THE WORK OF THE POST OFFICE.

The work of the Post Office during the past year, 1886, has in many of its departments increased in magnitude.

The average number of letters to each person in the United Kingdom increased from 16 in 1851, 22 in 1864, to 26 in 1885. Including postcards, the average number was 28 in 1885. The number of post offices in the United Kingdom increased by 600, making the total 4,773. The number of letters posted during the year 1885 was 170,685,000, an increase of 51,754,000 over the previous year, but 5,191,000 below the average for the previous ten years. The number of letters posted in the United Kingdom increased by 488, making the total 5,773. The number of letters posted in England and Wales, 2,536,477, in Scotland, and 1,338,149 in Ireland.

The management of the Foreign and Colonial Post Office was completed, and the department accepts parcels not exceeding 7 lbs. in weight for transshipment to Gibraltar, Egypt, Aden, India, and British Burmah.

The number of letters, postcards, newspapers, &c., received in the Returned Letter Office was 5,925,875, showing an increase of 1.8 per cent over the previous year. Of this total, 5,925,200 were unreturnable, and 6,472 letters which were posted without any address whatever, 1885 contained a value of the total 510,000. Upwards of 5,600 parcels could not be delivered, and were returned to the addressee or to the person who had originally sent them. 15,000 items of mail were returned to the cost of the postage. The number of letters, newspapers, &c., lost or delivered in England and Wales, 1,495,171, in Scotland, and 2,000,000 in Ireland.

The management of the Post Office and the Colonial Postal Service is conducted by railway throughout the United Kingdom, and to complete measures under the law to facilitate the conveyance of letters. Adjoining railways are used to reduce the cost of carriage, and a large number of important letters were delivered by railway companies, amounting in all to about 12,000,000 a year, were made.

The number of parcels carried by the department increased steadily. No less than 50,038 were posted in 1885, which was more than double the amount posted in the same year. The number of parcels posted in the United Kingdom was 5,925,875, showing an increase of 1.8 per cent over the previous year. Of this total, 5,925,200 were unreturnable, and 6,472 letters which were posted without any address whatever, 1885 contained a value of the total 510,000. Upwards of 5,600 parcels could not be delivered, and were returned to the addressee or to the person who had originally sent them. 15,000 items of mail were returned to the cost of the postage. The number of letters, newspapers, &c., lost or delivered in England and Wales, 1,495,171, in Scotland, and 2,000,000 in Ireland.

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Charge for two words 6d., inclusive of address of sender and receiver, for twenty-four words 1s., inclusive of address. If, therefore, the address requires six words, the message must consist of eighteen words only for 1s., in place of twenty as heretofore.

The limit of size for a book-postcard addressed to any place abroad is 6 in. by 9 in. in length and 2 in. in width or depth. The postage is 1s. a pound.

The fee for registering a letter, newspaper, or book-postcard passing between any two places in the United Kingdom is 1s., and for the transaction of Government Stock business 5s.

The post is one halfpenny for every 1 oz. or part of that weight.

A packet posted wholly unpaid is charged with double the book-postage, and if posted retaining payment, the charge is double the book-postage.

The person to whom a postal order is issued must, before parting with it, fill in the name of the money-order office at which the amount is to be paid.

The commission on Inland Money Orders is 2½ per cent., but not less than 3d., and not more than 1s. 3d., and the rate on £2 and under £3, 6d.; £3 and under £4, 5d.; £4 and under £5, 4d.; £5 and under £6, 3d.; £6 and under £7, 2½d.; £7 and under £8, 2½d.; £8 and under £10, 2½d.; £10 and over, 5s. 6d. per £10.

The commission on postal orders and drafts is 5 per cent. of the amount, received by the payee.

The following are the general conditions in regard to weight, dimensions, rates, and time of postage:

FOR AN INLAND POSTAL PARCEL

The rate of postage is 1s. for parcels up to 2 lbs. in weight, 2s. 6d. for parcels exceeding 2 lbs. in weight and in continued weight, the letter postal charge as follows:—For the first ounce, 1d.; for the second ounce, 2½d.; for the third ounce, 5d.; for the fourth ounce, 7½d.; for the fifth ounce, 1s. 3d.; for the sixth ounce, 1s. 6d.; for the seventh ounce, 1s. 9d.; for the eighth ounce, 2s.; for the ninth ounce, 2s. 3d.; for the tenth ounce, 2s. 6d.; for the eleventh ounce, 3s.; for the twelfth ounce, 3s. 6d.; and so on. The rate for letters exceeding 1 oz. but not exceeding 2 oz. is 1s.; and for letters exceeding 2 oz. but not exceeding 3 oz. is 2s.; and so on, up to 15 oz. and exceeding 15 oz. The rate for postal parcels is 3s. 6d. for the first ounce, and 2d. for each additional ounce.

The following are the general conditions in regard to weight, dimensions, rates, and time of postage:

The rate of postage is 1s. for parcels up to 2 lbs. in weight, 2s. 6d. for parcels exceeding 2 lbs. in weight and in continued weight, the letter postal charge as follows:—For the first ounce, 1d.; for the second ounce, 2½d.; for the third ounce, 5d.; for the fourth ounce, 7½d.; for the fifth ounce, 1s. 3d.; for the sixth ounce, 1s. 6d.; for the seventh ounce, 1s. 9d.; for the eighth ounce, 2s.; for the ninth ounce, 2s. 3d.; for the tenth ounce, 2s. 6d.; for the eleventh ounce, 3s.; for the twelfth ounce, 3s. 6d.; and so on. The rate for letters exceeding 1 oz. but not exceeding 2 oz. is 1s.; and for letters exceeding 2 oz. but not exceeding 3 oz. is 2s.; and so on, up to 15 oz. and exceeding 15 oz. The rate for postal parcels is 3s. 6d. for the first ounce, and 2d. for each additional ounce.