EARLY CARRIAGES & ROADS

BY

SIR WALTER GILBEY, Bart.

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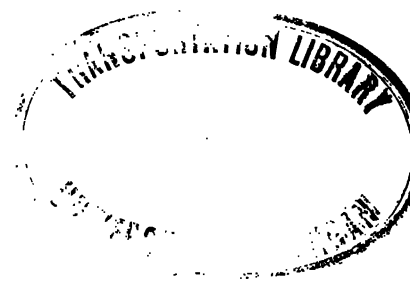

London
VINTON & CO., LTD., 9, NEW BRIDGE STREET, E.C.

1903

The use of carriages, coaches and wheeled conveyances have had an intimate relationship with the social life of English people from an early period in history.

Many instructive books have appeared on the subject of carriages generally, but these have been for the most part written by experts in the art of coach and carriage building.

In this publication, attention has been given to the early history of wheeled conveyances in England and their development up to recent times.

Elsenham Hall, Essex.
April, 1903.

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ILLUSTRATIONS.


Oliver Bale Sons and Danielsson Ltd
66 Titchfield Street
London

EARLY CARRIAGES AND ROADS.

Introduction.

Only some three hundred and fifty years have elapsed since wheeled conveyances for passengers came into use in England; but, once introduced, they rapidly found favour with all classes of society, more especially in cities. The progress of road-making and that of light horse-breeding are so intimately connected with the development of carriages and coaches that it is difficult to dissociate the three. In the early days of wheeled traffic the roads of our country were utterly unworthy of the name, being, more particularly in wet weather, such quagmires that they were often impassable.

Over such roads the heavy carriages of our ancestors could only be drawn by teams of heavy and powerful horses, strength being far more necessary than speed; and for many

generations the carriage or coach horse was none other than the Great or Shire Horse. Improved roads made rapid travel possible, and the increase of stage coaches created a demand for the lighter and more active harness horses, for production of which England became celebrated.

If comparatively little has been said concerning horses, it is because the writer has already dealt with that phase of the subject in previous works.*

FIRST USE OF WHEELED VEHICLES.

Wheeled vehicles for the conveyance of passengers were first introduced into England in the year 1555. The ancient British war chariot was neither more nor less than a fighting engine, which was probably never used for peaceful travelling from place to place. Carts for the conveyance of agricultural produce were in use long before any wheeled vehicle was adapted for passengers. The ancient laws and institutes of Wales, codified by Howel Dda, who reigned from A.D. 942 to 948,

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* *The Great Horse, or War Horse; Horses, Past and Present.* By Sir Walter Gilbey, Bart. (Vinton and Co., Ltd.)

describe the "qualities" of a three-year-old mare as "to draw a car uphill and downhill, and carry a burden, and to breed colts." The earliest mention of carts in England that some considerable research has revealed is in the *Cartulary of Ramsay Abbey* (Rolls Series), which tells us that on certain manors in the time of Henry I. (1100-1135) there were, among other matters, "three carts, each for four oxen or three horses."

BADNESS OF EARLY ROADS.

That carriages did not come into use at an earlier period than the sixteenth century is no doubt due to the nature of the cattle tracks and water-courses which did duty for roads in England. These were of such a nature that wheeled traffic was practically impossible for passengers, and was exceedingly difficult for carts and waggons carrying goods.

In old documents we find frequent mention of the impossibility of conveying heavy wares by road during the winter. For example, when Henry VIII. began to suppress the monasteries, in 1537, Richard Bellasis, entrusted with the task of dismantling Jervaulx Abbey, in Yorkshire, refers to the quantity of lead used for

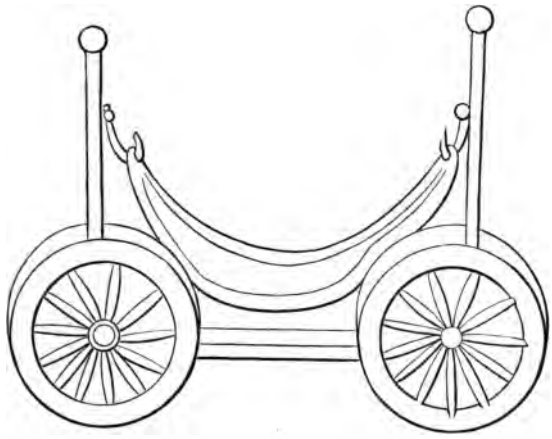
roofing purposes, which "cannot be conveyed away till next summer, for the ways in that countrie are so foule and deepe that no carriage (cart) can pass in winter."

In the Eastern counties, and no doubt elsewhere in England, our ancestors used the water-courses and shallow stream beds as their roads. This is clear to anyone who is at pains to notice the lie and course of old bye-ways; and it is equally clear that a stream when low offered a much easier route to carts, laden or empty, than could be found elsewhere. The beds of the water courses as a general rule are fairly smooth, hard and gravelled, and invited the carter to follow them rather than to seek a way across the wastes. In process of use the banks and sides were cut down by the wheels or by the spade; and eventually the water was diverted into another channel and its old bed was converted into a road.

SAXON VEHICLES AND HORSE LITTERS.

Strutt states that the chariot of the Anglo-Saxons was used by distinguished persons for travel. If the illustrations from which he describes them give a fair idea of their proportions and general construction, they must have been singularly uncomfortable

conveyances. The drawing is taken from an illuminated manuscript of the Book of Genesis in the Cotton Library (Claud. B. iv.), which Strutt refers to the ninth century, but which a later authority considers a production of the earlier part of



HAMMOCK WAGGON.
Supposed to have been in use in England about A.D. 1100-1200.

the eleventh. The original drawing shows a figure in the hammock waggon, which figure represents Joseph on his way to meet Jacob on the latter's arrival in Egypt; this figure has been erased in order to give a clear view of the conveyance, which no doubt correctly represents a travelling

carriage of the artist's own time, viz., A.D. 1100—1200.

Horse litters, carried between two horses, one in front and one behind, were used in early times by ladies of rank, by sick persons, and also on occasion to carry the dead. Similar vehicles of a lighter description, carried by men, were also in use.

William of Malmesbury states that the body of William Rufus was brought from the spot where he was killed in the New Forest in a horse-litter (A.D. 1100). When King John fell ill at Swineshead Abbey, in 1216, he was carried in a horse-litter to Newark, where he died. For a man who was in good health to travel in such a conveyance was considered unbecoming and effeminate. In recording the death, in 1254, of Earl Ferrers, from injuries received in an accident to his conveyance, Matthew Paris deems it necessary to explain that the Earl suffered from gout, which compelled him to use a litter when moving from place to place. The accident was caused by the carelessness of the driver of the horses, who upset the conveyance while crossing a bridge.

The illustration is copied from a drawing which occurs in a manuscript in the British Museum (Harl. 5256).

Froissart speaks of the English returning "in their charettes" from Scotland after Edward III.'s invasion of that country, about 1360; but there is little doubt that the vehicles referred to were merely the baggage carts which accompanied the army used by the footsore and fatigued soldiers.

HORSE LITTER USED A. D. 1400—1500.

The same chronicler refers to use of the "chare" or horse-litter in connection with Wat Tyler's insurrection in the year 1380:—

"The same day that these unhappy people of Kent were coming to London, there returned from Canterbury the King's mother, Princess of Wales, coming from her pilgrimage. She was in great jeopardy to have been lost, for these people came to her chare and dealt rudely with her."

As the chronicler states that the "good lady" came in one day from Canterbury to London, "for she never durst tarry by the way," it is evident that the chare was a "horse litter," the distance exceeding sixty miles.

The introduction of side-saddles by Anne of Bohemia, Richard II.'s Queen, is said by Stow to have thrown such conveyances into disuse: "So was the riding in those whirlicotes and chariots forsaken except at coronations and such like spectacles:" but when the whirlicote or horse-litter was employed for ceremonial occasions it was a thing of great magnificence.

CONTINENTAL CARRIAGES IN THE 13TH AND 14TH CENTURIES.

Carriages were in use on the continent long before they were employed in England. In 1294, Philip the Fair of France issued an edict whose aim was the suppression of luxury; under this ordinance the wives of citizens were forbidden to use carriages, and the prohibition appears to have been rigorously enforced. They were used in Flanders during the first half of the fourteenth century; an ancient Flemish chronicle in the British Museum (Royal MSS. 16,

F. III.) contains a picture of the flight of Ermengarde, wife of Salvard, Lord of Rouissillon.

The lady is seated on the floor boards of a springless four-wheeled cart or waggon, covered in with a tilt that could be raised

THE FLIGHT OF PRINCESS ERMENGARDE.
Carriage used about 1300-1350 in Flanders.

or drawn aside; the body of the vehicle is of carved wood and the outer edges of the wheels are painted grey to represent iron tires. The conveyance is drawn by two horses driven by a postillion who bestrides that on the near side. The traces are apparently of rope, and the outer trace

of the postillion's horse is represented as passing under the saddle girth, a length of leather (?) being let in for the purpose; the traces are attached to swingle-bars carried on the end of a cross piece secured to the base of the pole where it meets the body.

Carriages of some kind appear also to have been used by men of rank when travelling on the continent. *The Expeditions to Prussia and the Holy Land of Henry, Earl of Derby, in* 1390 *and* 1392-3 (Camden Society's Publications, 1894), indicate that the Earl, afterwards King Henry IV. of England, travelled on wheels at least part of the way through Austria.

The accounts kept by his Treasurer during the journey contain several entries relative to carriages; thus on November 14, 1392, payment is made for the expenses of two equerries named Hethcote and Mansel, who were left for one night at St. Michael, between Leoban and Kniltelfeld, with thirteen carriage horses. On the following day the route lay over such rugged and mountainous country that the carriage wheels were broken despite the liberal use of grease; and at last the narrowness of the way obliged the Earl to exchange his own carriage for two smaller ones better suited to the paths of the district.

The Treasurer also records the sale of an old carriage at Friola for three florins. The exchange of the Earl's "own carriage" is the significant entry: it seems very unlikely that a noble of his rank would have travelled so lightly that a single cart would contain his own luggage and that of his personal retinue; and it is also unlikely that he used one baggage cart of his own. The record points directly to the conclusion that the carriages were passenger vehicles used by the Earl himself.

CONVEYANCES IN HENRY VI.'s TIME.

It was probably possession of roads unworthy of the name that deterred the English from following the example of their continental neighbours, for forty years later the horse-litter was still the only conveyance used by ladies. On July 13, 1432, King Henry VI. writes to the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishops of Winchester and Durham, and the High Treasurer, in connection with the journeyings of Joan of Navarre, widow of Henry IV.:—

"And because we suppose that she will soon remove from the place where she is now, that ye order for her also horses for two chares and let her remove thence into whatever place within our kingdom that she pleases."

"CHARIOTS" FIRST USED ON GREAT OCCASIONS.

There is still some little doubt concerning the date when the carriage or coach was first seen in England; but it seems certain that wheeled vehicles of some kind were used on great ceremonial occasions before the coach suitable for ordinary travel came into vogue.

When Catherine of Aragon was crowned with Henry VIII., on June 24, 1509, she was, says Holinshed, conveyed in a litter followed by "chariots covered, with ladies therein." Similarly when Anne Boleyn passed in state through London she was borne in a litter followed by ladies in a chariot. From these records it is clear that the horse-litter was considered the more dignified conveyance.

The litter used by princesses and ladies of high degree on state occasions was very richly furnished. The poles on which it was supported were covered with crimson velvet, the pillows and cushions with white satin, and the awning overhead was of cloth of gold. The trappings of the horses and dress of the grooms who led them were equally splendid. Ancient records contain minute particulars of the materials purchased for litters on special occasions, and

these show with what luxury the horse litter of a royal lady was equipped.

In this connection we must note that Markland, in his *Remarks on the Early Use of Carriages in England*, discriminates between the "chare" and the horse-litter: the chare gave accommodation to two persons or more and was used for ordinary purposes of travel, and he believes that it ran on wheels; whereas the horse-litter accommodated only one person, and that usually a lady of high rank, on ceremonial occasions.

The chariot was clearly rising in esteem at this period, for when Queen Mary went in state to be crowned in the year 1553, she herself occupied a chariot. It is described as "a chariot with cloth of tissue, drawn with six horses"; and it was followed by another "with cloth of silver and six horses," in which were seated Elizabeth and Anne of Cleves.

FIRST USE OF CARRIAGES; CALLED COACHES.

We are now come to the period when the coach proper was introduced into England. Stow, in his *Summary of the English Chronicles*, says that carriages were not used in England till 1555, when Walter Rippon built one for the Earl of Rutland, "this

being the first ever made." Taylor, the "Water Poet," in his life of Thomas Parr, states that Parr was 81 years old "before there was any coach in England." Parr was born in 1483, so the year in which he reached 81 would be 1564; in that year William Boonen, a Dutchman, brought from the Netherlands a coach which was presented to Queen Elizabeth; and Taylor, on Parr's authority, mentions this as the "first one ever seen here."

The obvious inference is that Parr had not heard of or (what is more probable considering his advanced age) had forgotten the coach built eleven years earlier for a much less conspicuous person than the sovereign. There is also mention in the Burghley Papers (III., No. 53) quoted by Markland, of Sir T. Hoby offering the use of his coach to Lady Cecil in 1556. It is quite likely that the coach brought by Boonen from the Netherlands served as a model for builders in search for improvements, as we read in Stow's *Summary:* "In 1564, Walter Rippon made the first *hollow, turning coach,* with pillars and arches, for her Majesty Queen Elizabeth." What a "hollow, turning" coach may have been it is difficult to conjecture. Drawings of a hundred years

later than this period show no mechanism resembling a "turning head" or fifth wheel. Captain Malet* says that the Queen suffered so much in this vehicle, when she went in it to open Parliament, that she never used it again. The difference between the coach for ordinary travel and the chariot for ceremony is suggested by the next passage in the *Summary:* "In 1584 he (Rippon) made a *chariot throne* with four pillars behind to bear a crown imperial on the top, and before, two lower pillars whereon stood a lion and a dragon, the supporters of the arms of England."

Queen Elizabeth, according to Holinshed, used a "chariot" when she went to be crowned at Westminster in 1558.

COACHES IN FRANCE.

By way of showing how the old authorities differ, mention may be made of the coach which Henry Fitzalan, Earl of Arundel, brought from France and presented to the Queen, it is said, in 1580. This vehicle is cited as the first coach ever seen in public! but inasmuch as we have ample evidence to

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* *Annals of the Road*, London, 1876.

prove the last statement incorrect, apart from the fact that the Earl died in 1579, nothing more need be said about it.

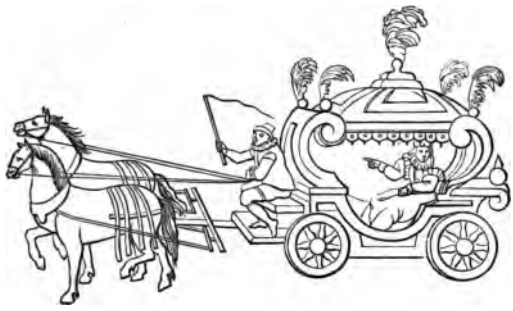
France does not seem to have been very far ahead of Britain in the adoption of coaches. In 1550 there were only three in Paris; one belonged to the Queen of Francis I., another to Diana of Poitiers, and the third to René de Laval, who was so corpulent that he could not ride. Mr. George Thrupp, in his *History of the Art of Coach Building* (1876), observes that "there must have been many other vehicles in France, but it seems only three covered and suspended coaches."

COACHES FIRST USED BY QUEEN ELIZABETH.

Queen Elizabeth travelled in a coach, either the one built by Walter Rippon or that brought by Boonen (who, by the way, was appointed her coachman), on some of her royal progresses through the kingdom. When she visited Warwick in 1572, at the request of the High Bailiff she "caused every part and side of the coach to be opened that all her subjects present might behold her, which most gladly they desired."

The vehicle which could thus be opened

on "every part and side" is depicted incidentally in a work executed by Hoefnagel in 1582, which Markland believed to be probably the first engraved representation of an English coach. As will be seen from the reproduction here given, the body carried a roof or canopy on pillars, and the intervening spaces could be closed by means of curtains.



QUEEN ELIZABETH'S TRAVELLING COACH.
About the year 1582.

Queen Elizabeth seems to have preferred riding on a pillion when she could; she rode thus on one occasion from London to Exeter, and again we read of her going in state to St. Paul's on a pillion behind her Master of the Horse. Sir Thomas Browne, writing to his son on October 15, 1680, says: "When Queen Elizabeth came to Norwich, 1578, she came on horseback

from Ipswich by the high road to Norwich, but she had a coach or two in her train."

Country gentlemen continued to travel on horseback, though ladies sometimes made their journeys by coach. The *Household Book* of the Kytson family of Hengrave in Suffolk contains the following entry under date December 1, 1574: "For the hire of certain horses to draw my mistress' coach from Whitsworth to London 26 shillings and 8 pence."

Other entries show that "my mistress" occupied the coach: whence it would appear that not all our country roads in Queen Elizabeth's time were impassable during the winter, as we might reasonably infer from many contemporary records. The horse-litter, as we may well suppose, was an easier conveyance than the early springless coach: for example, in Hunter's *Hallamshire* we find mention of Sir Francis Willoughby's request in 1589 to the Countess of Shrewsbury to lend her horse-litter and furniture for his wife, who was ill and unable to travel either on horseback or in a coach.

It may be observed here that the latest reference we have found to the use of the horse-litter occurs in the *Last Speech of Thomas Pride* (Harleian Miscellany): in

1680 an accident happened to General Shippon, who "came in a horse-litter wounded to London; when he paused by the brewhouse in St. John Street a mastiff attacked the horse, and he was tossed like a dog in a blanket."

Owing no doubt to their patronage by royalty, coaches grew rapidly popular. William Lilly, in a play called "Alexander and Campaspes," which was first printed in 1584, makes one of his characters complain of those who had been accustomed to "go to a battlefield on hard-trotting horses now riding in easy coaches up and down to court ladies." Stow, referring to the coach brought to England by Boonen, says:—

> "After a while divers great ladies, with as great jealousy of the Queen's displeasure, made them coaches and rid in them up and down the countries, to the great admiration of all the beholders, but then by little and little they grew usual among the nobilitie and others of sort, and within twenty years became a great trade of coach making."

This confirms the statement of Lilly above quoted: it is quite clear therefore that, about 1580, coaches had come into general use among the wealthy classes. Their popularity became a source of anxiety to those who saw in the use of a coach the coming degeneracy of men and neglect of horsemanship.

DUKE OF BRUNSWICK, 1588, FORBIDS USE OF COACHES.

In 1588, Julius Duke of Brunswick issued a proclamation forbidding the vassals and servants of his electorate to journey in coaches, but on horseback, "when we order them to assemble, either altogether or in part, in times of turbulence, or to receive their fiefs, or when on other occasions they visit our court." The Duke expressed himself strongly in this proclamation, being evidently resolved that the vassals, servants and kinsmen who "without distinction young and old have *dared* to give themselves up to indolence, and to riding in coaches," should resume more active habits.

The same tendency on the one side and the same feeling on the other in this country led to the introduction of a Bill in Parliament in November, 1601, "to restrain the excessive use of coaches," but it was rejected. Whereupon—

"Motion was made by the Lord Keeper, that forasmuch as the said Bill did in some sort concern the maintenance of horses within this realm, consideration might be had of the statutes heretofore made and ordained touching the breed and maintenance of horses. And that Mr. Attorney-general should peruse and consider of the said statutes, and of some fit Bill to be drawn and prefered to the house touch-

ing the same, and concerning the use of coaches: which motion was approved of the House."

It does not appear, however, that any steps were taken by the Parliament of the time to check the liberty of those who could afford it to indulge in coaches.

They were probably little used except in London and large towns where the streets afforded better going than country roads: though, as we have seen, Queen Elizabeth took coaches with her when making a progress. The coach seems to have been unknown in Scotland till near the end of the century, for we read that when, in 1598, the English Ambassador to Scotland brought one with him "it was counted a great marvel."

THE STAGE WAGGON.

About 1564 the early parent of the stage coach made its appearance. Stow says: "And about that time began long waggons to come in use, such as now come to London from Canterbury, Norwich, Ipswich, Gloucester, &c., with passengers and commodities." These were called "stages": they were roomy vehicles with very broad wheels which prevented them sinking too deeply into the mud: they travelled very slowly, but

writers of the period make frequent allusions to the convenience they provided. Until the "long waggon" came into use the saddle and pack horse were the only means of travelling and carrying goods: this conveyance was largely used by people of small means until late in the eighteenth century, when stage coaches began to offer seats at fares within the reach of the comparatively poor.

Some confusion is likely to arise when searching old records from the fact that words now in current use have lost their original meaning. Thus in an Act passed in the year 1555 for "The amending of High Ways," the preamble states that certain highways are "now both very noisome and tedious to travel in and dangerous to all passengers and 'cariages.'" We might read this to mean vehicles for the conveyance of passengers; but the text (which empowers local authorities to make parishioners give four days' work annually on the roads where needed) shows us that the "cariage" or "caryage" is identical with the "wayne" or "cart" used in husbandry. "Carriage" is used in the same sense in a similar Act of Elizabeth dated 1571, which requires the local authority to repair certain

streets near Aldgate which "become so miry and foul in the winter time" that it is hard for foot-passengers and "caryages" to pass along them.

THE INTRODUCTION OF SPRINGS.

It is impossible to discover when builders of passenger vehicles first endeavoured to counteract the jolting inseparable from the passage of a primitive conveyance over rough roads by means of springs. Homer tells us that Juno's car was slung upon cords to lessen the jolting: and the ancient Roman carriages were so built that the body rested on the centre of a pole which connected the front and rear axles, thus reducing the jolt by whatever degree of spring or elasticity the pole possessed.

To come down to later times, Mr. Bridges Adams in *English Pleasure Carriages* (1837) refers to a coach presented by the King of Hungary to King Charles VII. of France (1422-1461), the body of which "trembled." Mr. George Thrupp considers that this probably indicates a coach-body hung on leather straps or braces, and was a specimen of the vehicle then in use in Hungary. At Coburg several ancient carriages are preserved: one of those built in 1584 for the

marriage ceremony of Duke John Casimir, the Elector of Saxony, is hung on leather braces from carved standard posts which, says Mr. Thrupp, " are evidently developed from the standards of the common waggon. The body of this coach is six feet four inches long and three feet wide: the wheels have wooden rims, but over the joints of the felloes are small plates of iron about ten inches long."

In regard to these iron plates it will be remembered that the wheels of the coach represented in the "Flemish Chronicle" of the first half of the fourteenth century referred to on pp. 8-9, is furnished with complete iron tires. Neither this vehicle, nor that of Queen Elizabeth, a sketch of which is given on p. 17 are furnished with braces of any kind. It would not be judicious to accept these drawings as exactly representing the construction of the carriages, but if the artist has given a generally accurate picture it is difficult to see how or where leather braces could have been applied to take the dead weight of the coach body off the under-carriage.

STEEL SPRINGS INTRODUCED.

Mr. Thrupp states that steel springs were first applied to wheel carriages about

1670,* when a vehicle resembling a Sedan chair on wheels, drawn and pushed by two men, was introduced into Paris. This conveyance was improved by one Dupin, who applied two "elbow springs" by long shackles to the front axle-tree which worked up and down in a groove under the seat. The application of steel springs to coaches drawn by horses was not generally practised until long afterwards: in 1770 Mons. Roubo, a Frenchman, wrote a treatise on carriage building, from which we learn that springs were by no means universally employed.

When used, says Mr. Thrupp,

"They were applied to the four corners of a perch carriage and placed upright, and at first only clipped in the middle to the posts of the earlier carriages, while the leather braces went from the tops of the springs to the bottoms of the bodies without any long iron loops such as we now use; and as the braces were very long we find that complaints were made of the excessive swinging and tilting and jerking of the body. The Queen's coach is thus suspended. Four elbow springs, as we should call them, were fastened to the bottom of the body, but again the ends did not project beyond the bottom, and the braces were still far too long; and Mons. Roubo doubts whether springs were much use."

The doubt concerning the value of springs

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* See page 84.

was shared in this country; for Mr. Richard Lovell Edgeworth, in his *Essay on the Construction of Roads and Carriages* (1817), tells us that in 1768 he discovered that springs were as advantageous to horses as to passengers, and constructed a carriage for which the Society of English Arts and Manufactures presented him with a gold medal. In this carriage the axletrees were divided and the motion of each wheel was relieved by a spring.

Travel in a springless coach over uneven streets and the roughest of roads could not have been a sufficiently luxurious mode of progress to lay the traveller open to charge of effeminacy. Taylor, the Water Poet, was no doubt biased in favour of the watermen, but he probably exaggerated little when he wrote, in 1605, of men and women "so tost, tumbled, jumbled and rumbled" in the coach of the time.

THE FIRST HACKNEY COACHES.

It was in the year 1605 that hackney coaches came into use; for several years these vehicles did not stand or "crawl" about the streets to be hired, but remained in the owners' yards until sent for. In 1634 the first "stand" was established in

London, as appears from a letter written by Lord Stafford to Mr. Garrard in that year:—

"I cannot omit to mention any new thing that comes up amongst us though ever so trivial. Here is one Captain Bailey, he hath been a sea captain, but now lives on land about this city where he tries experiments. He hath created, according to his ability, some four hackney coaches, put his men into livery and appointed them to stand at the Maypole in the Strand, giving them instructions at what rate to carry men into several parts of the town where all day they may be had. Other hackney men veering this way, they flocked to the same place and performed their journeys at the same rate so that sometimes there is twenty of them together which dispose up and down, that they and others are to be had everywhere, as watermen are to be had at the waterside."

Lord Stafford adds that everybody is much pleased with the innovation. It may here be said, on the authority of Fynes Morryson, who wrote in 1617, that coaches were not to be hired anywhere but in London at that time. All travel (save in the slow long waggons) was performed on horseback, the "hackney men"* providing horses at from 2½d. to 3d. per mile for those who did not keep their own.

The number of coaches increased rapidly

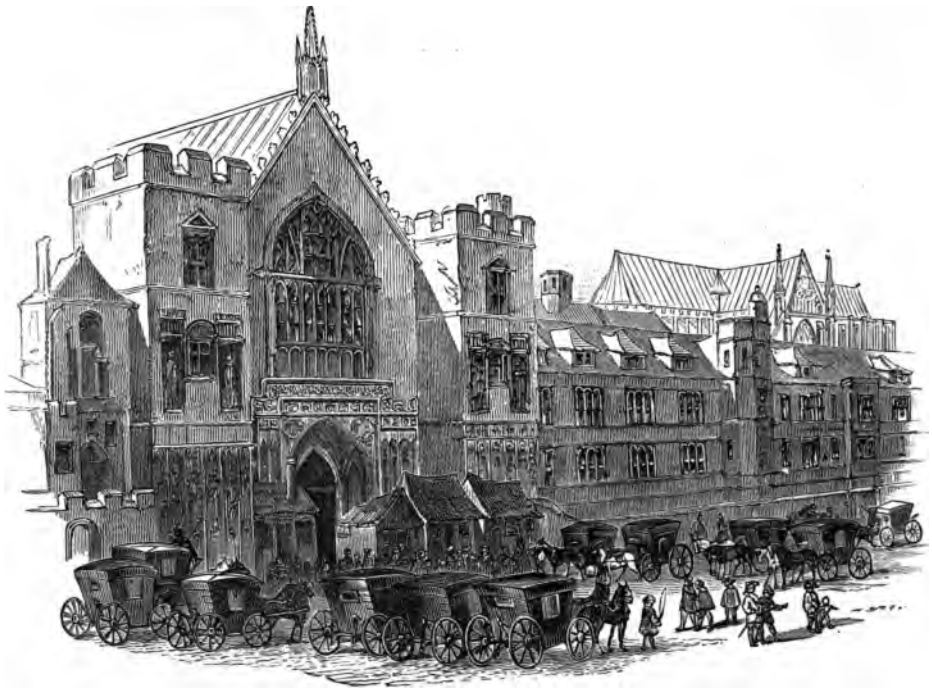
* See *Horses Past and Present*, by Sir Walter Gilbey, Bart. Vinton & Co., 1900.

during the earlier part of the seventeenth century.

EXCESSIVE NUMBER OF COACHES IN LONDON.

The preamble of a patent granted Sir Saunders Duncombe in 1634 to let Sedan chairs refers to the fact that the streets of London and Westminster "are of late time so much encumbered and pestered with the unnecessary multitude of coaches therein used"; and in 1635 Charles I. issued a proclamation on the subject. This document states that the "general and promiscuous use" of hackney coaches in great numbers causes "disturbance" to the King and Queen personally, to the nobility and others of place and degree; "pesters" the streets, breaks up the pavements and cause increase in the prices of forage. For which reasons the use of hackney coaches in London and Westminster and the suburbs is forbidden altogether, unless the passenger is making a journey of at least three miles. Within the city limits only private coaches were allowed to ply, and the owner of a coach was required to keep four good horses or geldings for the king's service.

This proclamation evidently produced the desired effect, for in 1637 there were only



HACKNEY COACHES IN LONDON, 1637.

sixty hackney carriages in London: the majority of these were probably owned by James Duke of Hamilton, Charles' Master of the Horse, to whom was granted in July of that year power to license fifty hackney coachmen in London, Westminster and the suburbs, and "in other convenient places"; and this notwithstanding the fact that in 1636 the vehicles "in London, the suburbs and within four-mile compass without are reckoned to the number of six thousand and odd."*

Charles I. can hardly have shared the dislike exhibited by some of his subjects to wheel passenger traffic, for in 1641 we find him granting licenses for the importation of horses and enjoining licensees to import *coach* horses, mares, and geldings not under 14 hands high and between the ages of three and seven years.

HACKNEY CARRIAGES AND THE THAMES WATERMEN.

The number of cabs, then called hackney coaches, soon produced an effect upon the earnings of the Thames watermen, who,

* *Coach and Sedan Pleasantly Disputing for Place and Precedence, the Brewer's Cart being Moderator.* Published at London by Robert Raworth for John Crooch in 1636.

until these vehicles were introduced, enjoyed the monopoly of passenger traffic. Thomas Dekker* refers to the resentment felt by the watermen in 1607, two years after the hackney coach made its appearance :—

"The sculler told him he was now out of cash, it was a hard time; he doubts there is some secret bridge made over to hell, and that they steal thither in coaches, for every justice's wife and the wife of every citizen must be jolted now."

There seems to have been good reason for the preference given the hackney coach over the waterman's wherry. The preamble of an Act passed in 1603 "Concerning Wherrymen and Watermen" shows that the risks attending a trip on the Thames were not inconsiderable, and that love of novelty was not the only motive which caused the citizens of London to take the hackney coach instead of the wherry. This Act forbade the employment of apprentices under 18 years of age, premising that :—

"It hath often happened that divers and sundry people passing by water upon the River of Thames between Windsor and Gravesend have been put to great hazard and danger of the loss of their lives and goods, and many times have perished and been drowned in the said River through the unskilfulness

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* *A Knight's Conjuring Done in Earnest.* By Thomas Dekker. London: 1607.

and want of knowledge or experience in the wherrymen and watermen."

In 1636, when, as we have seen, there were over 6,000 coaches, private and hackney, in London, Sedan chairs also were to be hired in the streets; and the jealousy with which the hackney coachman regarded the chairman was only equalled by the jealousy with which the waterman regarded them both. We quote from "Coach and Sedan," the curious little publication before referred to:—

"Coaches and Sedans (quoth the waterman) they deserve both to be thrown into the Thames, and but for stopping the Channel I would they were, for I am sure where I was wont to have eight or ten fares in a morning, I now scarce get two in a whole day. Our wives and children at home are ready to pine, and some of us are fain for means to take other professions upon us."

HACKNEY CARRIAGES A NUISANCE IN LONDON.

By the year 1660, the number of hackney coaches in London had again grown so large that they were described in a Royal Proclamation as "a common nuisance," while their "rude and disorderly handling" constituted a public danger. For these reasons the vehicles were forbidden to stand in the streets for hire, and the drivers were directed to stay in the yards until they

might be wanted. We can well understand that the narrowness of the streets made large numbers of coaches standing, or "crawling," to use the modern term, obstacles to traffic; and it is interesting to notice that the earliest patent granted in connection with passenger vehicles (No. 31 in 1625) was to Edward Knapp for a device (among others) to make the wheels of coaches and other carriages approach to or recede from each other "where the narrowness of the way may require."

LICENSED HACKNEY CARRIAGES.

In 1662, there were about 2,490 hackney coaches in London, if we may accept the figures given by John Cressel in a pamphlet, which we shall consider on a future page. It was in this year that Charles II. passed a law appointing Commissioners with power to make certain improvements in the London streets. One of the duties entrusted to them was that of reducing the number of hackney coaches by granting licenses; and only 400 licenses were to be granted.

These Commissioners grossly abused the authority placed in their hands, wringing bribes from the unfortunate persons who applied for licenses, and carrying out their

task with so little propriety that in 1663 they were indicted and compelled to restore moneys they had wrongfully obtained. In regard to this it is to be observed that one of the 400 hackney-coach licenses sanctioned by the Act was a very valuable possession. We learn from a petition submitted by the hackney coachmen to Parliament that holders of these licenses, which cost £5 each, sold them for £100. The petition referred to is undated, but appears to have been sent in when William III.'s Act to license 700 hackney coaches (passed in 1694) was before Parliament.

The bitterness of the watermen against Sedan chairs seems to have died out by Pepys' time, but it was still hot against the hackney coaches, as a passage in the *Diary* sufficiently proves. Proceeding by boat to Whitehall on February 2, 1659, Samuel Pepys talked with his waterman and learned how certain cunning fellows who wished to be appointed State Watermen had cozened others of their craft to support an address to the authorities in their favour. According to Pepys' informant, nine or ten thousand hands were set to this address (the men were obviously unable to read or write) "when it was only told them that it was a petition against hackney coaches."

COACHES WITH "BOOTS."

From *Coach and Sedan* (see page 30), we obtain a quaint but fairly graphic description of the coach of this period :—

"The coach was a thick, burly, square-set fellow in a doublet of black leather, brasse button'd down the breast, back, sleeves and wings, with monstrous wide boots, fringed at the top with a net fringe, and a round breech (after the old fashion) gilded, and on his back an atchievement of sundry coats [of arms] in their proper colours."

COACH OF QUEEN ELIZABETH'S LADIES.
Showing near-side "Boot."

The "boots" were projections at the sides of the body between the front and back wheels, as shown in the drawing of the coach occupied by Queen Elizabeth's ladies; and there is much evidence to support the opinion that these boots were not covered.

Taylor in *The World Runnes on Wheeles* describes the boot with picturesque vigour:—

> "The coach is a close hypocrite, for it hath a cover for any knavery and curtains to veil or shadow any wickedness; besides, like a perpetual cheater, it wears two boots and no spurs, sometimes having two pairs of legs in one boot, and often-times (against nature) most preposterously it makes fair ladies wear the boot; and if you note, they are carried back to back like people surprised by pirates, to be tied in that miserable manner and thrown overboard into the sea."

These two fanciful descriptions explain very clearly what the "boot" was and how occupied. The "monstrous width" referred to in *Coach and Sedan* confirms the statement by Taylor that sometimes "two pairs of legs" occupied it, the proprietors of the legs sitting back to back. "No trace of glass windows or perfect doors seems to have existed up to 1650" (Thrupp), so we can well understand that the passengers who were obliged to occupy the boot of a stage coach (for these as well as hackney coaches were so built) on a prolonged journey would have an exceedingly uncomfortable seat in cold or wet weather.

It was no doubt an open boot which was occupied by the writer of the curious letter quoted by Markland. Mr. Edward Parker

is addressing his father, who resided at Browsholme, near Preston, in Lancashire; the letter is dated November 3, 1663:—

"I got to London on Saturday last; my journey was noe ways pleasant, being forced to ride in the boote all the waye. Ye company yt came up with mee were persons of greate quality as knights and ladyes. My journey's expense was 30s. This traval hath soe indisposed mee yt I am resolved never to ride up againe in ye coatch. I am extreamely hott and feverish; what this may tend to I know not, I have not as yet advised with any doctor."

Sir W. Petty's assertion that the splendour of coaches increased greatly during the Stuart period recalls a passage in Kennett's *History of England.* George Villiers, the great favourite of James I. who created him Duke of Buckingham, had six horses to draw his coach ("which was wondered at then as a novelty and imputed to him as a mast'ring pride"). The "stout old Earl of Northumberland," not to be outdone by the upstart favourite, "thought if Buckingham had six, he might very well have eight in his coach, with which he rode through the city of London to the Bath, to the vulgar talk and admiration." The first coaches were drawn by two horses only; love of display led to the use of more for town use, but the deplorable condition of the country roads

justified the use of as many as quagmires might compel.

How much a coach weighed in these early days we do not know: Mr. R. L. Edgeworth, writing in 1817, says, "now travelling carriages frequently weigh above a ton;" and as carriages had undergone vast improvements by that date, we are justified in concluding that those of a hundred or a hundred and fifty years earlier weighed a great deal more.

CARRIAGES IN HYDE PARK.

During the Commonwealth (1649-1659), it was the fashion to drive in "the Ring" in Hyde Park. The Ring is described by a French writer,* as two or three hundred paces in diameter with a sorry kind of balustrade consisting of poles placed on stakes three feet from the ground; round this the people used to drive, in Cromwell's time. at great speed, as appears from a letter dated May 2, 1654, from a gentleman in London to a country friend, quoted by Mr. Jacob Larwood in his *Story of the London Parks*, (1872):—

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* M. Misson. *Memoirs and Observations of a Journey in England*, 1697.

"When my Lord Protector's coach came into the Park with Colonel Ingleby and my Lord's three daughters, the coaches and horses flocked about them like some miracle. But they galloped (after the mode court-pace now, and which they all use wherever they go) round and round the Park, and all that great multitude hunted them and caught them still at the turn like a hare, and then made a lane with all reverent haste for them and so after them again.* and I never saw the like in my life."

There is an interesting letter from the Dutch Ambassadors to the States General, dated October 16, 1654, which is worth quoting here. The Ambassadors give particulars of the accident to explain why no business has been done lately:—

"His Highness [Oliver Cromwell], only accompanied with Secretary Thurloe and some few of his gentlemen and servants, went to take the air in Hyde Park, where he caused some dishes of meat to be brought, where he had his dinner; and afterwards had a mind to drive the coach himself. Having put only the Secretary into it, being those six grey horses which the Count of Oldenburgh † had presented unto His Highness who drove pretty handsomely for some time. But at last, provoking these horses too much with the whip, they grew unruly and ran so fast that the postilion could not hold them in, whereby

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* The following sentence from Misson explains this reference. He says of the way people drive in the Ring: "When they have turned for some time round one way they face about and turn the other."

† This suggests that the North German province of Oldenbourg was famed then, as now, for its breed of coach horses.

His Highness was flung out of the coach box upon the pole. . . . The Secretary's ankle was hurt leaping out and he keeps his chamber."

From this it is evident that when six horses were used a postillion rode one of the leaders and controlled them; while the driver managed the wheelers and middle pair. When four horses were driven it was the custom to have two outriders, one to ride at the leaders' heads and one at the wheelers'; in town this would be merely display, but on a journey the outrider's horses might replace those of the team in case of accident, or more frequently, be added to the team to help drag the coach over a stretch of bad road.

COACH AND CART RACING.

John Evelyn in his Diary refers to a coach race which took place in the Park on May 20, 1658, but gives no particulars. Mr. Jacob Larwood observes that at this period and for a century later coach-racing was a national sport; some considerable research through the literature of these times, however, has thrown no light upon this sport, and while we need not doubt that coaches when they chanced to meet on suitable ground did make trials of speed, it is open

to question whether the practice was ever developed into a sport. It may be that Mr. Larwood had in mind the curious cart-team races described by Marshall in his *Rural Economy of Norfolk*, published in 1795.

This writer tells us that before Queen Anne's reign the farmers of Norfolk used an active breed of horses which could not only trot but gallop. He describes as an eye-witness the races which survived to his day; the teams consisted of five horses, which were harnessed to an empty waggon :—

> "A team following another broke into a gallop, and unmindful of the ruts, hollow cavities and rugged ways, contended strenuously for the lead, while the foremost team strove as eagerly to keep it. Both were going at full gallop, as fast indeed as horses in harness could go for a considerable distance, the drivers standing upright in their respective waggons."

REGULATIONS FOR HACKNEY CARRIAGES.

The Act of 1662 has already been referred to in connection with the number of hackney coaches in London; we may glance at it again, as it gives a few interesting particulars. No license was to be granted to any person following another trade or occupation, and nobody might take out more than two licenses. Preference was to be given to

"ancient coachmen" (by which expression we shall doubtless be right in understanding, not aged men but men who had followed the calling in previous years), and to such men as had suffered for their service to Charles I. or Charles II.

Horses used in hackney coaches were to be not less than fourteen hands high. The fares were duly prescribed by time and distance; for a day of twelve hours the coachman was to be paid not over 10s.; or 1s. 6d. for the first and 1s. for every subsequent hour. "No gentleman or other person" was to pay over 1s. for hire of a hackney coach "from any of the Inns of Court or thereabouts to any part of St. James' or the city of Westminster (except beyond Tuttle Street)"; and going eastwards the shilling fare would carry the hirer from the Inns of Court to the Royal Exchange; eighteenpence was the fare to the Tower, to Bishopsgate Street or Aldgate. This Act forbade any hackney coach to ply for hire on Sunday; thus the hackney carriage was placed in the same category as the Thames wherries and barges. The restrictions concerning the persons to whom licenses might be granted obviously afforded the Commissioners opportunity for the malpractices we have already mentioned.

For further information concerning this period we naturally turn to Mr. Pepys, who patronised the hackney coach so frequently that when he was considering the propriety of setting up his own private carriage, he justified his decision to do so by the fact that "expense in hackney coaches is now so great." Economy was not the only motive; on the contrary, this entry in his Diary appears to have been merely the salve to a conscience that reproached his vanity. In 1667 he confides more than once to the Diary that he is "almost ashamed to be seen in a hackney," so much had his importance increased: and on July 10, 1668, he went "with my people in a glass hackney coach to the park, but was ashamed to be seen." The private carriage he set up in December of that year will be referred to presently.

The public conveyance available for hire in Pepys' time was evidently a cumbrous but roomy conveyance; as when a great barrel of oysters "as big as sixteen others" was given him on March 16, 1664, he took it in the coach with him to Mr. Turner's: a circumstance that suggests the vehicle was built with boots.

No doubt many of these hackney carriages had formerly been the private property of gentlemen, which when old and shabby were sold cheaply to ply for hire in the streets.

Coaches with boots were being replaced by the improved "glass coach" a few years later, and of course the relative merits of the old and new styles of vehicle were weighed by all who were in the habit of using hackney coaches. It was one of the old kind to which Pepys refers in the following passage :—

August 23, 1667. "Then abroad to Whitehall in a hackney coach with Sir W. Pen, and in our way in the narrow street near Paul's going the back way by Tower Street, and the coach being forced to put back, he was turning himself into a cellar [parts of London were still in ruins after the Great Fire], which made people cry out to us, and so we were forced to leap out—he out of one and I out of the other boote. *Query*, whether a glass coach would have permitted us to have made the escape?"

Other objections to glass coaches appear in the following entry :—

September 23, 1667. "Another pretty thing was my Lady Ashley speaking of the bad qualities of glass coaches, among others the flying open of the doors upon any great shake; but another was that my Lady Peterborough being in her glass' coach with the glass up, and seeing a lady pass by in a coach whom she would salute, the glass was so clear that she thought it had been open, and so ran her head through the glass and cut all her forehead."

The usage of the time appears to have been for the driver of a hackney carriage to fill up his vehicle as he drove along the streets somewhat after the manner of a modern 'bus conductor, if we correctly understand the following entry in the Diary :—

February 6, 1663. "So home: and being called by a coachman who had a fare in him he carried me beyond the Old Exchange, and there set down his fare, who would not pay him what was his due because he carried a stranger [Pepys] with him, and so after wrangling he was fain to be content with sixpence, and being vexed the coachman would not carry me home a great while, but set me down there for the other sixpence, but with fair words he was willing to it."

Whence it also appears that some members of the public objected to this practice. The cabman of that time was evidently an insolent character, for Pepys refers contemptuously to a "precept" which was drawn up in March, 1663, by the Lord Mayor, Sir John Robinson, against coachmen who "affronted the gentry."

GLASS WINDOWS IN CARRIAGES.

Glass was used in carriages at this time, as the entries quoted from Pepys' Diary on pages 43 and 44 tell us. Mr. Thrupp states that "no trace of glass windows or perfect doors seem to have existed up to

1650." Glass was in common use for house windows before that date, and Mr. Thrupp refers to the statement that the wife of the Emperor Ferdinand III. rode in a glass carriage so small that it contained only two persons as early as 1631. The manufacture of glass was established in England in 1557* (Stow), but plate glass, and none other could have withstood the rough usage which coaches suffered from the wretched roads, was not made in England until 1670; previous to that date it was imported from France. A patent (No. 244) was granted in 1685 to John Bellingham "for making square window glasses for chaises and coaches."

Pepys writes in his Diary, December 30, 1668: "A little vexed to be forced to pay 40s. for a glass of my coach, which was broke the other day, nobody knows how, within the door while it was down: but I do doubt that I did break it myself with my

* James I., by Proclamation, in 1615, forbade the manufacture of glass if wood were used as fuel, on the ground that the country was thereby denuded of timber. In 1635 Sir Robert Maunsell perfected a method of manufacturing "all sorts of glass with sea coale or pitt coale," and Charles I. forbade the importation of foreign glass in order to encourage and assist this new industry.

knees." Forty shillings for a single pane seems to indicate that it was plate glass. This passage also shows us that the lower part of the coach door must have received the glass between the outer woodwork and a covering of upholstery of some kind. Had there been wooden casing inside Pepys would not have broken it with his knees, and had it been uncovered the accident could not have escaped discovery at the moment.

IMPROVEMENTS IN CARRIAGES.

With reference to the introduction of springs: the patent granted to Edward Knapp in 1625 protected an invention for "hanging the bodies of carriages on springs of steel": the method is not described. Unfortunately, the Letters Patent of those days scrupulously refrain from giving any information that would show us *how* the inventor proposed to achieve his object. Knapp's springs could not have been efficacious, for forty years later ingenious men were working at this problem. On May 1, 1665, Pepys went to dine with Colonel Blunt at Micklesmarsh, near Greenwich, and after dinner was present at the

"— trial of some experiments about making of coaches easy. And several we tried: but one did

prove mighty easy (not here for me to describe, but the whole body of the coach lies upon one long spring), and we all, one after another, rid in it; and it is very fine and likely to take."

These experiments were made before a committee appointed by the Royal Society, from whose records it appears that on a previous date Colonel Blunt had "produced another model of a chariot with four springs, esteemed by him very easy both to the rider and horse, and at the same time cheap."

This arrangement of springs evidently did not give such satisfactory results as the one mentioned above by Pepys. On May 3, 1665, we learn from Birch's *History of the Royal Society*:—

"Mr. Hook produced the model of a chariot with two wheels and short double springs, to be drawn with one horse; the chair [seat] of it being so fixed upon two springs that the person sitting just over or rather a little behind the axle-tree was, when the experiment was made at Colonel Blount's house, carried with as much ease as one could be in the French chariot without at all burthening the horse."

Mr. Hook showed:—

"Two drafts of this model having this circumstantial difference, one of these was contrived so that the boy sitting on a seat made for him behind the chair and guiding the reins over the top of it, drives the horse. The other by placing the chair clear behind the wheels, the place of entry being also behind and the saddle on the horse's back being to be borne up

by the shafts, that the boy riding on it and driving the horse should be little or no burden to the horse."

It seems to have been this latter variety of Colonel Blount's invention, or a modification of it, which Pepys saw on January 22, 1666, and describes as "a pretty odd thing."

On September 5, 1665, Pepys writes:—

"After dinner comes Colonel Blunt in his new chariot made with springs. And he hath rode, he says now, this journey many miles in it with one horse and outdrives any coach and outgoes any horses, and so easy, he says. So for curiosity I went into it to try it and up the hill to the heath and over the cart ruts, and found it pretty well, but not so easy as he pretends."

Colonel Blunt, or Blount, seems to have devoted much time and ingenuity to the improvement of the coach, for on January 22, 1666, the committee again assembled at his house

"—to consider again of the business of chariots and try their new invention which I saw my Lord Brouncker ride in; where the coachman sits astride upon a pole over the horse but do not touch the horse, which is a pretty odd thing: but it seems it is most easy for the horse, and as they say for the man also."

On February 16, 1667, a chariot invented by Dr. Croune was produced for inspection

by the members of the Royal Society and "generally approved." No particulars of the vehicle are given: we are only told that "some fence was proposed to be made for the coachman against the kicking of the horse."

PEPYS' PRIVATE CARRIAGE.

On October, 20, 1668, Pepys went to look for the carriage he had so long promised himself "and saw many; and did light on one [in Cow Lane] for which I bid £50, which do please me mightily, and I believe I shall have it." Four days later the coach-maker calls upon him and they agree on £53 as the price. But on the 30th of the same month Mr. Povy comes "to even accounts with me:" and after some gossip about the court,

> "— he and I do talk of my coach and I got him to go and see it, where he finds most infinite fault with it, both as to being out of fashion and heavy, with so good reason that I am mightily glad of his having corrected me in it: and so I do resolve to have one of his build, and with his advice, both in coach and horses, he being the fittest man in the world for it."

Mr. Povy had been Treasurer and Receiver-General of Rents and Revenues to James, Duke of York: Evelyn describes him as "a nice contriver of all elegancies."

The opinion of such a personage on a point of fashion would have been final with a man of Pepys' temperament, and we hear no more about the coach with which Mr. Povy "found" most infinite fault.

On 2 November, 1668, Pepys goes "by Mr. Povy's direction to a coachmaker near him for a coach just like his, but it was sold this very morning." Mr. Povy lived in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and Lord Braybrooke remarks, "Pepys no doubt went to Long Acre, then, as now, celebrated for its coach-makers." On November 5,

"With Mr. Povy spent all the afternoon going up and down among the coachmakers in Cow Lane and did see several, and at last did pitch upon a little chariot whose body was framed but not covered at the widow's that made Mr. Lowther's fine coach; and we are mightily pleased with it, it being light, and will be very genteel and sober: to be covered with leather and yet will hold four."

The carriage gave great satisfaction when it came home, but the horses were not good enough for it: and on December 12 Pepys records that "this day was brought home my pair of black coach-horses, the first I ever was master of. They cost me £50 and are a fine pair."

CARRIAGE PAINTING IN PEPYS' DAY.

Pepys' position as an official at the Navy Office was not considered by his detractors to give him the social status that entitled him to keep his own coach, and soon after he became the owner of it a scurrilous pamphlet appeared which, incidentally, gives us a description of the arms or device with which it was decorated. After denouncing Pepys for his presumption in owning a carriage at all the writer proceeds :—

> "First you had upon the fore part of your chariot tempestuous waves and wrecks of ships; on your left hand forts and great guns and ships a-fighting; on your right hand was a fair harbour and galleys riding with their flags and pennants spread, kindly saluting each other. Behind it were high curled waves and ships a-sinking, and here and there an appearance of some bits of land."

If this is a true description, it would seem as though Pepys' idea of the "very genteel and sober" cannot be measured by modern standards of sober gentility: however that may be, the Diarist takes no notice of the pamphlet and continues to enjoy possession "with mighty pride" in a vehicle which he remarks (March 18, 1669), after a drive in Hyde Park, he "thought as pretty as any there, and observed so to be by others."

In the following April, however, we find him resolving to have "the standards of my coach gilt with this new sort of varnish, which will come to but forty shillings; and contrary to my expectation, the doing of the biggest coach all over comes not to above £6, which is not very much." One morning, a few days later: "I to my coach, which is silvered over, but no varnish yet laid on, so I put it in a way of doing." Again, in the afternoon:—

"I to my coachmaker's and there vexed to see nothing yet done to my coach at three in the afternoon, but I set it in doing and stood by it till eight at night and saw the painter varnish it, which is pretty to see how every doing it over do make it more and more yellow, and it dries as fast in the sun as it can be laid on almost, and most coaches are nowadays done so, and it is very pretty when laid on well and not too pale as some are, even to show the silver. Here I did make the workmen drink, and saw my coach cleaned and oiled."

There is a passage in the Diary (April 30, 1669), which suggests that it was not unusual for people of station and leisure to superintend the painting of their carriages; as Pepys found at the coachmaker's "a great many ladies sitting in the body of a coach that must be ended [finished] by to-morrow; they were my Lady Marquess of Winchester, Lady Bellassis and other great ladies, eating of bread and butter and drinking ale."

On the day after that he spent at the coach-maker's, Pepys, on his return from office, takes his wife for a drive : "We went alone through the town with our new liveries of serge, and the horses' manes and tails tied with red ribbons and the standards there gilt with varnish, and all clean, and green reins, that people did mightily look upon us ; and the truth is, I did not see any coach more pretty, though more gay, than ours, all the day."

Samuel Pepys' child-like pride in his carriage was no doubt a source of amusement to his contemporaries, but it has had the result of giving us more minute details concerning the carriages of Charles II.'s time than we can obtain from the pages of any other writer.

THE FIRST STAGE COACHES.

We must now turn to the stage-coach which had come into vogue about the year 1640.* Chamberlayne,† writing in 1649, says :—

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* *History of the Art of Coach Building.* By George A. Thrupp, 1876.

† *The Present State of Great Britain.* By Chamberlayne, 1649.

"There is of late such an admirable commodiousness, both for men and women, to travel from London to the principal towns of the country that the like hath not been known in the world, and that is by stage coaches, wherein any one may be transported to any place sheltered from foul weather and foul ways, free from endamaging one's health and one's body by hard jogging or over violent motion on horseback, and this not only at the low price of about a shilling for every five miles, but with such velocity and speed in one hour as the foreign post can make but in one day."

There were two classes of coach in the seventeenth century. Mons. Misson* says, "There are coaches that go to all the great towns by moderate journeys; and others which they call flying coaches that will travel twenty leagues a day and more. But these do not go to all places." He also refers to the waggons which "lumber along but heavily," and which he says are used only by a few poor old women. Four or four miles and a half in the hour was the speed of the ordinary coach.

The coaches that travelled between London and distant towns were similar in construction to the hackney coach, which plied for hire in the streets, but were built on a larger scale. They carried eight

* *Memoirs and Observations of a Journey in England*, 1697.

passengers inside, and behind, over the axle, was a great basket for baggage and outside passengers, who made themselves as comfortable as they might in the straw supplied. The "insides" were protected from rain and cold by leather curtains; neither passengers nor baggage were carried on the roof; and the coachman sat on a bar fixed between the two standard posts from which the body was hung in front, his feet being supported by a footboard on the perch.

Mr. Thrupp states that in 1662 there were only six stage coaches in existence; which assertion does not agree with that of Chamberlayne, quoted on a previous page; the seventeenth century writer tells us that in his time—1649—stage coaches ran "from London to the principle towns in the country." It seems, however, certain that the year 1662 saw a great increase in the number of "short stages"—that is to say, coaches running between London and towns twenty, thirty, forty miles distant.

OBJECTIONS RAISED TO STAGE COACHES.

This is proved by the somewhat violent pamphlet written by John Cressel, to which reference was made on page 33. This publication, which was entitled *The Grand*

"THE MACHINE." A.D. 1640-1750.

Concern of England Explained, appeared in 1673. It informs us that the stage coaches, to which John Cressel strongly objects: —

"Are kept by innkeepers . . . or else . . . by such persons as before the late Act for reducing the number of hackney coaches in London [*see* page 33] to 400, were owners of coaches and drove hackney. But when the number of 400 was full and they not licensed, then to avoid the penalties of the Act they removed out of the city dispersing themselves into every little town within twenty miles of London where they set up for stagers and drive every day to London and in the night-time drive about the city."

These intruders,* whose number John Cressel says is "at least 2,000," paid no £5, and took bread from the mouths of the four hundred licensed hackney coachmen.

John Cressel's purpose in writing his pamphlet was to call the attention of Parliament to the necessity which, in his opinion, existed for the suppressing all or most of the stage coaches and caravans which were then plying on the roads; and incidentally he gives some interesting particulars concerning the stage coach service of his time. Taking

* Owing to the profitable nature of the business these unlicensed hackney coaches increased until on November 30, 1687, a Royal Proclamation was issued appointing new Commissioners with authority to make an end of them.

the York, Chester and Exeter coaches as examples, he says that each of these with forty horses apiece carry eighteen passengers per week from London.* In the summer the fare to either of these places was forty shillings and in winter forty-five shillings; the coachman was changed four times on the way, and the usual practice was for each passenger to give each coachman one shilling.

The journey—200 miles—occupied four days. These early "flying coaches" travelled faster than their successors of a later date. The seventeenth century London-Exeter coach did the journey, one hundred and seventy-five miles, in ten days, whereas in 1755, according to "Nimrod," proprietors promised "a safe and expeditious journey in a fortnight."

The "short stages," *i.e.*, those which ran between London and places only twenty or thirty miles distant, were the hackney coaches which had not been fortunate enough to obtain licenses under Charles II.'s Act. These were drawn by four horses and

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* The stage coach carried six passengers, and a coach left London for each of the towns named three times a week.

carried six passengers, making the journey to or from London in one day. There were, John Cressel states, stage coaches running to almost every town situated within twenty or twenty-five miles of the capital; and it is worth observing that at this date letters were sent by coach. Coaches ran on both sides of the Thames from Windsor and Maidenhead, and "carry all the letters, little bundles and passengers which were carried by watermen."

This writer's arguments against coaches are worthless as such, but they throw side lights on the discomforts of travel at the time. He considered it detrimental to health to rise in the small hours of the morning to take coach and to retire late to bed. With more reason he enquired,

> "Is it for a man's health to be laid fast in foul ways and forced to wade up to the knees in mire; and afterwards sit in the cold till fresh teams of horses can be procured to drag the coach out of the foul ways? Is it for his health to travel in rotten coaches and have their tackle, or perch, or axletree broken, and then to wait half the day before making good their stage?"

John Cressel was prone to exaggeration, but there is plenty of reliable contemporary evidence to show that his picture of the coach roads was not overdrawn. Yet when

this advocate for the suppression of coaches seeks to rouse public sentiment, he reproaches those men who use them for effeminacy and indulgence in luxury! One of his quaintest arguments in favour of the saddle horse is that the rider's clothes "are wont to be spoyled in two or three journies"; which is, he urges, an excellent thing for trade as represented by the tailors.

John Cressel, it will be gathered from this, viewed the innovation from a lofty standpoint. He describes the introduction of stage coaches as one of the greatest mischiefs that have happened of late years to the King. They wrought harm, he said:

(1) By destroying the breed of good horses, the strength of the nation, and making men careless of attaining to good horsemanship, a thing so useful and commendable in a gentleman.

(2) By hindering the breed of watermen who are the nursery for seamen, and they the bulwarks of the kingdom.

(3) By lessening His Majesty's revenues; for there is not the fourth part of saddle horses either bred or kept now in England that there was before these coaches set up, and would be again if suppressed.

Travelling on horseback was cheaper than by coach. The "chapman" or trader could hire a horse from the hackneyman at from 6s. to 12s. per week. John Cressel estimates that a man could come from "York,

Exeter or Chester to London, and stay twelve days for business (which is the most that country chapmen usually do stay), for £1 16s., horse hire and horse meat 1s. 2d. per day." From Northampton it cost 16s. to come to London on horseback, from Bristol 25s., Bath 20s., Salisbury 20s. or 25s., and from Reading 7s.

If men would not ride, John Cressel urged them to travel in the long waggons which moved "easily without jolting men's bodies or hurrying them along as the running coaches do." The long waggon was drawn by four or five horses and carried from twenty to twenty-five passengers. He proposed that there should be one stage per week from London to each shire town in England; that these should use the same team of horses for the whole journey, that their speed should not exceed thirty miles a day in summer and 25 in winter, and that they should halt at different inns on each journey to support the innkeeping business. If these proposals were carried out, the writer thought stage coaches would "do little or no harm."

John Cressel's pamphlet was answered by another from the pen of a barrister, who showed up the futility of his arguments and

deductions, but did not find great fault with his facts and figures.

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY HIGH ROADS.

It is commonly believed that the introduction of stage coaches produced the first legislative endeavour to improve the country roads; this is not the case: nor had the sufferings of travellers by "long waggon" any influence upon legislators if comparison of dates be a reliable test; for it was not until 1622 that any attempt was made to save the roads. In that year James I. issued a Proclamation in which it was stated that inasmuch as the highways were ploughed up by "unreasonable carriages," and the bridges shaken, the use of four-wheeled carts for carrying goods and agricultural produce was forbidden, carts with two wheels only being allowed.

In 1629 Charles I. issued a Proclamation confirming that of his father, and furthermore forbidding common carriers and others to convey more than twenty hundredweight in the two-wheeled vehicles which were lawful, and also forbidding the use of more than five horses at once; the avowed object being to prevent destruction of the road.

We may fairly reason from the terms of

this Proclamation that it was recognised that on occasion five horses might be required to draw one ton along the roads; and from this we can form our own idea of the condition to which traffic and rains might reduce the highways.

In 1661 the restrictions on cart traffic were modified by Charles II.'s Proclamation, which permitted carts and waggons with four wheels, and drawn by ten or more horses, to carry sixty or seventy hundredweight, and forbade more than five horses to be harnessed to any four-wheeled cart unless the team went in pairs. The orders issued thus by Proclamation were made law by two Acts of Charles II. in 1670; the second of which forbade the use of more than eight horses or oxen unless harnessed two abreast.

In 1663 the first turnpike gate was erected; this novelty was put on the Great North Road to collect tolls for repair of the highway in Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Huntingdon, where in places it had become "ruinous and almost impassable." The turnpike was so unpopular that for nearly a century no gate was erected between Glasgow and Grantham.

Nothing more clearly proves the badness

of the roads in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, than the number of patents granted to inventors for devices calculated to prevent carriages from overturning. The first invention towards this end was patented in 1684, and between that date and 1792 nine more patents were granted for devices to prevent upsetting, or to cause the body of the vehicle to remain erect though the wheels turned over.

Few thought it worth trying to discover a method of improving the roads which caused accidents. In 1619, one John Shotbolt took out a patent for "strong engines for making and repairing of roads"; another was issued in 1699 to Nathaniel Bard, who also protected "an engine for levelling and preserving roads and highways"; and in the same year Edward Heming was granted a patent for a method of repairing highways "so as to throw all the rising ridges into the ruts." History omits to tell us what measure of success rewarded these inventions: if the Patent Specification files form any guide to an opinion, inventors gave up in despair trying to devise means of keeping the roads in order, for not until 1763 does another ingenious person appear with a remedy thought worthy of letters patent.

Repairs to the highways were effected by forced labour when their condition made improvement absolutely necessary. Thus, in 1695, surveyors were appointed by Act of Parliament to require persons to work on the road between London and Harwich, which in places had become almost impassable. Labourers were to be paid at local rates of hire, were not to be called upon to travel more than four miles from home, nor to work more than two days in the week: nor were they liable to be summoned for road-mending during seed, hay and harvest-time. This Act also revised the system of tolls on vehicles: any stage, hackney, or other coach and any calash or chariot was to pay 6d. toll; a cart 8d. and a waggon 1s.

The Company of Coach and Coach Harness Makers was founded in 1677 by Charles II. The foundation of the company shows that the trade of coach-building was by this time large and important, while the interest taken by the King must have given an impetus to the business. We have evidence that coaches of English build were appreciated on the Continent in an old "List of the Names of all the Commodities of English Product and Manufacture that was Exported to France from England

during what may be called the Interval of Peace from Christmas, 1698, to Christmas, 1702." The list includes both coaches and harness for coaches.

In this connection it is to be observed that by the terms of its charter the Coachmakers' Company was empowered to seek out and destroy bad work wherever they might find such. Under these conditions it is not surprising that English workmanship became famous.

Hyde Park, as Pepys and other writers show us, was the best place in London to see the coaches of the gentry. In an undated petition, submitted by "a great number of licensed hackney coachmen," there is reference to the "four hundred licensed coachmen in Hyde Park," from which it might be inferred that these formed a body of license-holders distinct from the four hundred licensed by Charles II. in 1663.

HACKNEY CABS AS A SOURCE OF REVENUE.

In 1694, when the Parliament was hard pressed for money to carry on the French war, the London cabs or hackney coaches were more heavily taxed under a new system of licenses; the number licensed

to ply for hire was raised from 400 to 700, and for each license, which held good for twenty-one years, the sum of £50 was to be paid down, while £4 per annum was to be paid as "rent." All stage coaches in England and Wales were to pay a tax of £8 a year. This Act confirmed the old tariff of fares for hackney coaches in London (*see* p. 42), and the prohibition against plying on Sundays, which had been in force since 1662, was partially withdrawn. The new Act allowed 175 cabs to ply for hire on Sundays; the Commissioners were enjoined to arrange matters so that the 700 licensed cabmen should be employed in turn on Sunday.

This Act caused great discontent among the original 400 licensed coachmen, as it made them equally liable with the additional 300 licensees to the £50 impost; their grievances found vent in a petition, wherein they prayed that they, the Original Four Hundred, might be "incorporated" (presumably as a guild or company), and that all stage coaches running between London and places thirty miles therefrom might be suppressed.

The Act of 1693 compelled the hackney coachman to carry a fare ten miles out of

London if required, and doubtless the uncertainty of finding a "fare" to bring back was partly owing to the short stages, which ran on every road.

The five Commissioners who were appointed to carry out the provisions of this law discharged their duties with no greater integrity than their predecessors. Yet another Petition from the 700 hackney coachmen refers incidentally to the circumstance that in 1694 three of the five were dismissed for accepting bribes from tradesmen who wanted licenses; the petition also prays for better regulations to control the "many hundred coaches and horses let for hire without license, likewise shaises, hackney chairs and short stages."

The "shaise" or chaise was evidently a vehicle of a different type from the hackney coach. The post-chaise for hire was introduced into England about this time from France by John, a son of Mr. Jethro Tull, the famous agriculturist who in 1733 published a work, entitled "Horse Hoeing Husbandry," which attracted great attention and laid the foundation of the use of implements in farming and improvements in methods of cultivation. In 1740 John Tull was granted a patent for a sedan chair fixed on a wheel carriage for horse draught.

MANNERS OF THE CABMAN.

The licensed coachmen had good grounds for complaint, as we learn from an edict issued in 1692 by the Lord Mayor and Aldermen that the law was systematically evaded; in that year only 160 hackney coachmen applied for licenses and the number plying in the streets was about one thousand. The men were a turbulent set; several, we read, were indicted for "standing of their coaches [in the streets] as a common nuisance, for assaulting constables and tradesmen who attempt to remove them from before their shops." There were no side walks for foot passengers in those days, and thus the standing coach might be so placed as to block the entrance to a shop.

Mons. Misson has the following passage concerning the hackney coachman; it is interesting as an illustration of contemporary manners :—

"If a coachman has a dispute about his fare with a gentleman that has hired him, and the gentleman offers to fight him to decide the quarrel, the coachman consents with all his heart. The gentleman pulls off his sword, lays it in some shop with his cane, gloves and cravat, and boxes in the manner I have described. If the coachman is soundly drubbed, which happens almost always, that goes for payment, but if he is the *beator* the *beatee* must pay the money about which they quarrelled. I once saw the late

Duke of Grafton at fisticuffs in the open street, the widest part of the Strand, with such a fellow whom he lamm'd most horribly."

The same author says that the London squares are enclosed with railings to keep the coaches from crossing them.

CAB DRIVING A LUCRATIVE OCCUPATION.

It has been remarked on a previous page that the hackney coachman drove a thriving business; how profitable it was we may learn from two petitions which were evoked by Queen Anne's Act of 1710, which increased the number of licenses to 800 on payment of 5s. a week, such licenses to hold good for thirty-two years. Seven hundred coaches were more than profitable employment could be found for, if we might believe the inevitable petition put in against this Act; but nevertheless the new 800 licensees joined in petitioning that their licenses "may again be made assets" as under the Act of 1694. "In consideration of which, notwithstanding the rent of 5s. per week, we most humbly offer to raise £16,000 as a fine of £20 on each license for the use of His Majesty King George."

That there was money to be made in the business is shown even more clearly

by a petition submitted by James, Lord Mordington and others about this time. The petitioners offer to "farm the 800 hackney coaches which are now thought necessary" at £6 per license for 21 years; they were also prepared to pay £2,000 a year during that period, on which the King might raise a sum of £20,000; to pay £500 a year to the orphans of the City of London; and also to raise and equip a regiment of foot at a cost of £3,000!

The Act of 1710, it should be observed, altogether removed the prohibition against plying on Sunday. It licensed 200 hackney chairs and fixed the chair tariff at two-thirds of that in force for the coach (1s. for one and a half miles, and 1s. 6d. for two miles). An injunction to the Commissioners to fix at the Royal Exchange a table of distances must have been appreciated by the users of hackney coaches in London. It also repeated the injunction to use horses of fourteen hands at least; which repetition seems to have been very necessary, as Misson remarks that the regulation at the time of his visit was "but ill obeyed."

It was about this time that a curious system of wig stealing was adopted by the London thieves. We read in the *Weekly Journal* of March 30, 1713, that :—

"The thieves have got such a villainous way now of robbing gentlemen, that they cut holes through the backs of hackney carriages, and take away their wigs or the fine headdresses of gentlewomen."

The writer counsels persons travelling alone in a hackney coach to sit on the front seat to baffle the thieves.

In vol. 3 of the *Carriage Builders' and Harness Makers' Art Journal* (1863) was published an advertisement from an old newspaper; this was thought by the contributor who discovered it to be the first advertisement of the practical application of springs to coaches; it refers to a patent granted for fourteen years to Mr. John Green in 1691 :—

"All the nobility and gentry may have the carriages of their coaches made new or the old ones altered, after this new invention, at reasonable rates; and hackney and stage coachmen may have licenses from the Patentees, *Mr. John Green* and *Mr. William Dockwra*, his partner, at the rate of 12*d.* per week, to drive the roads and streets, some of which having this week began, and may be known from the common coaches by the words Patent Coach being over both doors in carved letters. These coaches are so hung as to render them easier for the passenger and less labour to the horses, the gentleman's coaches turning in narrow streets and lanes in as little or less room than any French carriage with crane neck, and not one third part of the charge. The manner of the coachman's sitting is more convenient, and the motion like that of a sedan, being free from the tossing and

jolting to which other coaches are liable over rough and broken roads, pavements or kennels. These great Conveniences (besides others) are invitation sufficient for all persons that love their own ease and would save their horses draught, to use these sort of carriages and no other, since these carriages need no alteration."

This advertisement is the more noteworthy as it clearly refers to some kind of turning head; however valuable the improvements thus offered, the springs at least do not appear to have been appreciated, for their use did not become general till the latter half of the eighteenth century.

COACHES AND ROADS IN QUEEN ANNE'S TIME.

From the advertisements in old newspapers we obtain some particulars of the speed made by stage coaches in the early part of the eighteenth century. In 1703, when the roads were good, the coach from London to Portsmouth did the journey, about ninety miles, in fourteen hours. In 1706, the York coach left London on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, performing the 200 mile journey in four days; each passenger was allowed 14 lbs. of luggage and overweight was charged for at 3d. per lb. In winter the cross-roads were execrable, as appears from the *Annals of Queen Anne*

(London, 1704). In December, 1703, the King of Spain slept at Petworth in Sussex, on his way from Portsmouth to Windsor, and Prince George of Denmark went to meet him there: concerning the journey one of the Prince's attendants writes :—

"We set out at six o'clock in the morning to go to Petworth, and did not get out of the coaches (save only when we were overturned or stuck fast in the mire) till we arrived at our journey's end. 'Twas hard service for the prince to sit fourteen hours in the coach that day without eating anything and passing through the worst ways that I ever saw in my life; we were thrown but once indeed in going, but both our coach, which was the leading, and his highnesse's body-coach would have suffered very often if the nimble boors of Sussex had not frequently poised it or supported it with their shoulders from Godalmin almost to Petworth; and the nearer we approached to the Duke's house the more unaccessible it seemed to be. The last nine miles of the way cost us six hours time to conquer them, and indeed we had never done it if our good master had not several times lent us a pair of horses out of his own coach, whereby we were enabled to trace out the way for him."

COACHING IN GEORGE I.'S AND GEORGE II.'S REIGNS.

Markland,* referring to the above passage, states on the authority of a correspondent that in 1748 persons travelling from Petworth

* *Remarks on the Early Use of Carriages in England.*

to Guildford were obliged to make for the nearest point of the great road from Portsmouth to London; plainly indicating that the main arteries of traffic were much superior to the cross roads.

Dean Swift, writing to Pope on August 22, 1726, refers to the "closeness and confinement of the uneasy coach." At this period there was still considerable prejudice against the use of carriages by men who were physically able to ride, as appears from a letter written by Swift to his friend Mr. Gay, on September 10, 1731 :—

"If your ramble was on horseback I am glad of it on account of your health; but I know your arts of patching up a journey between stage coaches and your friends' coaches; for you are as arrant a cockney as any hosier in Cheapside . . . you love twelvepenny coaches too well, considering that the interest of a whole thousand pounds brings you but half-a-crown a day . . . a coach and six horses is all the exercise you can bear."

The reference to Mr. Gay's income indicates that the saddle was a much cheaper means of travelling than the coach. Six horses seem to have been the number used in private coaches during the first half of the eighteenth century, if we may judge by the frequency with which Swift refers to "a coach and six."

An agreement made in 1718 between a

Mr. Vanden Bampde and Charles Hodges, a job-master, is worth noticing. Under this contract Hodges undertook to maintain for Mr. Bampde "a coach, chariot, and harness neat and clean, and in all manner of repair at his own charge, not including the wheels." If the coachman should break the glass when the carriage was empty, Hodges was to make good the damage. He was to supply at a charge of 5s. 6d. a day, a pair of "good, strong, serviceable, handsome well-matched horses of value between £50 and £60"; also a "good, sober, honest, creditable coachman," who, with the horses, should attend as Mr. Bampde or his lady might require in London or Westminster. If Mr. Bampde went into the country Hodges was to find him one or more pairs of horses at half-a-crown per pair per day extra.

DEAN SWIFT ON COACHES AND DRIVERS.

The hackney coachmen appear to have been quite as independent and offensive a class in Swift's time as they were in Pepys'. Writing from Dublin on July 8, 1733, he compares the advantages of residence in that city with residence in London, and gives prominence to the following items:—

"I am one of the governors of all the hackney coaches, carts and carriages round this town; who dare not insult me like your rascally waggoners or coachmen, but give me the way."

It may be observed here that there was still plenty of work for the wherrymen on the Thames in the middle of the eighteenth century. Swift writes on April 16, 1760, praying Mr. Warburton to leave London and pay him a visit at Twickenham, and by way of inducement he adds: "If the press be to take up any part of your time, the sheets may be brought you hourly thither by my waterman."

The Dean's *Humorous Advice to Servants* contains some sarcastic observations addressed to the coachman, which shed light upon what we must suppose was the usual character of that servant. He is advised that "you are strictly bound to nothing but to step into the box and carry your lord and lady;" and he is enjoined to take every opportunity of drinking. The following passage shows how wheels of carriages suffered from the battering on the roads:—

"Take care that your wheels be good; and get a new set bought as often as you can whether you are allowed the old as your perquisite or not; in one case it will turn to your honest profit and on the other it will be a just punishment on your master's

covetousness, and probably the coachmaker will consider you too."

ROADS IN THE 18TH CENTURY.

Every author of the time has something to say about the roads. Daniel Bourn * says :—

"So late as thirty or forty years ago [*i.e.*, 1723-33] the roads of England were in a most deplorable condition. Those that were narrow were narrow indeed, often to that degree that the stocks of the wheels bore hard against the bank on each side, and in many places they were worn below the level of the neighbouring surface, many feet, nay, yards perpendicular; and a wide-spreading, brushy hedge intermixed with old half-decayed trees and stubbs hanging over the traveller's head intercepting the benign influence of the heavens from his path, and the beauties of the circumjacent country from his view, made it look more like the retreat of wild beasts and reptiles than the footsteps of man. In other parts where the road was wide, it might be, and often was too much so, and exhibited a scene of a different aspect. Here the wheel-carriage had worn a diversity of tracks which were either deep, or rough and stony, or high or low as Mother Nature had placed the materials upon the face of the ground; the space between these were frequently furzy hillocks of thorny brakes, through or among which the equestrian traveller picked out his entangled and uncouth steps.

"To these horrible, stony, deep, miry, uncomfortable, dreary roads the narrow-wheel waggon seems to be best adapted, and these were frequently drawn

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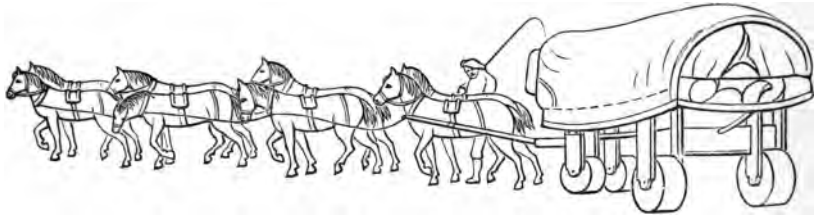
* *Treatise of Wheeled Carriages*, London, 1763.

by seven, eight, or even ten horses, that with great difficulty and hazard dragged after them twenty-five or thirty hundredweight, seldom more."

Bourn's reference to the "narrow-wheel waggon" touches a matter which formed the subject of hot debate for generations. It was urged that the narrow wheels of waggons were largely the means of cutting up the roads, and no doubt these did contribute to the general condition of rut and



MR. DANIEL BOURN'S ROLLER WHEEL WAGGON, A.D. 1763.

ridge that characterised them. This view was adopted by Parliament, and to encourage the use of wide wheels a system of turnpike tolls was adopted which treated the wide tire far more leniently than the narrow; anything under 9 inches in width being considered narrow.

Bourn was a warm advocate for wide wheels, and the book from which the above passage is taken describes an improved waggon invented by himself; the drawing is

from the inventor's work. The wheels of this vehicle resemble small garden rollers; they are 2 feet high and 16 inches wide. Each is attached independently to the body of the waggon and the fore wheels being placed side by side in the centre, while the hind wheels are set wide apart, the waggon is practically designed to fulfil the functions of a road roller.* It does not appear that Bourn's invention obtained any general acceptance, which is perhaps not very surprising.

SPEED OF THE 18TH CENTURY STAGE COACH.

In 1742, the Oxford coach, leaving London at seven in the morning, reached High Wycombe (about forty miles) at five in the evening, remained there the night, and concluded the journey on the following day. The Birmingham coach made its journey at about the same pace, forty miles per day, resting half a day at

* In the *St. James's Chronicle* of December 30, 1772, a correspondent "observes with particular pleasure the good effects of the rolling machine on the turnpike road to Stony Stratford. For this important improvement Mr. Sharp is responsible." The writer proceeds to describe with the exactness and appreciation due to so useful an invention, the first patent of the familiar road-roller.

Oxford. Night travel does not seem to have been at all usual. Apart from the badness of the roads, the audacity of highwaymen was a sufficient reason for refraining from journeys by night.

Some improvements were made in private carriages at this period, but there was little change for the better in the stage coaches, which differed slightly from the "machine" of a century earlier; the driver's seat was safer and less uncomfortable, and that was the only noteworthy alteration. An advertisement of 1750 announces "accommodation behind the coach for baggage and passengers; fares 21s., and servants 10s. 6d., riding either in the basket behind or on the box beside the driver."

Endeavour to expedite the service between the great towns of the kingdom is shown in an advertisement of the "Flying Coach," which was put on the London and Manchester road in 1754. This informs possible patrons that "incredible as it may appear, this coach will actually arrive in London in four days and a half after leaving Manchester." The distance between the two cities is about 187 miles, making the rate of speed a little over 44 miles per day.

The stage coach of 1755 is thus described by Mr. Thrupp.

"They were covered with dull black leather, studded by way of ornament with broad-headed nails, with oval windows in the quarters, the frames painted red. On the panels were displayed in large characters the names of the places where the coach started and whither it went. The roof rose in a high curve with an iron rail around it. The coachman and guard sat in front upon a high narrow boot, often garnished with a spreading hammer-cloth with a deep fringe. Behind was an immense basket supported by iron bars in which passengers were carried at lower fares. The whole coach was usually drawn by three horses, on the first of which a postillion rode, in a cocked hat and a long green-and-gold coat. The machine groaned and creaked as it went along with every tug the horses gave it, and the speed was frequently but four miles an hour."

Three horses may have done the work in summer, but there is no reason to suppose that the roads of 1755 were any better than they had been sixteen years earlier, when Thomas Pennant thus described a journey in March from Chester to London. The stage, he says :—

"was then no despicable vehicle for country gentlemen. The first day, with much labour, we got from Chester to Whitchurch, twenty miles; the second day to the Welsh Harp; the third to Coventry; the fourth to Northampton; the fifth to Dunstable; and as a wondrous effort on the last, to London, before the commencement of night. The

TRAVELLING POSTING CARRIAGE, 1750.

strain and labour of six good horses, sometimes eight, drew us through the sloughs of Mireden and many other places."

THE APPLICATION OF SPRINGS.

In the year 1768 Dr. R. Lovell Edgeworth, who had devoted much attention to the subject, and had made numerous experiments,* succeeded in demonstrating that springs were as advantageous to the horses of, as to the passengers in, a coach; and he constructed a carriage for which the Society of English Arts and Manufactures awarded him three gold medals. In this conveyance the axletrees were divided and the motion of each wheel was relieved by a spring. Just one dozen patents for springs were granted during the eighteenth century, and it is impossible to say which invention had most influence on methods of building coaches. In 1772 a patent was granted to James Butler for a new coach-wheel the spokes of which were constructed of springs; but this curious contrivance is mentioned nowhere—so far as the writer's investigations have shown—but in the Patent Office files, whence we may conclude it was a failure.

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* *An Essay on the Construction of Roads and Carriages.* London, 1817.

TRAVELLING POSTING CARRIAGE, 1750.

The adoption of springs was certainly gradual. It is probably right to assume that wealthy men led the way by having coaches built on springs or altering their vehicles. It is impossible to draw a hard and fast line between the period of the coach without and the coach with springs. The illustrations show that travelling carriages on springs and braces were built in 1750. These drawings prove that, clumsy though the public conveyances were, private carriages were both tolerably light and comfortable. The "whip springs" to which the braces are attached were in general use ten years later.

A curious error arose from the application of springs to public conveyances, according to Dr. Lovell Edgeworth. Their introduction, it must be premised, led to the accommodation of passengers and loading of baggage on top of the stage coach, and coachmen, finding the vehicle drew more easily, attributed the fact, not to the springs, but to the increased height and reduced length of the load.*

In the belief that a high and short load possessed some mysterious property which

* Abolition of the basket on the hind axle would have materially reduced the length of the load.

made it easier to draw than a low long one, builders vied with each other in building lofty vehicles. "Hence in all probability," says the authority we are quoting, "arose the preposterous elevation of public carriages."

OUTSIDE PASSENGERS.

Dr. Lovell Edgeworth gives us to understand that the practice of carrying passengers on the roof of the coach followed the application of springs to stage coaches; and in view of the belief noticed above this seems exceedingly probable. The practice had clearly been in vogue for some years when the *Annual Register* published the following paragraph :—

"*September* 7 (1770).—It were greatly to be wished the stage coaches were put under some regulations as to the numbers of persons and quantity of baggage. Thirty-four persons were in and about the Hertford coach this day when it broke down by one of the braces giving way."

In 1775, we learn from the same publication, stage coaches generally carried eight persons inside and often ten outside passengers. On another page appears the statement that "there are now of these vehicles [stage coaches], flies, machines and

diligences upwards of 400, and of other wheeled carriages 17,000."

In 1785 was passed George III.'s Act, which forbade the conveyance of more than six persons on the roof of any coach and more than two on the box. This Act was superseded in 1790 by another which permitted only one person to travel on the box and only four on the roof of any coach drawn by three or more horses. A coach drawn by less than three horses might carry one passenger on the box and three on the roof, but such vehicles might not ply more than twenty-five miles from the London Post Office.

The first "long coaches" (*i.e.* long-stage vehicles) and those called diligences were superseded by what were called the "old heavies," carrying six inside passengers and twelve out.*

ROADS IN GEORGE III.'s TIME.

The turnpike road had been improved by the year 1773, when Mr. Daniel Bourn wrote a pamphlet † answering some objections

* *The Public Carriages of Great Britain.* J. E. Bradfield, London, 1855.

† *Some Brief Remarks upon Mr. Jacob's Treatise.* London, 1773.

which had been urged against his waggon on rollers (see p. 79). Mr. Jacob had asserted that the roughness of the roads was an insuperable obstacle to the enormously wide wheels invented by Mr. Bourn; and the latter, while admitting the wretched condition of local roads, refutes this argument as applied to the great roads :—

"A person might follow a waggon from London to York and meet with very few great stones . . . let us now view this more agreeable turnpike road, yet even here you will find that there is less degrees of loose dirt and mangled materials."

In this connection it will be remembered that the road roller had been brought into use in the previous year (see footnote p. 80).

The improvement was by no means universal, however. Arthur Young* writes :—

"I know not in the whole range of language terms sufficiently expressive to describe this infernal road. To look over a map, and perceive that it is a principal one, not only to some towns, but even whole counties, one would naturally conclude it to be at least decent; but let me most seriously caution all travellers who may accidentally purpose to travel this terrible country, to avoid it as they would the devil, for a thousand to one but they break their necks or their limbs by overthrows or breakings down. They will here meet with ruts, which I actually measured, four feet deep, and floating with

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* *Tour in the North of England.* London, 1770.

mud, only from a wet summer; what, therefore, must it be after the winter? The only mending it receives, in places, is the tumbling in loose stones, which serve no other purpose but jolting the carriage in a most intolerable manner. These are not merely opinions, but facts, for I actually passed three carts broken down in these eighteen miles of execrable memory."

IMPROVEMENTS IN STAGE COACHES.

The last twenty-five years of the eighteenth century saw great increase of the coaching industry and many important improvements. The "long stages" were still slow; the *Edinburgh Courant*, of 1779, contains an advertisement of the London Coach which "will run every Tuesday, occupying ten days, resting all Sunday at Barrowbridge; for the better accommodation of passengers will be altered to a new genteel two-end coach machine hung upon steel springs, exceeding light and easy." At this period the newspapers often contained advertisements inviting a companion to share with the advertiser the risks and expenses of posting to London.

It was no doubt the love of Englishmen for privacy which led a Mr. Crispus Claggett to patent in 1780 his "Imperial Mercury." This vehicle had the outward appearance of one carriage, but it was

divided into four equal compartments with space in each for four persons. Each compartment was entered by its own door and was partitioned off from the others by doors and glasses. This curious conveyance must have somewhat resembled an early railway coach.

THE MAIL COACH.

Mr. John Palmer's* "diligences" were put upon the road in 1783, and with these the proprietor laid the first crude foundation of the mail service. The ordinary post was carried by boys on horseback and was both slow and uncertain owing to the poor quality of the horses, the badness of the roads and not least to the untrustworthiness of the boys. Every letter for which expedition was necessary was now sent by diligences where they were established, and they ran from nearly all the towns in the kingdom to London and between many of the principal towns. Postage by these was very expensive: a letter by the ordinary post from

* The story of John Palmer's work in connection with the postal service, may be read in Joyce's *History of the Post Office* (1893), and in many histories and other works dealing with Bath. Palmer became Member of Parliament for Bath in 1801.

Bath to London cost fourpence, whereas it cost two shillings for "booking, carriage and porterage" if sent by diligence. The greater speed and safety were the inducements to use the diligence for important letters, as on the stage coaches both guard and coachman were well armed; the former sat on the box with the driver, and, says a writer of the time, "always sat with his carbine cocked on his knees."

The conveyance of letters by diligence or "coach diligence" from Bath, where Mr. Palmer resided, to London was an experiment on the success of which that gentleman depended largely in his battle with the officials of Parliament and Parliamentary Committees when he sought to bring about change in the method of carrying letters. For a considerable time those in authority refused to admit the possibility of a coach travelling from Bath to London, 108 miles, in eighteen hours; but after a hard struggle Mr. Palmer triumphed, and the first mail coach ran from Bristol to London on August 2, 1784. Six miles an hour had been promised, but the journey, 117 miles, was performed in seventeen hours, or at a rate of nearly seven miles an hour, about double the speed of the mounted post-boy.

JOHN PALMER.

(From a portrait in the possession of Henry G. Archer, Esq.)

These early mail coaches (the "old heavies") were cumbrous vehicles, and by no means remarkable for strength of construction: indeed, until Mr. Palmer took the matter firmly in hand and compelled the contractors to replace their worn-out coaches by new ones (which were built by Besant), three or four breakdowns or upsets were daily reported to the Post-master General. They were drawn by four horses; carried six inside passengers and, until the law of 1785 already noticed, twelve "outsides." Their speed on the principal roads was gradually accelerated about this time, and after the mail coaches began to work the pace of "fly stage coaches," or flying coaches, was increased to eight miles an hour.

On some roads the old slow coaches remained; as late as the year 1798 the Telegraph left Gosport at one o'clock in the morning and reached Charing Cross at eight in the evening, thus occupying nineteen hours over a journey of 80 miles; a speed of little over four miles an hour.

In 1792 sixteen mail-coaches left London daily; and seven years later these had increased to about eighty.

REGULATIONS FOR MAIL AND STAGE COACHES.

During George III.'s reign, three Acts of Parliament had been passed defining the number of outside passengers that any stage coach might carry, and making other regulations in the public interest; these three Acts were repealed by a fourth placed on the statute book in 1810, which enacted that any "coach, berlin, landau, chariot, diligence, calash, chaise-marine or other four-wheeled vehicle," employed as a public carriage and drawn by four horses might carry ten outside passengers including the guard but not the coachman; that only one person might share the box with the coachman; and of the remaining nine, three should sit in front and six behind. No passenger might sit on the baggage. Stages drawn by two or three horses might carry not more than five outside passengers; "long coaches" or "double-bodied coaches" might carry eight.

The social distinction between "inside" and the "outside" is betrayed by a clause of this law which forbade any outside passenger to travel inside unless with the consent of one inside passenger; and the "inside" who gave consent was to have the "outside" placed next him.

This Act also prescribed important limitations to the height of coaches: neither passenger nor luggage might be carried on the roof of any coach the top of which was over 8 feet 9 inches from the ground and whose width was under 4 feet 6 inches measured from the centre of one wheel track to the centre of the other. On a four-horse coach 8 feet 9 inches high the baggage might be piled to a height of two feet; on one drawn by two or three horses, to a height of eighteen inches. As it was considered expedient to encourage low-hung coaches with the view of attaining greater immunity from accidents, it was legal to pile baggage up to a height of 10 feet 9 inches from the ground. Any passenger might require any turnpike keeper to count the "outsides" or to measure the height of the luggage on the roof. At a later date the fast mail coaches were prohibited by the Post-master General from carrying any baggage at all on the roof.

MAIL COACH PARADE ON THE KING'S BIRTHDAY.

Mr. Thrupp gives the following description of the mail coaches as they appeared at the "King's Birthday Parade," an interesting display which appears to have been held

for the first time in the year 1799, and which remained an annual function until 1835. The coaches assembled in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and drove through the streets past St. James' Palace and back to the General Post Office, then in Lombard Street :—

"Each coach was new or turned out to look like new and was painted red with the Royal Arms on the door panel, and on the smaller panel above the name of the town to which the coach went; on the boot the number of the mail, and on each upper quarter one of the stars of the four Orders of the Knighthood of the United Kingdom, the Garter, the Bath, the Thistle and St. Patrick. The coaches were built just big enough to contain four inside and three or four outside, and coachman and guard. The body was hung upon a perch carriage and eight telegraph springs, the underworks being both solid and simple in construction."

A writer in *Baily's Magazine* (June, 1900), gives a description of this parade; only the coachmen and guards, in new uniforms, were allowed on the coaches, for which gentlemen used to lend their best teams; the procession generally consisted of about twenty-five coaches and was prolonged by the presence of a horseman between every two coaches.

THE MAIL COACHMAN AND GUARD.

The mail coaches in their daily routine assembled in Lombard Street between 8 and 8.20 p.m. every evening to receive the mails, and drew up in double file. Each was known by the name of the town to which it ran, and on the call of "Manchester," "Liverpool," or "Chester," the coach bound thither broke rank and came up to the post-office door to receive the mails; the bags were tossed into the boot and the slamming of the lid of the boot was the signal to start.

Most of the mails for the Western counties started at 7 p.m. from the Gloucester Coffee House in Piccadilly, the mail bags being brought thither from the General Post Office in gigs drawn by fast-trotting horses. The stages for the West started from Hatchett's; for the North, from the Peacock, Islington.

The mail guard was a considerable personage; when the modern style of build was adopted, the hind seat over the mail boot was strictly reserved to him, nobody being allowed to share it, as a precaution against robbery of the mails. To obtain an appointment as guard on a mail coach the applicant had to produce a recommendation from a Member of Parliament showing that he bore a high character, and a medical certificate

to effect that he was of good constitution (exceedingly necessary in view of the nature of his work); if accepted as a probationer he had to spend a term in a coach factory and there learn how to repair a broken pole and patch up any other fracture that might occur on the road. His pay was only 10s. per week, but his perquisites were considerable; he might make as much as £3 or £4 a week, by taking charge of plate chests and valuables entrusted to his care; and it was the custom to allow the guard and coachman to divide all fares of 3s. or less between them.

The guard went the whole way with his coach; the coachman's "stage" was generally forty or fifty miles out and home again. The latter's wages were supplemented by tips from the passengers, who were admonished that the time had come to open their purses by the coachman's polite "Gentlemen, I leave you here."

The money thus collected by the driver of a first-class coach amounted, it is said, to £200 or £300 a year. The coachman was subject to numerous regulations which aimed at the security of passengers and mails. He might not allow anyone else to drive, without the consent of the coach proprietor or

against the wishes of the other passengers; he might not leave his box unless a man was at the leaders' heads; and there were many such minor instructions to be observed.

Until about 1815 the coachman's box was not part of the body of the vehicle, and while the passengers rode comfortably on springs the unfortunate driver had a seat as comfortless as want of springs could make it. When this was done away with, it was quite in accord with British traditions that strong objections should be made, the chief being founded on the idea that if the coachman were made so comfortable he would go to sleep on his box. The Manchester Telegraph, celebrated as one of the smartest coaches of the day, was the first which was thus altered.

The guard was responsible for the punctuality of the coach, and each evening when leaving the General Post Office he was handed a watch officially set and officially locked in a case in such wise that it could not be tampered with. The guard also carried what was called a "snow book" from the fact that entries therein were most usually caused by heavy snowstorms. In this he recorded any such incidents as the hire of extra horses when these might be

needed, of saddle horses to carry the mail bags forward if the coach came to grief, or of any other outlay.

"THE ROAD" IN WINTER.

Mention of the guard's "snow book" suggests that a winter's journey in the coaching days was an undertaking not to be lightly faced. One morning in March, 1812, the Bath coach arrived at Chippenham with two outside passengers frozen to death in their seats, and a third in a dying state. A snow shovel strapped behind his seat was a regular item of the guard's winter equipment, but only too often a shovel was useless. In the winter of 1814, the Edinburgh mail had to be left in the snow and the mail bags forwarded to Alnwick on horseback; in the same week eight horses were needed to draw the York coach to Newcastle. When a coach was snow-bound it was the guard's duty to get the mails forward; this he did when possible by taking two of the horses and riding one while the other carried the bags. Some of the best of Pollard's coaching pictures represent such incidents as occurred in the severe winters of 1812, 1814, and 1836.

The winter of 1814 was long remembered for the great and prolonged fog which disorganised traffic; the fog was followed by a singularly severe snow storm which continued for forty-eight hours; while it lasted no fewer than thirty-three mails in one day failed to arrive at the General Post Office.

The Christmas season of 1836 is historical in meteorological annals for the unprecedented severity of the snowfall. The storm lasted for the best part of the week, and for ten days travelling was suspended. Christmas night was the worst, and scarcely a single coach ventured to quit London on the 26th and 27th. St. Albans was literally full of mails and stages that could not get forward; on December 27, no fewer than fourteen mail coaches were abandoned snow-bound on various roads; and the Exeter mail, on December 26, was dug out five times on the way to Yeovil. In flat and open country all traces of the roads were lost, and the coachman had to trust the safety of the vehicle to his horses' instinct. In some places the snow drifts gathered to an enormous depth and made the roads utterly impassable.

It was an article of the coaching creed to "get forward" if humanly possible; and the

feats of endurance and courage accomplished by guards and coachmen in these old times prove them to have been a remarkably fine class of public servant, deserving all that has been written of them.

PASSENGER FARES.

Passenger fares by mail coach were higher than by the ordinary stage; on the former the rates were from 4d. to 5d. per mile for "outsides," and 8d. to 10d. per mile for "insides"; on the stage coach the outside passenger paid from 2½d. to 3d. per mile, and the inside from 4d. to 5d. Posting cost about eighteenpence per mile, and was therefore reserved to rich men.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN STAGE AND MAIL COACH.

In the early days of the century, though the actual rate of travel was about eight miles an hour by the ordinary stage coach, much time was occupied over the journey There appears to have been no such thing as a "time bill." The coachman would go out of his way to set down or pick up a passenger: he would wait to oblige a friend if desired, and "Nimrod" in his famous article

on "The Road" cites, as an example of the leisurely fashion prevalent, the civility of "Billy" Williams, who drove the Shrewsbury-Chester coach in his school days, and took twelve hours to cover the forty miles. Two hours were allowed for dinner at Wrexham, but this obliging coachman would come into the parlour and say, "The coach is ready, gentlemen, but don't let me disturb you if you wish for another bottle."

Very different was the case with the Royal Mail: every second was economised: at some places horses were changed within the space of a minute, and so jealously punctual were the coachmen that the village people set their clocks by the mail as it sped along the street. The Royal Mail paid no tolls, and if a turnpike keeper had not his gate open ready for its passage he was fined 40s. The passing of the London coach was the event of the day in quiet villages during the coaching age, as the guard performed the functions now discharged by the newspaper and telegraph wire. "The grandest chapter in our experience," says a regular traveller during the stirring times of 1805-1815, "was on those occasions when we went down from London with news of a victory."

THE "GOLDEN AGE" OF COACHING.

The adoption of Macadam's system of road making gave birth to the brief "golden age" of coaching. John Macadam, an Ayrshire man, born in 1756, had devoted many years to the subject of road improvement, and between the years 1798 and 1814 travelled over some 30,000 miles of highway in Great Britain. His method of spreading small broken fragments of hard stone, none over six ounces in weight, stamped or rolled into a compact crust, was finally approved in 1818, and "macadamised" roads were rapidly made all over the kingdom. The inventor was awarded a grant of £10,000, and in 1827 he was appointed Surveyor-General of Roads. He died in 1836, when fast coaching was at the zenith of its prosperity.

The portrait of which a reproduction is here given is believed to be the only one in existence. It was painted by Raymond, about the year 1835, and was given by Mr. Macadam's widow to Mr. Allen of Hoddesdon, Essex, who for several years had made road-mending tools and appliances to the great road-maker's patterns. The portrait was bequeathed to Mr. Allen's grand-

JOHN LOUDON MACADAM.

(From a painting in the possession of his great-grandson, Major J. J. L. McAdam, of Sherborne, Dorset.)

daughter, by whom it was sold in 1902, to the present owner, Major McAdam.

To fully appreciate the enormous value of Macadam's work it must be considered in conjunction with that of Telford the engineer, and with knowledge of the earlier methods of road-making. The original high-roads in England were the tracks made by travelling chapmen or pedlars, who carried their goods on pack horses. These naturally selected routes over the hills when they sought to avoid the bogs and quagmires of low-lying ground; and these routes, becoming in time the regular coach-roads, left much to be desired in point of gradient and contour. Telford cut through the hills to obtain an easier ascent, and when Macadam had "made" the new road thus outlined it was as widely different from the original track it replaced as it is possible to conceive. "Nimrod," writing in 1826, said, "Roads may be called the veins and arteries of a country through which channels every improvement circulates. I really consider Mr. Macadam as being, next to Dr. Jenner, the greatest contributor to the welfare of mankind that this country has ever produced."

With good, firm and level roads the speed of the mail and stage coaches increased, and

the endeavour to combine speed with safety brought about numerous minor but important improvements in coach-building, proprietors sparing neither pains nor money to insure the best materials and workmanship. The greatest improvements, says Mr. Thrupp, were those begun in 1820 by Mr. Samuel Hobson. He reduced the height of the wheels to 3 feet 3 inches in front, and 4 feet 5 inches behind, lengthened the coach body to better proportions and hung it lower, so that a double step would give access to the door instead of a three-step ladder. He wrought great improvements in the curves of the carriage, and did much to strengthen the details of the underworks.

FAST COACHES.

Coach driving became a favourite occupation among men of good birth who had run through their patrimony and could turn their hands to nothing more congenial. "Horsing" coaches was a business to which all sorts and conditions of men devoted themselves, and which did much to promote the spirit of rivalry that made for good service. Innkeepers and others contracted to supply horses for one, two, three, or more stages of a journey, and thus acquired a personal

interest in the coach. The best coaches now ran at ten or ten and a half miles an hour, and faster over favourable stretches of road. The Quicksilver mail from London to Devonport, "Nimrod" tells us, was half a mile in the hour faster than most of the coaches in England, and did the fastest stage of the journey, four miles near Hartford Bridge, in twelve minutes. This coach on one occasion accomplished its journey of 216 miles in twenty-one hours, fourteen minutes, including stoppages.

The mail coaches, it should be said, carried three outside passengers at most, and no luggage at all on the roof. Of course these rates of speed, so much higher than had been known theretofore, called forth protests. "Old Traveller," writing to the *Sporting Magazine* in 1822, objects to the encouragement given such hazardous work by "Nimrod." In his younger days, he says, when about to start on a journey, his wife's parting hope was that he would not be robbed; now she had changed it to the hope that he would not get his neck broken. It was no uncommon thing, at the beginning of the century and earlier, for a Birmingham merchant to make his will before he set out on a journey; and with all respect to the

ROYAL MAIL COACH.

"Old Traveller," the risks he encountered on the road in the days before Macadam were as great from ruts and holes as from highwaymen.

Travelling on May-day was avoided by those who objected to fast work, for it was customary for rival stages to race each other the whole journey on that day, and old sporting papers contain occasional record of the fact that a coach had accomplished its entire journey at a rate of fifteen miles an hour. A law passed in 1820, to put an end to "wanton and furious driving or racing," by which coachmen were made liable to criminal punishment if anyone were maimed or injured, did not stop this practice. For on May 1, 1830, the Independent Tallyho ran from London to Birmingham, 109 miles, in 7 hours, 39 minutes. The writer in *Baily's Magazine* of June, 1900, before referred to, gives a graphic account of a May-day race between two of the smartest West country coaches, the Hibernia and l'Hirondelle, from which it appears that these contests were not always free from foolhardiness, though it must be admitted that they produced wonderful displays of coachmanship. Captain Malet gives the

following as the fastest coaches in England in 1836 :—

London and Brighton, 51½ miles, time five hours, fifteen minutes ; London and Shrewsbury, 154 miles, time fifteen hours ; London and Exeter, 171 miles, time seventeen hours ; London and Manchester, 187 miles, time nineteen hours ; London and Liverpool, 203 miles, time twenty hours, fifty minutes ; London and Holyhead, 261 miles, time twenty-six hours, fifty-five minutes.

Some of the smartest coaches in England ran from London to Brighton, which, owing to George III.'s patronage, had since 1784 risen from a mere fishing village to the most fashionable of seaside resorts. In 1819, says Bradfield, upwards of 70 coaches visited and left Brighton every day ; in 1835, says Bradfield, there were 700 mail coaches and rather under 3,300 stages running in England ; he estimates the number of horses used at over 150,000, while 30,000 men were employed as coachmen, guards, horse-keepers, ostlers, &c. Mr. W. Chaplin, the member for Salisbury, was the largest proprietor ; he had five "yards" in London and owned 1,300 horses. Messrs. Horne and Sherman ranked next to Mr. Chaplin ; each had about 700 horses.

HEAVY TAXATION OF COACHES.

The heavy taxes laid upon the stage coaches were a fruitful source of complaint among proprietors. In 1835 a coach conveying eighteen passengers paid 3½d. per mile run to the revenue. To show the decline of coaching, it may be said that in 1835 the total revenue from the stage coaches amounted to £498,497 and in 1854 it had fallen to £73,903. The taxes were estimated to be one-fifth of the receipts, and this being the case it is not remarkable that, in the earlier days of the railroad, the people in country districts remote from railways should have suffered more inconvenience than they had ever known. It no longer paid to run a coach in such districts; and persons in the humbler walks of life found themselves set down at the station, ten, fifteen or twenty miles from home, with no means of getting there other than their own legs. Such districts saw a revival of old postal methods in the shape of boys mounted on ponies.

The unequal competition between coach and train was continued for many years, ruinous taxation of the former notwithstanding. While the coaches were paying 20 per cent. of their earnings to the revenue, the railways paid 5 per cent., and carried pas-

sengers more rapidly and more cheaply. The coaches held their place with great tenacity, aided no doubt by the innate British tendency to cling to old institutions.

The *Quarterly Review* of 1837 mentions as a curious and striking instance of enterprise and the advantages of free competition that a day coach then performed the journey between London and Manchester in time which exceeded by only one hour that occupied by the combined agency of coaches and the Liverpool and Birmingham railway. The Act for transmitting the mails by railway was passed in 1838, eight years after the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester railway, and then it may be said coach proprietors recognised that their industry was doomed; but they maintained fares at the old scales until the coach was nearly extinguished.

EARLY CABS.

We must now retrace our steps and endeavour to trace the progress made in vehicles other than stage and mail coaches. In 1740 the first patent was granted for a two-wheeled carriage; it is briefly described as a "double shaft and pole carriage with two wheels drawn by two horses harnessed

abreast." Another "coach with two wheels" was patented in 1786. Mr. Thrupp states that 27,300 two-wheeled vehicles paid duty in the year 1814, a fact which shows how rapidly they grew in favour. It is therefore somewhat curious that the first two-wheeled hackney cab in London should not have appeared in London until 1823, when Mr. David Davis built twelve of these vehicles.

"The body was a little like a hansom cab but smaller; it had a head, of which the hinder half was stiff and solid, and the fore part made to fold. This arrangement was probably an imitation of the gentleman's cabriolet, the hood of which was rarely put down altogether, as the groom had to hold on by it. Outside the head on one side was a seat for the driver of the cab, and the whole was hung upon stiff shafts. These cabs were, I think, painted yellow, and stood for hire in a yard in Portland Street close to Oxford Circus."

Cabs of this kind stood for hire in the streets, a few years later, if we may accept the authority of Charles Dickens. Readers of the *Pickwick Papers* which was published (in monthly parts) in 1837 and 1838, will remember how Mr. Pickwick, when he set out upon his travels took a cab from "the coach stand at St. Martins-le-Grand"; and took notes of the driver's account of his horse as he drove to Charing Cross. On another page we find Mr. and Mrs. Raddle

and Mrs. Cluppins "squeezed into a hackney cabriolet, the driver sitting in his own particular little dickey at the side." This vehicle was perhaps the light two-wheeled cab with a fixed panel top, built to carry only two persons inside, which was introduced about 1830. The driver sat on a little seat over the off-side wheel.

This vehicle was succeeded by Mr. Boulnois' patent cab, of which an illustration is given. It opened at the back, and the driver's seat was on the roof; the passengers sat facing one another. This cab was light and convenient, but appears to have fallen into disuse because the fore part was within too easy reach of the horse's heels to make it quite acceptable to nervous passengers. Harvey's "Quarto Bus" to carry four was the next popular conveyance, but it was superseded about 1836 by the "brougham cab" for two. This cab was rather smaller than the vehicle to which Lord Brougham's name was given in 1839. From this conveyance was developed the "clarence cab," which remains with us still as the familiar "four-wheeler." It should be mentioned that the first four-wheeled cabs appeared in London about 1835; these however, carried only two

passengers inside. The modern hansom belongs to a later period. In 1802 there were 1,100 hackney carriages in London, and in 1855 the number was 2,706.

In 1824 was published *The Hackney Coach Directory;* this book, which must

LONDON HACKNEY CAB (BOULNOIS' PATENT) ABOUT 1835.

have been hailed as a real boon to the users of cabs in London, was compiled by James Quaife, "Surveyor to the Board of Hackney Coaches." It set forth the "Distances checked from actual admeasurement from eighty-four coach stands in and about the

Metropolis," and the title page tells us "The number of fares set forth is nearly eighteen thousand."

PRIVATE AND STATE COACHES, 1750-1830.

A volume might easily be filled with the particulars of private carriages which came into use between the middle of the eighteenth century and the end of the coaching era. Great ingenuity and a great deal of art of a florid kind was expended on the private coaches of the upper classes. A patent granted in 1786 gives us an idea of the materials used for the purpose; the patent was for a method of "ornamenting the outsides of coaches and other carriages with foil stones, Bristol stones, paste and all sorts of pinched glass, sapped glass and every other stone, glass and composition used in or applied to the jewellery trade." Mr. Larwood writes of the carriages in Hyde Park :—

"The beautiful and somewhat vain Duchess of Devonshire had a carriage which cost 500 guineas without upholstery. That of the Countess of Sutherland was grey, with her cypher in one of Godsell's newly-invented crystals. A Mr. Edwards had a *vis-à-vis* which cost 300 guineas, and was thought 'admirable'; while another nameless gentleman glad-

dened the eyes of all beholders with a splendid gig lined with looking glass; while the artistic curricle, with shells on the wheels, of Romeo Coates, was one of the features of Hyde Park."

Six horses were not uncommonly driven. Sir John Lade drove a phaeton and six greys. The Prince of Wales, in 1781, drove a pair caparisoned with blue harness stitched in red, the horses' manes being plaited with scarlet ribbons while they wore plumes of feathers on their heads.

The decorative art as applied to vehicles naturally found greatest scope in State coaches. The State carriage of Queen Victoria was built in 1761 for George III. from designs by Sir William Chambers, a famous architect, who was born in 1726. The length of this coach is 24 feet, the height 12 feet, the width 8 feet, and the weight is between 3 and 4 tons; the various panels and doors are adorned with allegorical groups by Cipriani. This superb carriage, having only been used on rare occasions, is still in a good state of preservation. It cost £7,562 to build and adorn. The State coach of the Lord Mayor of London has been of necessity more frequently used, and alterations and repairs have left comparatively little of the original vehicle built in

1757. In style it is generally similar to the Royal State coach.

While money and artistic talent were lavished freely on the adornment of the carriages built for pleasure or display in London, it must not be supposed that sound workmanship was neglected. The highly decorated vehicles driven in the Park were well built, but the best and strongest work was necessarily put into carriages which were required for more practical purposes, and we must therefore discriminate between the pleasure carriage and that used for travelling.

The mail and stage coaches were used by nearly all classes of society, but these worked only the main roads throughout the kingdom; therefore country gentlemen who resided off the coach routes had to find their own way to the nearest stage or posting house; moreover, wealthy men who could afford the luxury of taking their own time over a journey, were still much addicted to the use of private travelling carriages drawn by their own horses or, more often, horsed from stage to stage along the route by the post masters.

For many years after Mr. McAdam's methods had been applied to the main highways, the narrower and less used by-roads

After the Picture by Chas. Cooper Henderson.

TRAVELLING POST, 1825-1835.

left much to be desired; and however good the roads it is obvious that lavishly adorned carriages would have been out of place for travel in all weathers. A single day's journey through mud or dust would play havoc with ornamentation contrived of "foil stones, Bristol stones, sapped glass" and similar materials; what was required in the travelling carriage, such as that so well portrayed by the late Charles Cooper Henderson, was the combination of strength and lightness. Hence the best of the coach-builder's art, the finest workmanship in the practical, as opposed to the decorative, sense, was applied to the travelling carriage, which was constructed to secure the greatest comfort to the occupants, together with the greatest strength to withstand rapid travel over roads of all kinds with the least weight.

The picture by Cooper Henderson, from which the illustration is reproduced, refers to the period about 1825-35, and it will be observed that while the body of the carriage is hung lower than the posting carriage of seventy years earlier, the general plan is not greatly dissimilar.

VARIETIES OF CARRIAGE.

About 1790 the art of coach-building had arrived at a very high degree of perfection,* and carriages in great variety of shape were built. A feature common to all, or nearly all, was the height of the wheels. The highest were 5 feet 8 inches in diameter; these had 14 spokes, and the number of spokes were reduced in ratio with the size of the wheel, till the smallest, 3 feet 2 inches in diameter, had only 8 spokes. A good example of the coach of 1790 may be seen in the South Kensington Museum; it belonged to the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, and, save for the greater size of the body, the flatness of its sides and greater length above than below, is not widely dissimilar from coaches of the present day.

The Landau, invented at Landau in Germany, in 1757, was, about 1790, made to open in the middle of the roof or "hood," and became very popular as combining the advantages of a closed coach with an open carriage; the chief objection to Landaus was the greasiness and smell of the blacking leather of which the hoods were con-

* *Treatise upon Carriages and Harness.* W. Felton, London, 1794.

By J. Doyle.]

KING GEORGE IV. IN HIS PONY PHAETON.

structed. The name of the phaeton first occurs in a patent granted in 1788. Phaetons of various shapes came into fashion later: all were built to be driven by the owner, and probably gained much in popular esteem from the fact that George IV., when Prince of Wales, used to drive a "Perch High Phaeton" in the Park and to race meetings. Some of these vehicles were extravagantly high, and it was the correct thing to drive four horses in them at the fastest trot. The "Perch High Phaeton" was shaped like a curricle and had a hood. "The centre of the body was hung exactly over the front axletree, the front wheels were 4 feet high, and the hind wheels 5 feet 8 inches" (Thrupp).

The pony phaeton owed its popularity to King George IV., who, in 1824, desired to possess a low carriage into which he could step without exertion; old pictures show us that the pony phaeton of the present day is very like the original vehicle. Such a phaeton was built for our late Queen, then Princess Victoria, in 1828. It should be said that C springs were first used by English coach builders about the year 1804.

Among other curious carriages was the "Whisky," a two-wheeled gig with a mov-

able hood, the body connected with the long horizontal springs by scroll irons. The "suicide gig" was an absurdly high vehicle which was popular in Ireland; in this the groom was perched on something resembling a stool 3 feet above his master who drove.

Dr. R. Lovell Edgeworth, writing in 1817, says that a sudden revolution in the height of private carriages had taken place a few years previously. Such as might be seen in Bond Street were so low that gentlemen on foot could hold conversation with ladies in their carriages without the least difficulty; but it was soon discovered that other people over-heard their conversation, and carriages "immediately sprang up to their former exaltation." It is difficult to believe that such a reason accounted for a revolution in the method of carriage building.

Driving as a pastime came into vogue about the beginning of the century, when it became fashionable for ladies to display their skill on the coach box. The "Benson Driving Club" was founded in 1807, and survived until 1853 or 1854; the Four Horse Club came into existence in 1808, but only continued for eighteen years. The Four-in-Hand Driving Club was founded in 1856, and the Coaching Club in 1870.