

Postal Difficulties of Long Ago.

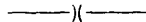
By GEO. W. HICKS.

In England in 1784 the first mail-coach started from St. Martin's-le-Grand. A handsome sight it presented with its four splendid horses, and its coachman and guard in brilliant scarlet uniform. The guard, armed with a wide-mouthed blunderbuss of gigantic proportions, ought to have carried terror to the hearts of the highwaymen who infested every road around the principal towns throughout the country, but it didn't, and the robbery of the night mails was a matter of constant occurrence, the guard usually being incontinently despoiled of the aforesaid arm as a preliminary,

Nor was this the only danger to which the mails were exposed. For the coach to be overturned by some huge stage wagon crawling along the narrow road in the darkness was to be expected now and again and in winter it was not at all unreasonable—at least so thought our forefathers—that it should be snowed up occasionally and perhaps be abandoned altogether, the driver and guard placing themselves and the mail-bags on the horses and leaving the unfortunate passengers to follow as well as they were able.

The mail-carriers were often found not wanting in noble devotion to their duty, sacrificing even their own lives in the endeavor to get the mails to their destination. Take the instance of John Goddellow, mail coachman, and James Mc George, mail guard—their names are worth preserving. Starting from Edinburgh to Dumfries they found before long that it was impossible for the wearied horses to drag the coach any farther; so, taking them out of the

traces and strapping the mail on the two spare horses, they mounted the others and, securing the services of a local postboy as guide, continued their journey. Soon the road became so heavy that the exhausted horses could be urged forward no longer. But the men did not give up. Sending the horses back in charge of the boy, they struggled on bravely with the bags, and five days afterwards their bodies were found stiff in death; but the bags were safe and sound, fixed to a stake some distance off—the last act of the dying men, good and loyal servants, "faithful unto death."



A Unique Postal Race.

Mr. Robert McClure, Glasgow, Scotland, engineered a unique scheme for the purpose of determining the shortest route around the earth. The method employed was both novel and simple—by mailing four postcards in as many different directions. The card which made the best time was mailed from Glasgow to Yokohama, Japan, and readdressed there to Winnipeg, Manitoba, and thence home to Glasgow in 76 days. Had it been addressed to Winnipeg via Vancouver instead of San Francisco, it would have gained several days and have made the trip in almost ten weeks. The second card was started off in the opposite direction via New York, Auckland, N. Z. Madras, India, and arrived home in exactly three calendar months. It would have gained a whole week had it reached Madras one day earlier. The other two cards were returned by the postal authorities at San Francisco and London respectively endorsed as "Unmailable" and "Contrary to postoffice regulations.

C. T. K., Winnipeg.