all delivered together. Up to this time the mail-bags had been carried by postboys on horseback at an average rate, including stoppages, of from three to four miles an hour; and Mr. Palmer, in submitting his plan to Mr. Pitt, in 1783, pointed out that "the post, instead of being the swiftest, is about the slowest conveyance in the country," and that "the mails were generally intrusted to some idle boy, without character, mounted on a worn-out hack, and who, so far from being able to defend himself, or escape from a robber, is much more likely to be in league with him."

The officers of the Post Office vehemently opposed Mr. Palmer's plan, but its merits were recognised by Mr. Pitt, and under his auspices an Act was passed authorising its adoption.

Mr. Palmer was appointed Controller of the General Post Office to carry out his plan, with a salary of £1,500 a year and 2½ per cent. on any excess of revenue over £240,000 a year, and he appears to have performed his duties with great ability. The speed of the mails was at once increased from three and a half to six miles an hour, and subsequently still greater acceleration was attained, accompanied by a large immediate increase of correspondence and of revenue.

In 1792, Mr. Palmer was suspended from his functions, an allowance of £3,000 a year being made to him in lieu thereof. This sum was much below what he was entitled to under his agreement, and, after unsuccessfully memorialising the Treasury against the arrangement, he laid his case before Parliament; and in 1813, after a struggle lasting many years, a parliamentary grant of £50,000 was made to him.

About the year 1814, Mr. Macadam's improved system of road-making enabled a great acceleration to be effected in the speed of the mail-coaches. The speed gradually increased to ten miles an hour, and even more, until in the case of the Devonport mail the journey from London of 216 miles was punctually performed, including stoppages, in twenty-one hours and fourteen minutes.

Mails first sent by Railway.

In 1830, on the opening of the line between Liverpool and Manchester, the mails were, for the first time, conveyed by railway, and the payment to railway companies for conveyance of mails amounted last year to £900,000.

The first travelling post-office, for the purpose of sorting correspondence in transit, was established on the Grand Junction Railway, between Liverpool and Birmingham, on the 1st July, 1837; and on the completion of the railway to the metropolis, in July, 1838, that travelling post-office began to run throughout between London and Liverpool. The speed was then a gentle twenty miles an hour, as even at a somewhat later period, when the railway northward had been completed as far as Lancaster, the mail-train took eleven hours and a half to perform the journey from London to Lancaster, a distance of 241 miles. Now, when the mail-train to the north has travelled eleven hours and a half it is pulling up at Forfar, so distant as 471 miles from London. Travelling post-offices are attached to numerous mail-trains on all the principal lines, those under the control of the London Postal Service running in the aggregate about 3,000,000 miles annually over the principal railway systems of Great Britain. About 1,800,000 miles, or three-fifths of the total distance traversed by the mail-carriages, are run on the London and North-Western and Caledonian Railways; about 270,000 miles are run on the Midland and North-Eastern lines, and nearly 300,000 miles on the Great Western Railway. The total number of letters, &c., dealt with in the travelling post-offices annually is about 210,000,000, besides about 4,000,000 parcels.

Extensive use is made of the apparatus for receiving mails into, and leaving mails from, mail-trains travelling at full speed. Mr. Ramsay, formerly an officer of the General Post Office, is said to have suggested the machinery for the purpose. To Mr. Dicker, also an officer of the department, must be ascribed many important improvements of the apparatus, which made it fit for general use, Mr. Dicker receiving his reward in the shape of a grant of £500 from the Board of Treasury, and the appointment of Supervisor of Mail-bag Apparatus. Mr. Pearson Hill, only son of Sir Rowland Hill, is credited with further advantageous changes, and still further improvements have been made of late years by the present supervisor, Mr. Garrett.

The total number of apparatus stations in England, Scotland, and Wales is 220, and there are 355 standards and 372 nets erected at these stations for the despatch and receipt of mails. There are fourty-four travelling post-office carriages, to which the apparatus, nets, &c., are fixed.

The number of exchanges of mails daily from the station standards into the carriage-nets is 516, and from the carriage to the stationary nets 530. The total number of mail-bags included in these exchanges is about 2,000. It rarely happens that a bag is missed or dropped. On an average about 110,000 letters, &c., a day are exchanged by the apparatus at a normal period, of which about 85,000, or nearly four-fifths, are sorted in the travelling post-offices, the remainder being sent direct in bags from one town to another through the travelling post-offices unopened.

Foreign and Colonial Mail-Packet Service.

The foreign and colonial mail service benefited almost as much by the introduction of steam packets as the inland service did by the introduction of railways. The state of the mail-service to Ireland in old times is illustrated by the fact that in 1693 a piteous petition was received from James Vickers, the captain of the "Grace Dogger," who, while his vessel lay in Dublin Bay, waiting for the tide to take him over the bar, was captured by a privateer, the captain of which, he complains, stripped the "Grace Dogger" of all her rigging and the furniture "wherewith she had been provided for the accommodation of passengers, leaving not so much as a spoone or a nail-hook to hang anything on." The vessel herself had to be ransomed for the sum of fifty guineas, which the Postmaster-General had to pay. The result of this and similar misfortunes was that the Postmaster-General resolved to build swift packet-boats that should escape the enemy, but built them so low in the water that a report states, "We doe find that in blowy weather they take in soe much water that the men are constantly wet all through, and can noe ways goe below to change themselves, being obliged to keep the hatches shut to save the vessels from sinking, which is such a