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THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF THE POSTAL SERVICE.

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According to the most authentic information obtainable by the most careful and accurate research in history, the first postal service was invented by Cyrus, King of Persia, on his Scythian expedition; he establishing one hundred and eleven posts from the shore of the Ægean Sea to Susa, the capital; each a day's journey from the preceding. Though, generally conceded by historians that posts were well-known among the Romans, it has been too difficult to trace with any degree of certainty, the exact period of their introduction. It is a well-known fact, however, that Augustus instituted them along all the large roads of the empire, and hired young men to deliver his dispatches from post to post until the place of destination was reached. Shortly afterward, the same Emperor changed this method of delivery to that of sending all his messages and dispatches by means of charioteers, in regular chariots, with relays of horses at each post. This was kept up by his successors for a number of years, although slight information can be obtained concerning them up to about the year 807 A.D., when the Emperor Charlemagne established three public posts—one each in Italy, Germany and Spain—in order to facilitate his communication with those three countries, which he had placed in a state of subjection to his dominion. With his death, however, these were soon dropped, and no further traces of them can be discovered up to about 1470, when Louis XI., King of France, owing to his suspicious and restless nature, and also to his eagerness for a quick and certain knowledge of what was transpiring within his kingdom, established them throughout the whole civilized portion of France.

From France, his method gradually spread to other portions of Europe;

Count Taxis settling them at his own expense in Germany, for which the Emperor Matthias, in 1616, gave the position of postmaster to him and his descendants. In England, the earliest accounts indicate that Edward III. set up some species of posts, but nothing definite has ever been ascertained concerning them. In 1548, during the reign of Edward VI., an Act of Parliament was passed, making the rate of post-horses at one penny per mile.

The first chief postmaster of England was Thomas Randolph, appointed by Queen Elizabeth in 1581. James I. appointed Matthew De L'Equestor, post-master for the control of correspondence to and from foreign parts, about the time of his accession to the throne in 1603. This office was afterward claimed by Lord Stanhope, but Charles I. continued it to William Frizel and Thomas Witherington in 1682. Witherings, from 1640, got control of his office, machy, under superseded by Philip Burlmof the K... for the direct supervision ate. Irving's principal Secretary of S office 1656, a new and general post if the was established by the authority of the Parliament, and very nearly upon the same model as has been since adopted. Ralph Allen, about 1720, instituted a series of cross-posts, which were found to be of great convenience to the public, as also to the government; and in 1782, a plan was suggested by John Palmer, by which the mails were to be carried in stage-coaches under guard. This plan met with a great deal of opposition at the start, but gradually overcame it, until about 1784, when it came into very general use. The penny post was first started in London by Mr. Robert Murray, an upholsterer, about the year 1681, who assigned his interest in it to Mr. Dockwra in 1683.

This causing a confliction with the government, it was, on a trial at the King's Bench Bar, adjudged to belong to the Duke of York as a branch of the general service, and was, therefore, annexed to the Crown in 1690.

This was made a two-penny post in 1794. Mails were first carried on rail-

road trains in 1830 by the overland route to India, which method was found to be a much cheaper way of transporting them.

In 1837, Sir Rowland Hill offered his plan of penny postage, which was adopted in 1839 by the House of Commons after a full thorough investigation.

In December, 1839, the four penny, uniform rate per letter, came into operation as an experiment; and in January, 1840, the uniform rate of one penny per letter of half an ounce weight was adopted; and finally, in May, 1840, the widely celebrated stamped envelopes, designed by Mr. W. Mulready, first came into existence. From this time on the postal service made rapid strides toward perfection. To show with what rapidity it progressed, a few figures will not be amiss.

The number of letters delivered in 1839 was 82,470,596; in 1840, 168,768,-344; in 1851, 360,651,187; in 1856, 478,000,000; in 1859, 545,000,000; in 1860, 564,000,000; in 1861, 593,000,000; in 1862, 605,000,000, and in 1864, 679,000,000.

In 1855, the English Treasury issued a warrant, providing for the carriage of books, pamphlets, etc., by post under certain restrictions—four ounces for one penny, eight ounces for two pence, etc.; and in the same year street letter-boxes were instituted, the first one being placed at the corner of Fleet and Faringdon streets, London.

The postal guide first appeared in 1856, and during the same year London and vicinity was divided into districts for the convenience of the postal department, viz.: east, west, etc. The money order service was originally started in 1792, but was comparitively little used until 1839 when 188,291 money orders were issued, amounting to £313,124.

In 1861, this branch of the service alone issued 7,580,455 orders, amounting to £14,616,348.

The above facts show with what great rapidity the postal service has progressed, and it has, at the present time, reached about as high a degree of perfection as can possibly be attained. We