where couriers were kept in readiness to bear dispatches and intelligence; but the posts of ancient times were never used for the conveyance of private correspondence. The first letter-post seems to have been established in the Hanse Towns, in the early part of the 13th century. A line of letter-posts followed, connecting Austria with Lombardy, in the reign of Emperor Maxilian.

In England, in early times, both public and private letters were sent by messengers, who, in the reign of Henry III, wore the royal livery. They had to provide themselves with horses, until the reign of Edward I, when posts were established, where horses could be had for hire. The posts were meant for the conveyance of Government dispatches alone, and it was only by degrees that permission was extended to private individuals to make use of them. A foreign post, for the conveyance of letters between London and the continent, seems to have been established by foreign merchants in the 15th century.

In 1835, a man named Wither-

ings was authorized to run a post, night and day, between London and Edinburgh, "to go thither and back again in six days." Eight main postal lines throughout England were at the same time instituted, and the post was allowed to carry inland letters. The first rates of postage were 2d. for a single letter, for a distance less than 80 miles; 4d. up to 140 miles; 6d. for any longer distance in England; and 8d. to any place in Scotland. An attempt in 1649, by the Common Council of London, to set up a rival post-office for inland letters, was suppressed by the House of Commons.

In 1685 a penny-post was set up, for the conveyance of letters and parcels between different parts of London and its suburbs. It was a private speculation, originating with one Robert Murray, an upholsterer. When its success became apparent, it was complained of by the Duke of York, on whom the post-office revenues had been settled, as an encroachment on his rights. A decision of the Court of King's Bench adjudged it to be a part of the royal establishment, and it was thereupon annexed to the crown. In this way began the London district post, which was improved, and made a two-penny