

ADMISSIONS TO THE UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION.

The United States of Colombia, having ceded in 1849 to the Panama Railroad Company for a term of 99 years the exclusive right to transport mails across the isthmus of Panama, at certain rates fixed by that company, the government of that country no longer possesses complete sovereignty in postal matters so far as isthmus transportations are concerned. Consequently the United States of Colombia has been admitted to the Union with the reservation that special rates of transit of mails across the isthmus are to be applied in lieu of the Union territorial transit charges fixed by article 4 of the Convention of Paris.

Table showing the countries and colonies which have acceded to the Postal Union since the date of the Postmaster-General's report for 1880, and the dates upon which the said countries and colonies entered, or will enter, the union.

Grenada.....	February 1, 1881
St. Lucia.....	February 1, 1881
Tobago.....	February 1, 1881
Turk's Islands.....	February 1, 1881
Chili, Republic of.....	April 1, 1881
Hayti, Republic of.....	July 1, 1881
Paraguay, Republic of.....	July 1, 1881
Colombia, United States of.....	July 1, 1881
Guatemala, Republic of.....	August 1, 1881
Barbadoes.....	September 1, 1881
St. Vincent.....	September 1, 1881
Hawaiian Islands.....	January 1, 1882
Nicaragua, Republic of.....	May 1, 1882

ILLUMINATED LETTER-BOXES.

It has been suggested, and we highly approve the idea, that the holes or slits in the street letter-boxes be surrounded with a line of luminous paint. This paint costs little more than ordinary paint. It will be a great convenience at night to all—especially strangers—who wish to deposit their letters in the boxes. No matter how dark or how stormy the night, the slit into which the letters are to be put will be as clearly distinguished as at noon of a pleasant day. Exposure to storms will not injure its luminous powers more than is ordinary paint injured. This is a cheap reform that the Post Office authorities would do well to consider.

WEIGHT OF U. S. POSTAL MATTER.

In the year ending June 30th, 1881 there were sent from the United States to foreign countries through the mails the following weights of matter:—

	Letters lbs.	Papers, etc. lbs.
To Europe	285,765,536	1,104,217,706
To other countries and colonies in the Postal Union	23,540,352	175,216,140
To countries not in the Postal Union	868,330	not given
Totals	309,175,218	1,279,433,846

U. S. MONEY ORDERS.

The following table will give an idea of the extent and importance of the Money Order business transacted by the Post Offices in the United States in the year ending June 30th, 1881:—

Country.	Number of Orders Issued.	Amount of Orders Issued.	Fees.	Number of Orders Paid.	Amount of Orders Paid.	Amount of Orders re-paid.
Domestic.....	7,063,932	\$107,072,769.33	\$66,723.75	7,627,710	\$104,219,822.65	\$830,127.72
Canadian.....	40,008	877,756.02	14,051.65	38,373	611,163.69	3,886.04
British.....	245,244	2,008,989.65	54,723.10	21,169	360,736.71	4,662.91
German.....	84,991	1,292,725.83	24,001.60	85,007	825,001.07	6,130.41
Swiss.....	7,521	145,749.94	4,106.90	3,630	109,372.31	485.56
Italian.....	9,385	239,673.95	54,697.90	928	23,548.15	7,031.99
French.....	4,649	73,030.07	1,333.30	2,676	38,380.22	877.14
Total.....	7,953,330	\$109,759,695.72	\$1,072,899.20	7,761,038	\$106,178,092.80	\$2,177,312.67

THE REDUCTION OF LETTER POSTAGE.

from three to two cents will be possible within three years. I believe this reduction could be accomplished without the proportionate diminution of receipts which followed the adoption of three-cent postage in 1851. The people have shown their appreciation of cheap postage. The introduction of the postal card, instead of diminishing the receipts, has on the whole largely increased them. Two cent postage would, I believe, after one or two years' trial produce the same result. It is my deliberate judgment that two-cent postage is feasible in the near future. I would favor it even if the rates of postage on third and fourth class matter had to be increased. The great mass of the people are interested in cheap letter postage. The proportion of those benefited by the unremunerative rates on third and fourth class matter is comparatively small. Moreover the people who are benefited could afford to pay more liberally for the advantages extended to them. The bulk and weight of third and fourth class matter adds so largely to the cost of transporting the mails that all the profit realized from letter postage is thereby absorbed. If these classes of matter contributed proportionately, two-cent postage would at once be assured. It the government is to be a common carrier, ought it to be compelled to lose money thereby? Ought the many who are interested in cheap letter postage be taxed for the benefit of the few who are concerned for low rates on third and fourth class matter?