THE COACHING ERA

VIOLET A. WILSON

Q-2-4/3

JOHN A. SEAVERNS

TUFTS UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
3 9090 013 415 514

Veterinary Library
Tufts University
School of Veterinary Medicine
200 Westboro Rd.
North Grafton, MA 01536

THE COACHING ERA

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

QUEEN ELIZABETH'S
MAIDS OF HONOUR
Illustrated

THE BODLEY HEAD

AN EARLY STAGE COACH

By J. C. Ibbetson (1792)

Reproduced from the original picture by permission of Messrs. Leggatt Bros.

THE COACHING ERA

BY VIOLET A. WILSON

WITH FIFTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS FROM OLD PICTURES AND PRINTS

NEW YORK
E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY
681 FIFTH AVENUE

MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY MORRISON AND GIBB LTD., EDINBURGH

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	Early Coaches	1
II	Stage-Coaches	16
III	Mail-Coaches	31
IV	Coachmen	44
V	Guards	69
VI	Coaching Competition	85
VII	Coach Proprietors	104
VIII	Down the Road	114
IX	"The Traveller's Oracle"	139
X	The Coach as News-Bearer	151
XI	Highwaymen	162
XII	The Amateurs	178
XIII	Accidents	196
XIV	Travellers' Experiences	210
XV	Two Foreigners on Coaching	227
XVI	The Coming of the Railway	241
	Index	255

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

In Colour

An Early Stage-Coach . . . . . *Frontispiece*
By J. C. Ibbetson (1792)

FACING PAGE

Mail-Coach going Downhill 38
By J. Pollard

Mail-Coach in a Snow-Drift 72
By J. Pollard

Stage-Coach and Opposition Coach in Sight . . . 94
By J. Pollard

A Stage-Coach 132
By M. E.

The Norwich Coach 170

The Roadsters 192
By H. Alken

The Day before Christmas 234

In Black and White

The York Highflyer (Edinburgh and London) . . . 20

The Oxford Coach 54
By F. Turner

The Abingdon Machine 112

Edinburgh and London Mail-Coach passing Toll-Gate by Moonlight 156
By J. Pollard

The Exeter Coach 202
By J. F. Herring

A Double-Bodied Coach 222

The Last of the Coaches 250

NOTE

The thanks of the Publishers are due to Mr. A. E. Preston, Messrs. Leggatt Bros. of St. James's Street; Messrs. Arthur Ackermann of Bond Street; and Messrs. Bromhead & Cutts of Cork Street, for their kindness in lending the valuable Pictures and Prints which bear their names in this Volume.

"GENTLEMEN—THE ROAD!"

THE COACHING ERA

CHAPTER I EARLY COACHES

WHEN the Romans came to England, they were not greatly impressed by our island or its inhabitants, for Cicero wrote to a friend that there appeared to be very little worth taking away from Britain, except the chariots, of which he wished his friend to bring him one as a pattern.

These chariots, which the Ancient Britons used in battle, differed in certain respects from those of Roman construction: they were open in front instead of at the back, whilst the pole went straight out between the horses and was broad enough for the driver to walk along; the wheels were high and had long scythes fixed to the axle trees, so that when driven at full speed through the ranks of the enemy they produced a devastating effect.

The writers of old chronicles occasionally mentioned the use of "whirlcotes," which were litters borne by men or horses. In these women and sick persons travelled; but it was not till the reign of Queen Elizabeth that regular coaches were first introduced into England.

The sixteenth century then saw the establishment of private coaches, the seventeenth of stage-coaches, the

eighteenth of mail-coaches, the nineteenth of railways, and the twentieth of flying machines. Doubtless, next century will evolve an even more progressive mode of transport, causing our descendants to smile tolerantly when they speak of the days when people were content to travel at the leisurely rate of a mile a minute.

We can, however, console ourselves with the comforting reflection that, if posterity will look down on us, our present means of locomotion would command the awe and respect of our ancestors of a few generations back. If they could be persuaded that we had not sold ourselves to the devil, and were in consequence profiting by his satanic majesty's own patent inventions, they would certainly account us heroes, and marvel at our temerity. In their days carriages with horses were looked upon as novelties, and the back of the horse considered the orthodox means of transport; while those who could only afford the humble conveyance of Shank's mare had perforce to confine their peregrinations within narrow limits.

If some one with a gift of prophecy, and a desire for notoriety, had ventured to foretell the advent of motor-cars, the good folk of the time would have remarked plainly that he lied, for such things could not be. If pressed to give a solid reason for this statement, they would have pointed to the nearest high road, and asked, if six, eight, and sometimes as many as fifteen horses were requisite to pull coaches out of the mud in which they so persistently stuck, how then would coaches without horses at all fare?

This was so eminently true that the prophet, having no precedent for road engineers or the powers of steam, would have been at a loss for an answer and, seeing the apparent futility of his remark, have hastened to add that he spoke by way of pleasantry, and that by horseless carriages he meant those drawn by oxen. If he was anxious to enhance his reputation, he might even have ventured to predict live unicorns for draught purposes, as those mystic animals were still thought to exist, and the prophet would have obtained far more credence than if he had adhered to his original statement, that carriages would travel without the assistance of any animal power at all.

The roads in England were at that time, and, indeed, for long after, in such an appalling state that travelling of any description was both difficult and dangerous, and in winter well-nigh impossible. A narrow track in the middle of the road represented the only firm surface, whilst on either side were deep sloughs of mud, and ruts eminently calculated to break the leg of man or beast.

To those obliged to travel, the middle of the road was the only place, and they started off with the firm determination never to leave it; the consequence was that when two trains of pack-horses, or two waggons met, the right of way was very fiercely contested. The rule of the road being either unknown or wilfully disregarded, the question as to who should step down into the sea of mud was usually settled by a free fight among the parties concerned. Travellers in the rear had "to

stand stock-still behind the standing cart or waggon, on most beastly and insufferable deep wet ways, to the great endangering of our horses, and the neglect of important business: nor durst we adventure to stir (for the most imminent danger of those deep ruts, and unreasonable ridges) till it has pleased mister carter to jog on which we have taken very kindly."[1]

Such was the tenacity of the mud that, during the Civil War, the Parliamentarians captured 800 horse, not in battle, after a full fair fight, but "while sticking in the mire." Dr. Burton opined that the reason Sussex women, oxen and swine, were all long-legged arose from the necessity of forcibly pulling their feet out of the mud with every step they took. At a time when all the roads in the kingdom were bad, those in Sussex had the distinction of being among the worst. One of the courtiers who accompanied Queen Anne's husband, Prince George of Denmark, on a visit to Petworth in 1703, has left a dismal account of the experiences which befell their party:

"We set out at six o'clock in the morning to go for 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 ever I saw in my life: we were thrown but once indeed in going, but both our coach which was leading and His Highness's body coach, would have suffered very often, if the nimble boors of Sussex had not

[1] Thomas Mace's tract on the State of the Roads, 1675.

frequently poised it or supported it with their shoulders from Godalming almost to Petworth; and the nearer we approached to the Duke's house the more inaccessible 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."

Horace Walpole wrote bitterly of the Sussex roads in 1749, and besought his friends, if they valued their lives and constitutions, never to set foot in that appalling county. The inhabitants were savages, the inns, horses, postilions, and coaches all as bad as bad could be, and the roads so execrable that anyone foolish enough to imagine them meant for wheeled traffic would be promptly disillusioned.

In the North things were little better, for Arthur Young, the agriculturist, in his northern tour of 1770 exclaimed vehemently:

"I know not in the whole range of language terms sufficiently expressive to describe this infernal road. Let me most seriously caution all travellers to avoid it as they would the devil, for a thousand to one they break their necks or their limbs by overthrows or breakings down. They will meet with ruts which I actually measured four feet deep and floating with mud, only from a wet summer, what therefore must it be after a winter?"

Even in the vicinity of London, matters, though slightly better than in the provinces, were still nothing

to boast of, and, as late as 1736, Lord Hervey writing from Kensington declared: "The road between this place and London is grown so infamously bad that we live here in the same solitude as we would do if cast on a rock in the middle of the ocean; and all the Londoners tell us that there is between them and us an impassable gulf of mud."

The cross-country roads in the provinces were called roads out of courtesy, for in point of fact they were little more than rough tracks across country made by the carriers with their strings of pack-horses. These pack-horses, besides being the acknowledged conveyance for merchandise and other heavy goods, also carried occasional letters, packages, and sometimes travellers, from one place to another.

Smollett, whose novel, *Roderick Random*, is largely autobiographical, gives an account of such a journey: "I determined therefore to set out with the carriers who transplant goods from one place to another on horseback; and this scheme I accordingly put into execution, on the first day of November 1739, sitting upon a pack-saddle between two blankets, one of which contained my goods in a knapsack. But by the time we arrived at Newcastle-on-Tyne, I was so fatigued with the tediousness of the carriage, and benumbed with the cold of the weather, that I resolved to travel the rest of the journey on foot, rather than proceed in such a disagreeable manner."

Walter Rippon made the first hollow turning coach for Queen Elizabeth, but his invention did not advance

him much in her favour, for she was so knocked about in it during her first drive that she refused ever to use it again. Elizabeth's next coach was intimately connected with what to her was a most important event, for William Bonner brought it from Holland, and with him came his wife, who introduced the art of clear starching, by the aid of which the Queen's ruffs spread out stiffly to a truly astonishing extent.

The early coaches, gorgeous with cloth of gold, embellished with wonderful carvings, adorned with ostrich plumes, were outwardly everything that was magnificent and regal, but agonizing to drive in. Being utterly destitute of springs, they pitched and rolled in an alarming manner over the rough roads, so that it is no wonder that, when giving audience to the French ambassador, Elizabeth complained that she was "suffering aching pains in consequence of having been knocked about in a coach which had been driven a little too fast only a few days before."[1]

Queen Elizabeth had, however, a very keen perception of the state and pageantry due to royalty, and on public occasions she used her coach despite its manifold discomforts. At the public thanksgiving for the defeat of the Spanish Armada, she proceeded in great pomp to St. Paul's Cathedral, attended by an enormous retinue on horseback. Elizabeth made a truly impressive appearance in "a chariot throne made with foure pillars behind to have a canopie, on the top whereof was made a crowne imperial, and two lower pillars before

[1] Dépêches de La Mothe-Fénelon.

whereon stood a lyon and a dragon, supporters of the arms of England."[1]

The great ladies who were present on this occasion, or who got their husbands to give them a detailed description of the Queen's wonderful conveyance, never rested till they had coaches of their own, though they were perfectly aware that by their presumption in daring to imitate they ran the risk of incurring her Majesty's displeasure, and the Elizabethan temper was a thing to be reckoned with. Be in the fashion they would, cost what it might, and importuned their husbands till at last obtaining their wish they "rode up and down the country to the admiration of all beholders."

At first the Spartan gentlemen of the period looked on all carriages with contempt, considering them only fit for women and the aged, and: "In Sir Philip Sydney's days, so famous for men at armes, 'twas then held a great disgrace for a young gentleman to be seen riding in the streets in a coach." Thomas Pennant, the antiquarian, says: "The single gentlemen, then a hardy race, equipped in Jack boots and trousers up to their middle, rode fast through thick and thin, and guarded against the mire, defying the frequent stumble and fall, arose and pursued their journey with alacrity." This attitude died out in the next generation, and early in the seventeenth century a coach was essentially part of a fashionable man's equipment. In 1619 the Duke of Buckingham, so beloved at Court and abhorred of the public, desiring to make a grand display, caused six horses to be har-

[1] Nichols's *Progresses of Queen Elizabeth.*

nessed to his private coach; a piece of arrogance that so enraged the haughty old Earl of Northumberland that he determined to surpass it, and promptly appeared with a coach and eight, "and drove through the city of London to Bath, to the vulgar talk and admiration."

Considering the state of the Bath Road at that time, the eight horses, no doubt, had all they could do to pull the heavy coach through the quagmires that encompassed it. Noble and intrepid pioneers suffered for their pride, when their coaches stuck fast or were overturned in the mud, and highwaymen, never renowned as respecters of persons, relieved them of their valuables on lonely heaths, whither they had wandered and lost their way. Except being upset, nothing was so easy for these early travellers as to lose their way; indeed, in consequence of the absence of signposts, and the difficulty of telling roads from cart tracks, they were likely to arrive at an entirely different destination from the one they set out for.

After the Restoration, private carriages are often mentioned in the news letters of the time, chiefly on account of the accidents which so very frequently befell them. Thus in 1679:

"We hear that the Duke of Monmouth lately passing over the ferry at Windsor with his coach and six horses, two of the horses in the passage leapt over the boat into the water, and endangered the drawing of the coach after them, had not one of the servants cut the traces, and let them go, thereby preventing any further mischief which might have happened."

Pepys, in his diary, recounts how he saw the King's coach overturned:

"To Whitehall, from whence the King and the Duke of York went by three in the morning, and had the misfortune to be overset with the Duke of York, and the Prince (Rupert) at the Kingsgate in Holborne, and the King all dirty, but no hurt. How it came to pass I know not, but only it was dark, and the torches did not, they say, light the coaches as they should."

In 1634 Captain Butler, a retired mariner of a speculative turn of mind, built four hackney-coaches which he stationed for public hire at the *Maypole* in the Strand. This venture met with instant success, and Captain Bailey's liveried drivers were in great request so that other drivers, quick to follow, took up their station at the coach rank or drove slowly about in search of fares.

These first hackney-coaches were imitations of the private coaches of the period, and the coachman's position was most unenviable, for, as the idea of a coach-box had not yet occurred, the driver was accommodated on a bar placed very low behind the horses. "The coachman rides behind the horses' tails, lasheth them, and looketh not behind him," wrote Stow, who was of the opinion that no carts shod with iron should be allowed within the city "unless for the service of princes"; even then the foremost horse should be led by hand to minimize danger.

This sudden influx of public vehicles was not regarded at all favourably at Court, which very justly considered

that, if anyone could hire a coach, the pageantry of a royal procession would be shorn of much impressiveness. With the hope of putting a check on wheeled carriages, Charles I endeavoured to persuade his subjects to use sedan chairs, an innovation they regarded but coldly. Annoyed that he could not make the populace see eye to eye with him in this matter, the King issued a proclamation forbidding anyone to engage a hackney-carriage unless for the purpose of going at least three miles out of town.

Business enterprise of any description necessarily languished during the strenuous years of the Civil War, but with the Restoration hackney-coaches increased and multiplied, though Charles II, who loved them little more than his father had done, did his unsuccessful best to put them down.

Pepys in his diary for November 1669 notes: "Notwithstanding that this was the first day of the King's proclamation against hackney-coaches coming into the streets to stand for hire, yet I got one to carry me home."

That the narrow streets of old London were overcrowded it is easy to believe, for at one time there were more than 2000[1] of these hackney-coaches. Neither were the drivers any too considerate for the public safety, according to a curious old tract entitled "Coach

[1] In April 1633 the poor widows of hackney-coachmen petitioned for some relief, as the Parliament had reduced the number of coaches to 400 : there were before in and about London more than 2000. T. Rugges, Diurnal.

and Sedan," which requests the drivers to "Leave in any case that ill habit ye have of running over people in a dark night, and then bid them stand up!"

Pedestrians of those days, either by custom or the toughness of their constitutions, seem to have become used to such misadventures, for Pepys recounts how he saw a coach run over a man's neck, but who got up seeming none the worse for the experience.

The coaching era had undoubtedly begun and the alarmists of the period rushed into print on the subject. Their fathers, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers, to go no further back, had been content to exist without such luxuries, but considered the back of a horse the right place for a man of courage. Should the present generation presume to question the wisdom of their revered ancestors on this subject? It was presumption even to suggest such a thing.

John Taylor, one of the Thames watermen[1] who were nearly ruined by the introduction of coaches, launched out very bitterly against them. Taylor, when he found his trade was threatened, took to writing; his output was prodigious, and though not of high literary merit, materially helps later generations to reconstruct the times in which he lived. He was so bitten with poetry that he would never write in prose if he could help it, and an added grievance against the coach was that so few words would rhyme with it. Encroach did, however,

[1] Before the introduction of coaches the river had been the chief highway of the city. "Up and by water to Whitehall" is a constantly recurring phrase in the early part of *Pepys's Diary*.

and Taylor made the most of it, saying "the word encroach, I think, that best befits it, for I think there never was such an impudent, proud, saucie intruder came into the world as a coach is."

He then went on to impute every imaginable evil to the pernicious influence of the coach, "for it had driven many honest families out of their houses, many knights to beggars, corporations to poverty, almsdeeds to misdeedes, hospitality to extortion, plenty to famine, humility to pride, compassion to oppression, and all earthly goodness almost to utter confusion."

Taylor was of the opinion that anything on wheels was put to an improper use when carrying live things; he grudgingly admitted that they might be useful for conveying stone, timber, corn, wine and other merchandise, for "they are dead and cannot go on foot, so must be carried." For any person possessing a full complement of legs, to travel in a coach was a disgrace unspeakable, and Taylor's eyes, in consequence, must have been offended a hundred times a day, for in spite of all he could say the popularity of coaches increased.

Coachmen, too, came in for a large measure of his hatred and he contrasted them unfavourably with carmen, in so much that they had the awful presumption to ride, whilst the carmen walked on foot, and, according to Taylor, if his horses were afflicted with a fit of melancholy—which, considering the state of the roads and construction of the waggons, cannot have been very infrequent—he would "whistle him into a fit of mirth."

In the provinces, travelling was still primitive, and the

first inception of a public conveyance can be traced back to carriers' vans which moved slowly from place to place carrying merchandise, and giving occasional lifts to peasants by the way. From this beginning came the great cumbersome waggons which gradually began to travel to and from the country districts and London. These huge wains, with tyres a foot or more in breadth, usually travelled in companies, for support in case of robbery, and assistance when they stuck fast in the mud, as they did two or three times a day. Little provision was made for the passengers, who shared the interior with bulky merchandise, and bumped and jolted against each other, as the waggon groaned and creaked on its way at the rate of a couple of miles an hour.

The waggoner either walked or rode beside his team, which was rarely, if ever, changed during the journey, so that it is little wonder the pace was slow, andt hat, however ill-assorted, the unfortunate travellers had to put up with close companionship for five or six days at a time. These waggons usually travelled only by day and stopped the night at some inn where the passengers were provided with supper at sixpence a head, and accommodated for the night in a large room or loft.

Monsieur Soulbrière, a Frenchman who came to England in the reign of Charles II, says: "I went from Dover to London in a waggon. It was drawn by six horses placed one after another, and driven by a waggoner who walked by the side of them. He was clothed in black, and affronted in all things like another St. George. He had a brave monteror on his head, and was a merry

fellow, fancied he made a figure, and seemed mightily pleased with himself."

These stage waggons, although humble conveyances and looked on with contempt by their later rivals, the coaches, yet continued stolidly on their way and, from the nature of their patrons, suffered so little from competition that they outlasted their more showy rivals by many years. Even now, when stage-coaches have long ceased to be, the carriers' vans which ply to and from the country towns to remote hamlets can lay claim to being a direct survival of the oldest form of public conveyance.

CHAPTER II STAGE-COACHES

FROM hackney-coaches and stage-waggons, stage-coaches were a natural transition, and though it is impossible to assign the exact date of their introduction it was probably about the year 1640. A play called *The Committee* though first acted in 1665, portrays the customs and habits of the reign of Charles I, and in the opening scene the coachmen and passengers of the Reading stage-coach enter. The coachman receives his tip "a groat of more than ordinary thinness," as he scathingly terms it, and a lady, anxious to impress the rest of the company, laments that her own coach is out of repair, declaring her husband would be furious if he knew she rode in a public coach.

The first authentic reference comes from a most unlikely quarter—from John Taylor. Apparently he had overcome his bitter hatred of hackney-coaches—which he used to refer to as "hell carts"—for in 1548 he managed to write of a stage-coach without one abusive adjective:

> "Myself in proper person took this journey;
> Two gentlewomen (by two maids attended)
> Accompanied me till my travels ended,
> We took one coach, two coachmen, and foure horses,
> And merrily from London made our courses.
> We wheel'd the top of th' heavy hill called Holborne
> (Up which hath full many a sinful soul borne)
> And so along we jolted past St. Gileses,
> Which place from Brainford six (or neare) seven miles is.

To Stanes at night at five o'clock we coasted,
Where, at the Bush we had bak'd, boil'd and roasted.
Bright Sol's illustrious Rayes the day adorning,
We past Bagshot and Bawbaw Friday morning.
That night we lodged at the White Hart at Alton,
And had good meate—a table with a salt on.
Next morn we arose with blushing cheeked Aurora;
The wayes were fair, but not so fair as Flora,
For Flora was a goddesse, and a woman,
And (like the highways) to all men was common.
Our horses with the coach, which we went into
Did hurry us amaine, through thick and thin too;
With fiery speed, the foaming bit they champt on,
And brought us to the Dolphin at Southampton."

This, then, is the earliest account of a stage-coach journey, and, really, if the writer had been anyone but a Thames waterman, it would almost seem as if he had enjoyed the experience. Notwithstanding the fiery speed at which they travelled, it took them three days to go from London to Southampton, though they started each morning at an unconscionably early hour.

If Taylor had overcome his hatred of coaches, his place as public alarmist was as adequately filled by one John Cressel, who in 1673, when there were but six stage-coaches in the land, wrote a pamphlet calling for their suppression.

The indictments which he arrayed against them now constitute the strongest arguments in their favour, and we realize what an immense boon the introduction of stage-coaches was to the nation at large. According to him, the nation was fast sinking into such a state of

effeminate degeneracy that after riding a few times in coaches men became unwilling to perform long journeys on horseback. They were no longer "able to endure frost, snow or rain, or to lodge in the fields"[1] as had afore time been their pleasing portion when benighted by the way. All this, too, that they might "save their fine clothes and keep themselves clean and dry."

Nor was this all. "For the passage to London being so easy, gentlemen came to London oftener than they need, and their ladies either with them or, having the convenience of the coaches, quickly follow them. And, when they are there, they must be in the mode, having all the new fashions, buy all their clothes there, and go to plays, balls and treats, where they get such a habit of jollity and love of gaiety and pleasure, that nothing will afterwards serve them, if ever they should fix their minds to live there again; but they must have all from London whatever it costs."

What was John Cressel's special grievance against coaches can only be surmised; he may have been victimized by country cousins, who, greatly undesired, came up in relays by the six stage-coaches to visit him; at any rate he expended all his eloquence in trying to prove how much better it would be for people living in the provinces to stop there. In case his scathing insinuations as to their manhood should not have the desired effect, he pretended an affectionate solicitude for their health, and endeavoured to point out the manifold dangers they

[1] "The Grand Concern of England Explained." *Harleian Miscellany*, Vol. VIII.

subjected themselves to by using a stage-coach. It was neither advantageous for men's health nor business, "to be laid fast in foul ways, and to be forced to wade up to the knee in mire; afterwards to sit in the cold till teams of horses can be sent to pull the coach out! Is it for the health to travel in rotten coaches, and to have the tackle or pearch, or axletree broken, and then to wait three or four hours, sometimes half a day to have them mended?"

"To be called out of bed into coaches an hour before day, and to be hurried about in coaches till two or three hours within night. Stifled with heat and choked with dust in summer. Starving or freezing with cold in winter, or choked with filthy fogs. Often brought to inns by torch light when it is too late to sit up and get supper, and next morning forced into the coach so early they can get no breakfast." The exceeding discomfort of these statements rather detracts from the luxury of coaching which was Cressel's theme at the beginning of his pamphlet.

Chamberlayne, in his *Present State of Great Britain*, published in 1673, expressed very different sentiments: "There is of late such an admirable commodiousness for both men and women in the country, that the like hath not been known in all the world, and that is by stage-coaches wherein anyone may be transported to any place, sheltered from foul weather, foul ways, free from endamaging one's health and one's body by hard jogging or over violent motion."

The first coach between Oxford and London took two

days to do the journey, but in 1669 bills were posted about the city to inform prospective travellers of a rival coach.

"These are to give notice that every day in the week there will be a coach set out at six o'clock in the morning from Thomas Moor's house over against All Souls College in Oxford which shall commodiously perform the whole journey to London in one day, and from the Saracens Head on Snow Hill London to Oxford again the next day, and so constantly for this summer half year. If God Permit."

The Vice-Chancellor ruled Oxford despotically in those days, so great was his indignation when another coach was put on the road without his express permission, and he instantly issued a proclamation which was stuck up in every corner of the town.

"'These are to give notice that whereas Thomas Dye and John Fossett have, without licence from me, and in contempt of the Chancellor, masters and scholars of the University (to whom the ordering and giving of all carriers of what kind soever, trading to or with the University and city of Oxford doth of right belong) presumed to set up a flying coach to travail from hence to London. These are to require all scholars, priviledged persons and members of the University, not to travail in the said coach set up by Thomas Dye and John Fossett, not to send letters or any goods whatsoever by the aforesaid flying coach." P. Mews, Vice-Chancellor.

That the early stage-coaches were about as uncomfortable as they could well be, we have proof in a letter

THE YORK HIGHFLYER (EDINBURGH AND LONDON)

From an old painting lent by Messrs. Ackermann

written by a traveller named Edward Parker in 1663, which recounts his harrowing experiences, and his determination never to go in a coach again if he can help it:

"Honoured Father,

"My dutie promised etc. I got to London on Saturday last, my journie was noe ways pleasant, being forced to ride in the boote all the waye, ye company up with mee were persons of great quality, as knights and ladyes. My journeys expense was 30s. This travail hath soe indisposed mee, that I am resolved never to ride up again in ye coatch. I am extremely hott and feverish, what this may tend to I know not. I have not yet advised with any doctor."[1]

It is probable that Edward Parker's sufferings were by no means unique, and that after one experience of the manifold discomforts of the stage-coach men preferred to return once more to the use of their saddle-horses. There was also the motive of economy in this method of progression, for horses purchased cheaply in the provinces could be sold at a profit when the rider reached London, an advantage which the canny Scots in particular are said to have keenly appreciated.

The earliest stage-coaches were fearful and wonderful to behold, for they were the last word in heaviness and clumsiness. The body was built to carry six or eight persons, who, though they had every reason to be thankful in that they had a roof over their heads, had to put up with leather shutters in lieu of windows, for it was

[1] *Archælogia*, XX.

not till 1680 that glass was used for that purpose. The coachman's lot was an unenviable one, for he sat on a bar between the two standard posts from which the coach was hung, with his feet on a board fixed to the top of the porch. Behind the coach was the "Basket," a huge wicker-work structure, originally intended for the carriage of luggage, and amongst which the outside passengers sat in exquisite discomfort.

As was only to be expected, these unwieldy vehicles frequently overset, and Ralph Thoresby, the antiquary, who travelled much on horseback, but took coach occasionally, always did so with the liveliest apprehension and, as five coaches were overturned in one day, he had definite grounds for alarm. That even the early coaches were popular on the road we gather from a brief notice he gives of one of them in connection with the annual May Day festivities:

"We dined at Grantham; had the usual solemnity (this being the first time the coach passed the road in May) of the coachmen and horses being decked with ribbons and flowers, the town music, and young people in couples before us."

By the end of the century coaching had become a national institution, and in a 1680 newspaper a house advertised to let at Eltham in Kent holds out the inducement, "there going a stage-coach thither every day." Hatfield Parsonage too—"In which house persons of quality and reputation have lived"—claimed that "both coaches and waggons go every other day." In

June 1668 Pepys says: "All the five coaches that come this day from Bath, as well as we, were gone out of the town before six."

Improvement in construction and pace of the early coaches was slow, three or four miles an hour being the recognized rate of progress, and owing to the state of the roads "it happened almost every day that coaches stuck fast, until a team of cattle could be procured from some neighbouring farm, to tug them out of the slough." [1] Passengers to lighten the draught were often obliged to walk for miles together, and in 1689 a Dutchman died in the Oxford stage-coach from his exertion in walking up Shotover Hill. People in a hurry would refuse the offer of a lift in a coach with the very reasonable excuse that they had no time to waste, whilst pedlars and packmen would often keep pace alongside the coach displaying their wares.

In the year 1700 it took a week to get from London to York; whilst Exeter was five days' journey, and Salisbury two. Some idea of the leisurely pace at which the old stage-coaches used to travel before the age of competition began may be gathered from the fact related by one traveller that, when the Exeter coach stopped at Axminster for breakfast, "a woman barber shaved the coach." Another time, a coachman and guard having a difference of opinion, the coach halted and the passengers watched them fight it out on the road.

The Edinburgh coach, which took ten days in summer and twelve in winter to get to London, made an an-

[1] Macaulay.

nouncement in 1754 that, for the better accommodation of its passengers, it would in future be hung on steel springs. At about the same time Manchester made a bold bid for popularity by claiming that, "However incredible it may appear, this coach will actually arrive in London in four days and a half after leaving Manchester." So great did they consider this acceleration of speed that, with inflated pride, they advertised the venture as a "Flying Coach."

Other proprietors, not willing to be behind the times, proceeded to increase their speed to five miles an hour, and in consequence dubbed their coaches flying-coaches, or even flying-machines, the newspapers containing such announcements as "The Gloucester flying-machine on steel springs, begins flying next Monday for the summer season." Charles Matthews the actor, after a tedious journey in one of these conveyances, ironically remarked: "I suppose they are called flying-coaches, because they are the slowest things that ever crawled."

Though the proprietors were ready enough to promise amazing things in the matter of speed, they entertained grave doubts as to their ability to perform them, and that in such cases they might not be held solely responsible they added a proviso "if God permits," or "if roads are good."

The flying-coaches were essentially fair weather vehicles, and at the end of the summer they issued notices of the following description: "The Proprietors of the Stroud coach beg leave to inform their friends

and the public in general, that the coach left off flying on Saturday the 14th of October instant."

With the spring they once more took the road, and on May 20th, 1682, the *City Mercury* contained the following announcement:

"The coach that went last year to Epsom every morning from the George in the Stocks Market and victualling house, will begin on Thursday the first of June, and goes to Mr. Tonsers, a barber, next door to the new King's Head in Epsom, and returns the same day."

The few that had the temerity to keep the road through the winter had many difficulties to contend with, for, putting aside the heavy snow-storms which obliged them to lie up for days together, they were in constant danger from floods, and there were many instances of coaches being overturned and passengers drowned. A newspaper of the time thus briefly refers to an appalling state of things in Yorkshire:

"There has been abundance of mischief done by the late flood and rains, several coaches and horses, and divers men and women in Yorkshire having lately been lost thereby, with waggons and cattle of all sorts, and it is said that two post-boys are drowned also."

Considering the dangers and difficulties that beset travellers in those days, a journey by coach occasioned much thought and anxiety. The passengers, no doubt, hoped most fervently that the coach would not be upset, or robbed by highwaymen, and that the coachman was not in league with the innkeepers to defraud them.

As these things happened every day, they had but little hope of escaping all of them, and had every reason to be thankful if they arrived at their destination within two or three days of the time so glibly promised by the proprietors, without broken limbs, and with little money left in their pockets.

They set out armed with fire-arms, and no doubt with a grim determination to use them on the person of the first highwayman who appeared at the coach door with an impolite request for the travellers' purses and valuables. As a matter of fact, they very rarely made use of their weapons, but meekly parted with their goods.

There were occasional exceptions to this amiable compliance with unjust demands, for when the Leeds coach was attacked in 1769 the *Oxford Journal* tells how a bold and intrepid passenger drew out his blunderbuss and fired at the robber. Whether the highwayman was wounded or merely astounded at meeting with resistance is uncertain, but at any rate he hurriedly dismounted and took to his heels. The passengers, still rather dazed at the utterly unexpected turn of events, got out of the coach and sought wildly for the highwayman in the darkness. Being unable to see, but determined to have a captive highwayman as proof positive of their doughty deed, they seized one of their companions and, paying not the slightest heed to his struggles, bound him securely, and consigned him ignominiously to the Basket. They then resumed their places, and talked vainglorioously, and thought deliciously of the reward that was paid for the capture of a highwayman. At

the next stage, however, their pleasant dreams were rudely dispelled, for the inconsiderate passenger in the Basket protested that he was no highwayman and, being able to prove incontestably that this was indeed so, they were reluctantly obliged to release him.

The coachmen of those days regarded the highwayman with no unfriendly eye, and were suspected of being occasionally in league with him. That they made good bargains with the innkeepers is beyond doubt, and the coach passengers dined, slept, breakfasted and consumed frequent draughts of ale not by any means at the best inns, but at those the coachmen arbitrarily decreed that they should patronize, and where they were often overcharged and ill-catered for. The coachman being a person of much authority on the road, his victims grumbled but submitted, fearing worse to come, like the coach passengers in "The Beaux Stratagem":

Landlord: "The Company of the Warrington coach has stood in the hall this hour, and nobody to show them to their chambers . . . they threaten to go to another inn."

Cherry: "That they dare not, for fear the coachman should overturn them to-morrow."

Once, being stirred up to revolt by a companion of more than ordinary braveness, the passengers marched boldly out of the tavern selected for them, and walked along the road till they came to one which took their fancy better. The coachman, furious at this flagrant rebellion, determined to give them a lesson, mounted his box and drove past the house where they were refreshing

themselves. He ignored the inn and his mutinous passengers, who strove frantically to attract his attention, and departed leaving them to continue their journey as best they could. They did get back to London somehow, and eventually brought an action against him at the King's Bench when they were awarded £20 damages.

Undoubtedly, early coach travelling had many drawbacks, not the least among them being the extreme easiness with which the coach upset, an instance of which is exemplified by an entry in John Wesley's diary 1775. "Before nine, a gentleman in a single horse chaise struck his wheel against one of ours. Instantly the weight at the top overset the coach; otherwise ten times the shock would not have moved it; but neither the coachman nor the men on the top, nor any within, were hurt at all."

The idea of utilizing the roof as a place of transit undoubtedly originated in some one to whom travel was imperative on an occasion when both the inside of the coach and the Basket were fully occupied. What one adventurous spirit could do others were ready to imitate, and the roof of the coach became a recognized place for soldiers, sailors and others hardened to danger, who wished to ride cheaply. At first no provision was made for their safety, but somewhat later proprietors provided handles, or occasionally a rail round the roof of the coach to give them some slight feeling of security.

The relative positions of the passengers were gauged to a nicety by the coachman's formula when hills were steep or roads more than usually bad: "First Class passengers (inside) keep your seats; Second Class passen-

gers (in the Basket) get out and walk; Third Class passengers (on the roof) get down and push behind."

In the reign of George III, coaching, though still to be avoided if possible, was a great improvement on what had gone before. The coaches themselves had altered somewhat in construction, the front and hind boots began to be framed to the body of the coach, and seats were placed on the roof. The driver's seat was raised higher, but still unprovided with springs and, as Wilkins of the Balloon told Frank Raby, "There is a great deal of h'art in sitting on a coach-box."[1] This is confirmed by the *Oxford Journal* for 1779, which reports an accident to the Bristol Mail, caused by the coachman being "shooke off the box."

The rate of speed was nominally increased to six miles an hour for fast coaches, but the coachmen considered themselves in no wise tied down to a fixed time and, though a coach might be due at a definite hour, the coachman questioned on the subject would reply easily that he had been every hour of the twenty-four after it. He was particularly obliging with regard to meals, and allowed his passengers to take their time over them, so that though an hour was the time specified for dinner it not infrequently lengthened into two, the coachman being generally ready to help drink another bottle of wine, remarking comfortably of the coach, "she could wait she could."

A man who tipped liberally in those days could accomplish much: visit his friends who lived near the

[1] *Life of a Sportsman.* Nimrod.

high road, or wait and explore any place of interest through which the coach passed.

The roads, though still bad, had been considerably improved by the turnpike acts, and it slowly dawned on coach proprietors that the speed of their coaches was sensibly increased by changing horses occasionally, instead of causing the same unfortunate animals to perform the entire journey. The stages, however, were still incredibly long, fifteen or twenty miles for one team being considered by no means excessive.

CHAPTER III MAIL-COACHES

"HASTE, post haste, haste with all diligence. For thy life, for thy life," was the urgent superscription on official letters in Tudor times. This should have spurred the messengers on to great endeavours, but did not, for the post-boys, either on foot or on horseback, lagged and loitered throughout the whole course of their existence.

When George III was King the postal arrangements of the country were about as bad as they could be, for the mails were entrusted "to some idle boy, without character, mounted on a worn-out hack."[1]

> "He comes, the herald of a noisy world,
> With spattered boots, strapped waist and frozen locks,
> News from all nations lumbering on his back.
> True to his charge, the close packed load behind,
> Yet careless what he brings, his one concern
> Is to conduct it to the destined inn,
> And having dropped the expected bag pass on.
> He whistles as he goes, light hearted wretch
> Cold and yet cheerful; messenger of grief
> Perhaps to thousands, and of joy to some."

Cowper, with true poetic licence, decidedly overestimated the trustworthiness of post-boys. Contemporary evidence shows they were by no means anxious as to the security of the mail-bags, being in truth far more concerned for the safety of their own skins. Indeed,

[1] "A plan for the Reform and Improvement of the General Post Office." J. Palmer.

from the obliging manner in which they instantly acceded to the highwaymen's request for the mail to be handed over to them, the post-boys were by no means unjustly suspected of being actively in league with them, having come to an arrangement for their mutual benefit at the expense of the long suffering British public. Finally, finding that the plea of robbery was accepted as a just and satisfactory excuse, they improved upon the occasion and tampered with the mail-bags themselves.

Though their official rate of speed was only five miles an hour, the post-boys rarely troubled themselves to keep true time, but dawdled on the road, and imbibed such frequent potations at the various inns that the arrival of the mail was a matter for much speculation.

The post had, in fact, attained the distinction of being the slowest and unsafest conveyance in the country. People obliged to send money by it were so distrustful of the existing arrangements that they cut their bank bills in halves and sent them by different routes.

Often rather than trust to the post at all, or if they were anxious for a letter to travel expeditiously, they made it up into a parcel and sent it by the stage-coach, being willing to pay the extra carriage for the greater security of the conveyance. "I write by the coach the more speedily and effectually to prevent your coming hither," wrote Mrs. Thrale to Dr. Johnson in 1784.

The ordinary cost of a letter by post was 4d., if sent by coach as a parcel 2s., or in cases of special urgency even more, for it was the custom to write on such packages—

"An extra sum will be given to the porter if he deliver this letter immediately."

Dickens refers to this custom in *The Pickwick Papers*:

"Well," said Mr. Pickwick, "but I must send a letter to London by some conveyance, so that it may be delivered the very first thing in the morning at all hazards." The landlord smiled his delight. Nothing could be easier than for the gentleman to enclose a letter in a sheet of brown paper and send it on either by the mail or night coach from Birmingham. If the gentleman was particularly anxious to have it left as soon as possible he might write outside "To be delivered immediately" which was sure to be attended to, or "*Pay the bearer half a crown extra for immediate delivery*" was surer still.

This circumstance eventually gave rise to the introduction of mail-coaches, whose inception was due to the inventive genius of one man, and a man, moreover, who had nothing whatever to do with postal affairs. This was Mr. John Palmer, the manager of the Bath and Bristol theatres, whose business suffered great inconvenience from the inadequate postal arrangements. The stage-coaches between London and Bath did the journey in one day, whereas a letter took three. Mr. Palmer, like many of his fellow-townsmen, sent important letters under the guise of parcels, and it occurred to him that it would be a very great improvement if, in place of the post-boys, stage-coaches with certain modifications were made the official carriers of His Majesty's Mails.

The idea was undoubtedly good, and Palmer drew up

a carefully thought-out scheme entitled, "A Plan for the Reform and Improvement of the General Post Office," which he presented to Pitt, then Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Pitt saw at once the practicability of the idea and, charmed with the prospect of considerable increased revenue it held out, did all he could to further its adoption. Like most sweeping reforms which embody the substitution of new for old, the scheme for the mails caused men to hold up their hands in horror and dismay. They declared if desperate men had set their hearts on having the mail-bag have it they would and, seeing that they were thoroughly determined on the matter, resistance was useless, and it was much better to give in without unnecessary fuss, as witness the post-boys. Whereas if the guard was armed, "resistance would lead to murder," at the very mention of which the sensitive Post Office shuddered. Mr. Palmer's observations as to the time in which the stage-coaches would convey the mails were regarded as fantastic and wild, it being impossible "that the Bath Mail could be brought to London in sixteen or eighteen hours."

It was indeed fortunate for John Palmer that he had such a strong partisan in Pitt, who determined that at all events the plan should have a fair trial. In 1784 the Post Office very sorely against its will, issued this notice:

"His Majesty's post masters general, being inclined to make an experiment for the more expeditious conveyance of mails of letters by stage-coaches, machines etc. have been pleased to order that a trial should be made

upon the road between London and Bristol, to commence at each place on Monday the 2nd."

The first trial was watched with anxiety by Pitt and Palmer, eager for its success, and by the Post Office, praying for its utter and humiliating annihilation. In this generous hope they were disappointed, for the undertaking prospered instantly. It is generally supposed that no records exist giving particulars of this first mail-coach, but the following notices appeared in the *Oxford Journal* during August 1784:

"The new mail diligence set off from Bristol on Monday last for the first time at four o'clock, and from the Three Tuns in this city (Bath) at twenty minutes after five the same evening. From London it set out at eight on Monday evening and was in Bath the next morning. The excellent steps taken to carry out this undertaking leave not the least room to doubt of its succeeding to the great pleasure and advantage of the public."

A week later was recorded the complete success of the venture which had fulfilled the most sanguine hopes entertained of it:

"The new mail-coach has travelled with an expedition that has been really astonishing, having seldom exceeded thirteen hours in going or returning from London. It is made very light, carries four passengers and runs with a pair of horses, which are changed every six or eight miles; and as the bags at the different offices on the road are made up against its arrival there is not the least delay. The guard rides with the coachman on the box, and the mail is deposited in the Boot."

Mr. Palmer was appointed Controller General of the Post Office in 1786, and eventually granted a commission of 2½ per cent upon any excess of net revenue over the sum at which the annual proceeds of the Post Office stood at the date of appointment. Eventually he received a pension of £3000.

The new Controller was an admirer of the stage-coaches, but in no way blind to their defects, and he installed so many improvements that coaching was completely revolutionized. Palmer was a martinet for punctuality; stage-coaches were not, and they had to alter their ways very considerably if they wished for the privilege of carrying His Majesty's Mails. The mail-coaches were timed to a minute at the different stages, fresh horses, warned by the blast of the guard's horn, stood ready waiting, and with lightning rapidity were put to the coach. Dinners had to be despatched in the brief period of twenty minutes, whilst the coach started prompt to time, and coachmen could no longer be cajoled into granting an extra hour; passengers who loitered on a mail-coach were simply left behind.

The stages were shortened and rarely exceeded eight miles, and better bred and highly fed horses employed, by which means the pace of the coaches was very materially increased, and the official speed raised from eight miles an hour to ten or even twelve. Time lost on one stage had to be made up on the next, and at places where the coach changed drivers unpunctuality was a sin hard to forgive. "They ex-p-p-p-p-pect me to k-k-k-k-k-keep t-t-t-t-t-t-time up, but d-d-d-d-d-devil a b-b-b-b-bit

do they bring any t-t-t-t-t-time down," spluttered a coachman of the middle ground, rendered almost incoherent by rage and natural impediment.

The first mail-coaches, or rather stage-coaches under another name, were clumsily and badly constructed, so that the accelerated pace brought forth a proportionate number of accidents, and people began to eye them askance, and to show a growing disinclination to travel by them. The indefatigable Mr. Palmer saw this and remedied it by issuing an order that in future all the mail-coaches should be of one pattern and of most up-to-date construction.

These new coaches were much lighter than the old-fashioned stages and designed to carry four inside instead of six. Outside travelling was recognized, but, the chief objects of the Post Office being to keep the guard in splendid isolation, they at first allowed only one outside passenger, on the coach-box and, though subsequently seats were placed on the roof, none were allowed at the back of the coach near the guard. The idea was that a highwayman with a keen eye to possibilities might engage the seat to the subsequent undoing of the guard and mail-bags, and it was not till the coaching era was drawing to a close that this regulation was altered.

The speed and punctuality of the coaches increased rapidly and, coincident with their improvements, the proprietors ceased to announce bombastically that they would fly, and contented themselves with modestly announcing that they would run; they might in many

instances without unwarrantable licence have announced that they would gallop.

The Edinburgh mail did its 400 miles in forty hours, and the other mails with proportionate despatch. The public looked on and were staggered. It was the awful velocity that alarmed them, and Lord Campbell says: "This swift travelling was considered dangerous as well as wonderful and I was gravely advised to stay a day at York, as several passengers who had gone through without stopping died of apoplexy from the rapidity of the motion."

This increased rate of travelling was very largely due to the great improvement which took place in the roads under the Post Office supervision, for without the genius of Mac-Adam, coaching could never have attained to the perfection it did.

The stage-coaches paid heavy tolls, but the mails were exempt from this; a circumstance which made stage-coach proprietors eager for the privilege of carrying the mails, and caused those who had money invested in turnpike securities to complain most bitterly.

"The most second-sighted of your house could never have forseen that the usage of the single horse and post-boy afterwards in many places converted into the light Mail-cart drawn by one horse, would be superseded by a Royal carriage drawn by four horses, and filled by passengers, who before rode in the common stages, and contributed to support the roads which they passed over," wrote Mr. Pennant in his "Letter to a Member of Parliament on Mail-Coaches" (1792), calling attention

MAIL COACH GOING DOWN-HILL

By James Pollard

From a print lent by Messrs. Ackermann

to the fact that the Post Office insisted on the improvement of the roads, yet they contributed nothing towards their upkeep.

A tollkeeper was bound to have the gate open for the mail to go through, if he neglected to do so he was liable to a fine of 40s. Should he attempt to delay its passage in any way he could be fined £5, whilst for a like offence an innkeeper was deprived of his licence. An attempt at robbery entailed the sentence of transportation for life, and punishments in proportion were provided for carriers, and other users of the road, who did not instantly "give the road" to the mails.

In consequence of these stringent rules and regulations, the mail-coaches were regarded with great veneration, turnpikes flew open at the sound of the guard's horn, innkeepers were deferential, drivers of other vehicles hastened to efface themselves in the nearest ditch in order that His Majesty's arrogant mails might keep to the middle of the road. Indeed, a mail-coach lighted by powerful lamps, thundering along at the rate of ten miles an hour, was no inconsiderable thing to meet in a narrow country road on a dark night.

So omnipotent were the Mails that William Hazlitt declared that even "the brother-in-law of a mail-coach driver is himself no mean man," whilst he regarded what would have been insupportable discomforts on a stage-coach, as quite bearable on a mail: "On the outside of any other coach on the tenth of December, with a Scotch mist drizzling through the cloudy moonlight air, I should have been cold, comfortless, impatient, and no doubt wet

through; but seated on the Royal Mail, I felt warm and comfortable, the air did me good, I was pleased with the progress we made, and confident that all would go well through the journey."

The departure of the mails became one of the sights of London, and crowds of people assembled near the General Post Office in Lombard Street every evening at 8 o'clock when the mail-coaches drove up in double file to receive their mail-bags.

This assemblage of mails was a sight to remember: the handsome crimson coaches with the Royal Arms, the sleek, well-groomed horses with their polished harness, the spruce coachman, and the scarlet-coated guard, who, when the coach had received its mails, blew a cheering blast on his horn as a prelude to the journey.

The perfection of coaches brought into existence two things which had not entered into Palmer's calculations. One was that with good roads and good horses the sporting spirit was not to be controlled and, when rival coaches were put on the road, race they would if they broke every bone in their passengers' bodies, to say nothing of the stringent rules enacted against the practice by those in authority; the second, that gentlemen suddenly discovered that there was most exquisite pleasure to be obtained from driving four horses and, when coaches were horsed at the proportion of one a mile, nowhere could this pleasure be enjoyed so thoroughly as on the public coaches.

Proprietors fumed, passengers protested shrilly and indignantly, but to little purpose, for the would-be

drivers, by dint of liberal tips to the legitimate coachmen, contrived to handle the ribbons of the most famous coaches, to their own intense satisfaction.

To one of the amateur drivers the professional coachmen were deeply indebted, for to John Warde "the father of fox-hunting," they owed the introduction of springs beneath the driver's seat. Warde, who learnt to tool a coach under the able tuition of Jack Bailey of The Prince of Wales, found the coach-box—then utterly innocent of springs and resting on the front axle—a situation of the acutest discomfort which responded to every jolt in the road.

He saw at once that this could easily be remedied by placing the box on springs, and endeavoured to persuade the proprietors of the coaches to make the alteration. They, however, looked askance and unanimously condemned it. Clinging fast to the old maxim of no change, they protested that as hundreds of coachmen had driven all their lives on boxes without springs it was patent that springs were not necessary. Another argument advanced was that if the box did not jolt the coachman violently and frequently he would go to sleep, and then, they asked triumphantly, what would become of the coach.

At length Mr. Warde persuaded the proprietors of the Manchester Telegraph to give his invention a trial and, from the fact that this coach was the first to use them, the springs were called "Telegraph" springs. When it was seen that the Telegraph coachman did not go to sleep at his post, and could in consequence of the greater

comfort drive with more ease, the springs quickly came into general use, and the box-seat became in consequence a coveted position, whereas aforetimes travellers would have been only too thankful to pay extra to avoid it.

The mail-coaches appeared in great glory on the anniversary of the Sovereign's birthday, when they paraded many of the principal streets of London, and provided an imposing spectacle. No expense was spared to make the occasion a memorable one, most of the coaches being new, whilst those not used for the first time came fresh from the workshop, where they had undergone a thorough overhauling, and were as resplendent as fresh paint and varnish could make them. Picked teams were used, and many country gentlemen would send their horses to draw favourite coaches for the ceremony. All the horses were groomed till their coats shone like satin, and they stepped out seeming proudly conscious of the important occasion, and of their new silver plated harness, and gay rosettes.

The Post Office provided the guards with new scarlet coats and gold-laced beaver hats, while the contractors, not to be outdone, furnished the coachmen with equally resplendent livery, and both coachmen and guards provided themselves with enormous nosegays.

No passengers were allowed outside the coaches, and the interiors were filled with the friends of the coachmen and guards. When the coaches left Millbank, the church bells rang, guards blew their horns, and the procession, headed by Bristol and oldest established Mail, started off. The route taken varied, but a visit was always paid to

St. James's Palace, where the coachmen and guards stood up and loyally saluted their Sovereign.

The last occasion on which the Mails thus formally paraded was on May 17th, 1838, for even then the railways menaced their proud supremacy, and when the next anniversary came round the very existence of the coaches was threatened, and Londoners lost for ever a majestic spectacle which had been in existence for 36 years.

CHAPTER IV COACHMEN

A COACHMAN on his box was an autocrat whose wish could not be disputed, and whose slightest word on equine matters was law. His sway on the road was absolute, and he and his coach were familiar objects, eagerly looked for day by day, and the admired of all beholders. His acquaintances were many, for though he might never exchange a word with them from one year's end to another he had friends in every village through which he passed. Pretty girls ran to the windows to watch him go by, children waved their caps and cried "Hurrah," shopkeepers hurried to their doorways, whilst old men, whose life lay behind them, watched expectantly for the coming of the coach, and felt their sluggish blood leap at the exhilarating sound of the guard's horn, and the merry rattle of the bars as the coach dashed gaily by.

Villages where the coaches changed horses were greatly to be envied, for the coachman would dismount and condescend to take a glass of his favourite beverage from the barmaid, whilst he kept a professional eye on the fresh team, and delivered words of weighty wisdom on the subject of bits and coupling reins to the attendant ostlers who hung on his words and envied him enormously.

Farmers' wives and daughters viewed him with great respect, as one to whom distance was naught, and whose connection with the city of London was constant and intimate. Shopping in remote country districts being

primitive, it was owing to the kindly service of a passing coachman that many of the country maids were enabled to dazzle their friends, by appearing on festive occasions in the latest bonnets and sprigged muslins, purchased expressly for them in far-off London town.

The old coachmen were usually willing to undertake any small commissions, such as the carrying of love letters, the matching of silks, or even to act as go-between in the weightier matters of farm produce.

As a reward for their services, the farmers' wives fed them with dainties of their own making, for the coachmen had great capacities for food, and drink. They were, however, somewhat fastidious as to the offerings they accepted from their admirers, and not above returning a gift that did not meet with their approval, or come up to their expectations. Jack Adams, who drove the Royal Defiance, a coach much patronized by Oxford undergraduates, looked very contemptuous when a farm lad came up one day to him at Dorchester, and presented a bundle of fresh cut turnip tops as a gift from a neighbouring farmer.

"Hump!" said Jack, eyeing them unfavourably. "Is that all your master sent?"

"Yes, sir," replied the boy.

Adams was of the opinion that a bunch of greens was in no way worthy of his acceptance, so he bade the boy take them back with the message: "Greens alone are of no use to Mr. Adams unless he has something to eat with them, such as a piece of home-cured bacon."

The farmer took the hint, and next day when the

coach changed horses at Dorchester, the country boy in his smock-frock was waiting with two bundles of greens, a splendid fowl, and a piece of home-cured bacon.

"Ah, that's more like it!" said Jack, giving the lad a shilling. "Tell your master that Mr. Adams is very much obliged to him."

The coachmen of those days were good trencher men. This, combined with the fact that they took practically no exercise, contributed to their enormous bulk, which indeed passed into a tradition, and Tom Hood aptly hit off the popular conception of them in the ballad beginning:

> "John Day he was the biggest man
> Of all the coachmen kind,
> With back too broad to be conceived
> By any narrow mind."

The love of good feeding once occasioned rather an unpleasant experience to the coachman and guard on a night coach called the Birmingham Old Fly; a heavy old-fashioned vehicle carrying six inside and seven out. The road it travelled was a lonely one and badly provided with inns, so that between Shipston and Woodstock there was no place where a good meal could be obtained. Such a long fast could not be thought of, so the coachman arranged with a man who horsed one of the stages to provide a hot supper for him and the guard every night. The plan answered capitally, until one day, coming down Long Compton hill, the near-side leader, a five-year-old mare, slipped and fell, injuring herself so badly that she had to be destroyed.

The next night the coach halted at the accustomed stopping-place, and the coachman and guard walked into the stable, where as usual a cloth was laid on a corn-bin which did duty as a table. The horse-keeper's wife brought in a smoking hot dish to which they did ample justice and finished to the last morsel. As the coachman was mounting the box, the horse-keeper came up to him and said:

"Well, gentlemen, how did you enjoy your supper?"

"Very much indeed," replied the coachman warmly, "it was delicious."

"Ah," said the horse-keeper complacently, "I always told the missus the young mare would eat well."

Words failed the coachman and guard; they turned pale, their hands shook, and their eyes nearly started out of their heads as the awful truth came home to them that they had supped to repletion on horsesteak, and what was worse they had enjoyed it!

The old coachmen were necessarily men of strong constitutions, for the work they were called upon to perform was arduous, and called for great physical endurance. The box-seat was a place of exquisite discomfort, susceptible to every jolt and jar; the horses were ill-bred, over worked, and badly put together, so that it was no light undertaking to drive them, and coachmen and teams were rarely changed, but went from one end of the journey to another. That the coachmen brought their coaches through in safety was in no small measure due to the exercise of fanning, springing and towelling; terms which being interpreted for the

benefit of the uninitiated mean, whipping, galloping, and flogging. For the better performance of the last named, the coachmen kept in reserve a special weapon known as the "apprentice," or "Tickle Toby," which, judiciously applied, was calculated to inspire the most jaded cattle to fresh endeavours.

With the introduction of mail-coaches, and the consequent renovation of all things appertaining to coaching, the old race of coachmen gradually died out, and their places were taken by a totally different class of men.

This change was in a great way due to the growing popularity of the outside of the coach and the realization that the box-seat was a place of honour and distinction. The old coachmen had for their companions soldiers, sailors, and poor people who wished to travel cheaply, but when coaches were well turned out, well horsed, and driven at the rate of ten miles an hour, men of birth and education rebelled against the cramped quarters of the inside of the coach, and began to vie with each other in their anxiety to secure the box-seat. There they could obtain the full benefit of the coachman's spicy conversation, and if they showed themselves appreciative, and were prepared to tip liberally, they might attain the coveted distinction of handling the ribbons.

The coachmen adapted themselves to their company and, during the latter and glorious half of the coaching era, the swell dragsmen on the crack coaches were men skilled in their art, smart in appearance, possessed of

strong personalities, and very distinct ideas of their own importance.

George Borrow, who detested them, wrote thus with exceeding bitterness:

"The stage-coachmen of England, at the time of which I am speaking, considered themselves mighty fine gentry, nay, I verily believe the most important personages of the realm, and their entertaining this high opinion of themselves can scarcely be wondered at; they were low fellows, but masters at driving; driving was in fashion, and sprigs of nobility used to dress as coachmen and imitate the slang and behaviour of the coachmen, from whom they would occasionally take lessons in driving as they sat beside them on the box, which post of honour any sprig of nobility, who happened to take a place on a coach, claimed as his unquestionable right; and these sprigs would smoke cigars and drink sherry with the coachmen in bar-rooms, and on the road, and when bidding them farewell would give them a guinea or half a guinea, and shake them by the hand, so that these fellows, being low fellows, very naturally thought no small liquor of themselves, but would talk familiarly of their friends, Lord So-and-So, the Honourable Mister So-and-So, and Sir Harry and Sir Charles, and be wonderfully saucy to anyone who was not a lord, or something of the kind; and this high opinion of themselves received daily augmentation from the servile homage paid them by the generality of the untitled male passengers, especially those on the forepart of the coach who used to contend for the honour of sitting on the box with the coachman when no sprig was nigh to put in his claim. Oh! what servile homage these craven creatures did pay these same coach fellows, more especially after witnessing this or t'other act of brutality

practised upon the weak and unoffending—upon some poor, friendless woman travelling with but little money, and perhaps a brace of hungry children with her, or upon some thin and half-starved man travelling on the hind part of the coach from London to Liverpool, with only eighteenpence in his pocket after his fare was paid, to defray his expenses on the road, for as the insolence of these knights of the road was vast, so was their rapacity enormous; they had been so long accustomed to have crowns and half-crowns rained upon them by their admirers and flatterers, that they would look at a shilling, for which many an honest labourer was happy to toil for ten hours under a broiling sun, with the utmost contempt; would blow upon it derisively, or fillip it into the air before they pocketed it; but when nothing was given them, as would occasionally happen—for how could they receive from those who had nothing? and nobody was bound to give them anything, as they had certain wages from their employers—then what a scene would ensue!"

George Borrow was certainly unlucky in his acquaintance with stage-coachmen. Leigh Hunt held them in very different estimation:

"The mail or stage-coachman, upon the whole, is no inhuman mass of great-coats, gruffness, civility, and old boots. The latter is the politer, from the smaller range of acquaintance, and his necessity for preserving them.

"His face is red, and his voice rough, by the same process of drink and catarrh. He has a silver watch with a steel chain, and plenty of loose silver in his pocket, mixed with halfpence. He serves the houses he goes by for a clock. He takes a glass at every alehouse; for thirst, when it is dry, and for warmth when it is wet.

"He likes to show the judicious use of his whip, by twigging a dog or a goose on the road, or children that get in the way. His tenderness to descending old ladies is particular. He touches his hat to Mr. Smith. He gives 'the young woman' a ride, and lends her his box-coat in the rain. His liberality in imparting his knowledge to anyone who has the good fortune to ride on the box with him is a happy mixture of deference, conscious possession and familiarity. His information lies chiefly in the occupancy of houses on the road, prize-fighters, Bow Street runners, and accidents.

" He concludes that you know Dick Sams, or old Joey, and proceeds to relate some of the stories that relish his pot and tobacco in the evening. If any of the four-in-hand gentry go by, he shakes his head, and thinks they might find something better to do. His contempt for them is founded on modesty.

"He tells you that his off-hand horse is as pretty a goer as ever there was, but that Kitty—'Yeah, now there, Kitty, can't you be still?—Kitty's a devil, sir, for all you wouldn't think it.' He knows that all the boys on the road admire him, and gives the horses an indifferent lash with the whip as they go by. If you wish to know what rain and dust can do, you should look at his old hat. There is an indescribably placid and paternal look in the position of his corduroy knees and old top-boots on the foot-board, with their pointed toes and never cleaned soles. His beau-ideal of appearance is a frock-coat, with mother-o'-pearl buttons, a striped yellow waistcoat, and a flower in his mouth."

The drivers both of the mails and stages were as a rule civil, good-natured men, and polite to all classes of passengers, though naturally they had a preference for those whose interests were akin to their own, and who

could appreciate the points of their team, and converse with them in the language of the road.

"I talk to nobody about 'orses except lords," declares the coachman in *Lavengro*, and Jem Howell considered that a member of the nobility was a distinct ornament to a coach-box saying: "I like to have a lord about my coach, it looks so respectable." Besides a knowledge of horse-flesh "Lords" had two other endearing qualities—they made good listeners, and they tipped well.

Lord Abingdon who was a noted whip often drove the Blenheim coach with its celebrated team of greys, but one day he had the box-seat he did not take the ribbons, though the coachman offered them to him with the conventional remark: "Now, my lord, have you your driving-gloves on?" When the coach reached the Gloucester Coffee House, Lord Abingdon gave the coachman his fee, who looked at it disdainfully:

"My lord, half a sovereign."

"Yes, you see I did not drive."

"But you might have, my lord," was the reproachful reply.

"Oh well, give it me back," said Lord Abingdon, producing a sovereign.

"Thank you, my lord, that's right. We don't do things by halves on the Blenheim."

The old coachmen and the swell dragsmen differed greatly in externals, but had many traits in common, among the most prominent of which was a strong predisposition for "shouldering," which, in the expressive slang of the road, meant carrying passengers whose

names were not down on the way-bill, and whose fares went into the pockets of the coachmen and guards instead of the proprietor's. This well-established custom flourished exceedingly despite strenuous efforts on the part of those in authority to put it down. The most ingenious device for the abolition of shouldering was making the fine of 40s. payable to the turnpike men, who eagerly embraced the opportunity of adding to their incomes. The coachmen got out of the difficulty by putting extra passengers down on one side of the gate and taking them up on the other; a practice which entailed a heavy penalty if detected.

Even more abhorrent than the "pikes" in the eyes of the coachmen, were the professional informers who patrolled the roads with the avowed intention of catching coachmen infringing some of the innumerable laws which Parliament had enacted for the regulation of their conduct, but which they ignored with the greatest possible freedom. When an informer managed to convict a coachman of shouldering, allowing amateurs to drive, being the worse for drink, carrying excess luggage, or committing any other sin for which a fine was expressly specified, he pocketed the whole or part of the penalty as the Court might decide.

As was only to be expected, the coachmen hated the informers with the bitterest hatred, and the whole of their extensive vocabulary was inadequate to express their opinion of them. Occasionally informers were seen and recognized on the road; then ostlers became blind and deaf, whilst the coachman with the most exquisite

joy would trash their enemy, duck him in the nearest pond, or otherwise pay out old scores in whatever manner their ingenuity suggested.

The most notorious informer was a man named Byers[1] who harassed the coachmen on the Brighton road to their great infuriation. In 1825 he transferred his attention to the Bath Road, where in the space of a fortnight he laid thirty-four informations involving penalties amounting to £500, of which a large proportion went into his own pocket.

Hearing that an election was in progress at Oxford, he rightly judged it to be a propitious time for catching university coachmen tripping. Accompanied by a friend he therefore paid a surprise visit to the Oxford road, where he instantly began to lay information against coachmen for carrying excess passengers during the election.

The day came for the hearing of the cases, but the two chief witnesses did not appear. The reason for their absence was soon apparent, for the city was in an uproar, caused by the facts that as the two informers were on the way to the hall they suddenly came face to face with a select deputation of Oxford coachmen. The informers gave one look and fled. The coachmen halloed and pursued, the crowd joined in, and Oxford enjoyed the thrilling and novel experience of a man hunt. The informers provided a good run, but were eventu-

[1] In "A Lay of St. Nicholas" (*Ingoldsby Legends*) Byers is represented as carrying on his trade of informer: "The accusing Byers flew up to Heaven's Chancery."

THE OXFORD COACH

From an original picture by F. Turner by permission of Messrs. Bromhead, Cutts & Co.

ally pulled down by the coachmen who ducked them joyously in the river.

Oxford in those days could have produced a perfect regiment of coachmen had occasion required, for the University town was a most important junction in the coaching era, as many as seventy-three coaches passing through the city daily.

It naturally followed that a great many coachmen resided in the town, and St. John's Street alone could boast the honour of no less than fourteen of the coaching fraternity. Two of these were old John Bayzand, who drove the Southampton Oxonian for thirty-six years, and Will Stacey, of the Alert, and one evening as they were on their way home they chanced to meet three retired tailors who resided in Beaumont Street, and rejoiced in the names of Mr. Speakman, Mr. Dry, and Mr. Banting. These tailors thought not inconsiderably of themselves, and had planned a joke at the coachmen's expense.

"Well, gentlemen, done your daily toil?" inquired Mr. Banting.

"Yes," replied Bayzand, and would have passed but the tailors detained him.

"We have had a consultation, and with your permission, we are going to change the name of your street."

"Oh, certainly," replied Bayzand, "may I inquire what name you intend to bestow on it?"

"Oh, Whipcord Terrace," returned the tailor, whilst the others acclaimed his wit.

"Well, that is strange," retorted Bayzand instantly, "for we were about to alter the name of your street, provided we could obtain your sanction."

"Oh, with pleasure; 'tis granted," said Mr. Speakman patronizingly.

"We thought Threadneedle Street would be appropriate,"[1] said the coachman suavely, and passed on leaving the discomfited tailors.

It was not easy to get the better of old John Bayzand, for he was nimble of wit and apt at repartee; moreover, he was possessed of such a fund of good stories, and had so many jokes to crack, that he boasted that his passengers were never dull.

The Southampton coach passed a quaint little church, and travellers generally inquired its name.

"Newtown, sir," Bayzand would reply, "and there's a very curious thing about that church, for they ring all the bells for a funeral, and only one for a wedding."

"Dear me," was the invariable reply, "how very extraordinary, what can have given rise to such a custom?"

When they had speculated sufficiently the coachman would remark:

"Well, you see, sir, there is only one bell."

Bayzand was very fond of his horses, and it said much for his popularity that he was able to prevail on his passengers to get out and walk whenever they approached a hill; and they were many on the Southampton road. When they objected Bayzand cajoled them somehow,

[1] MSS. William Bayzand, Bodleian Library.

and he once got the better of a clergyman whose actions were strangely at variance with his admonitions.

Regular attendance at church was scarcely a typical feature of the old coachmen, but Bayzand always made a point of visiting St. Mary's to hear the University sermon. One Monday morning when he started from the *Mitre* with his four long-tailed blacks, he had the preacher of the previous day on the box-seat beside him, and three fellows of New College on the seat behind.

At the bottom of Hinksey Hill Bayzand politely requested them all to get out and walk, which they did, though the clergyman evidently thought it would entail loss of time, for he asked rather pointedly what time the coach was due at Whitchurch.

"One o'clock, sir," replied Bayzand.

During the next stage there occurred another steep hill and Bayzand asked his passengers to get down and ease the horses.

"Coachman," cried the clergyman in evident annoyance, "*what* time did you say we were due at Whitchurch?"

"At one o'clock, sir," reiterated Bayzand.

At the third hill, he once more appealed to them to walk, and the clergyman's anger could no longer be contained.

"Coachman," he said irritably, "you will never get to Whitchurch at this rate. Why don't you drive the horses faster? Pitch into them right and left and make them gallop."

"Oh, sir," cried Bayzand in pretended horror, "I

wish you had been at St. Mary's church yesterday, and heard the strange parson preach such a beautiful sermon from the text: 'A merciful man is merciful to his beast!'"

The fellows from New College became purple from suppressed laughter, Bayzand looked gently grieved; the box-seat passengers said nothing, but at the next change he hurriedly dismounted and went inside the coach.

"Bayzand, it was too bad of you," cried the fellows from New College, trying to moderate their mirth.

"Indeed, gentlemen. May I ask why?" said Bayzand in pretended innocence.

"You old rascal," said one of them. "You know very well that was the man who preached the sermon."

"Well, to be sure!" said John Bayzand.

The coach reached Whitchurch on the stroke of one; a circumstance which Bayzand did not fail to point out to the clergyman, who said never a word, but seized his bag and departed hurriedly.

Bayzand was the last coachman to drive over Old Folly Bridge, and the first to cross the new one in 1826. He was known as the "Sweeper," because when going down Oriel Lane he always made a long turn at the corner, whilst Bill Taylor, who drove the Oxonian on alternate days, cut the corner very fine, and in consequence was called the "Scraper."

One bitterly cold wet night, John Bayzand was driving his coach over Winchester Downs, when he passed a poor man scantily clad tramping along with his bundle over his shoulder.

"Coachman," said a gentleman on the roof, "give that poor fellow a lift."

Bayzand willingly complied, and scarcely was the man seated when one of the passenger lent him a coat, another a shawl, and he was soon warm and comfortable.

"And now tell us where you have come from," said one.

"India," replied the man. "Yesterday I got my discharge from Portsmouth after being from England more than twenty-five years. I went as substitute for a Mr. John Bayzand of Aston-under-Hill."

"Why, I am John Bayzand," exclaimed the coachman.

All the travellers were much interested at the unexpected meeting between the two men, and a military looking gentleman, who occupied the box-seat, took the soldier's address and asked him many questions.

The passengers clubbed together to give the poor man a good dinner at Newbury, paid his fare to Oxford and gave him a sovereign. John Bayzand took his substitute home with him, provided him with a new suit of clothes and some money. Shortly afterwards the soldier received a letter from the War Office, and found he was entitled to a good pension, which he owed to the representation and kindness of the gentleman who occupied the box-seat on the Oxonian.

Many of the coachmen had nicknames bestowed upon them for some peculiarity of habit or appearance; John Barnshaw, who drove the Rising Sun, was "Civil John" for his urbanity; James Witherington was "Bloody Jimmy" for his severity with his horses; whilst

Tillimant Bobart, driver of the Oxford Balloon, was known far and wide as the "Classical Coachman," from the fact that he had been to college, and was a Bachelor of Arts. Such was the diversity of his accomplishments, that he "capped verses and the front of his hat with equal dexterity, and read Horace over his brandy and water of an evening."

Most famous of all was Will Bowers who drove the Alert, and from the darkness of his complexion was known far and wide as "Black Will"; a fact of which he was fully aware and resented not a little. At a trial in which he was in some way concerned, he was cross-examined to the following effect.

Counsel: I believe your name is Bowers?
Bowers: It is.
Counsel: You drive the London coach?
Bowers: I do.
Counsel: Are you considered a good coachman?
Bowers: Yes (and with true professional pride); I've never had an upset.
Counsel: (not in the least impressed, and anxious to insinuate against the witness's character) Now, sir, can you deny that you are often spoken of as "Black Will"?
Bowers: Yes, by blackguards; gentlemen call me Mr. Bowers (whereat the counsel collapsed and the Court was convulsed with laughter).

One day just before term commenced "Black Will" drew up at the *White Horse* cellars, Piccadilly, with his coach filled inside and out with undergraduates. An exceptionally pretty girl came up to ask if there was room

for one inside, and the undergraduates craned forward to look at her, becoming ecstatic over her beauty.

"What a peach!" exclaimed one.

"Quite lovely!" cried another.

"Heavenly!" raved a third.

"Sorry, miss, but we're full inside and out," replied Bowers in response to her inquiry.

"Couldn't you make room for one more?" she urged.

"Impossible," said Will; then seeing her disappointment added, "That is, unless the gentlemen give their permission."

The undergraduates gave it instantly and unanimously.

"There's lots of room inside," they cried, "We are not very big and can easily make room for one more."

"If the gentlemen consent I have no objection," said Bowers.

"We consent," cried the eager Oxonians.

The girl paid the fare, the guard opened the door, saying:

"Now, miss, if you please. We are losing time."

"Come along, grandma," cried the pretty girl to a stout old lady who had accompanied her but taken no part in the proceedings. "Get in, and be sure you thank the young gentlemen."

Petrifaction seized the undergraduates as the guard opened the door, the coachman mounted the box, and the full horror of their situation dawned on them.

"Stop, stop," they cried. "There's some mistake; we shall be crushed to death."

The young lady tittered, the guard was convulsed,

the outside Oxonians were doubled up in the very ecstasy of mirth, and even "Black Will" grinned as the coach drove off to the accompaniment of the bitter lamentations of the deluded insides.

It was not always the passengers whose undoing caused merriment and provided so many good stories down the road, for coachmen themselves were hoaxed sometimes, and Jem Howell, who drove the Birmingham day coach, and liked a joke himself, was once effectively taken in. When driving along the bleak exposed road near Enstone, a farm lad called out to him to stop, and with true Oxfordshire deliberation and drawl asked if there was room for three inside passengers.

"Yes, my boy, plenty of room," replied Howell.

"For three inside?" reiterated the boy.

"Yes, yes, make haste."

"Did you understand, sir?" persisted the lad.

"Oh, yes; three inside passengers."

"Three," emphasized the boy.

"Yes, yes; do be quick, my boy," answered Howell impatiently.

"You be sure you have room?"

"Why, yes, how many more times must I tell you?"

"Wal," drawled the youth, as he turned on his heel, "if I does happen to hear of anyone as wants to go, I'll let you know."

What would have happened if he attempted to play such a trick on another coachman, by name John Spooner, passes all powers of imagination, for he was notorious for his hasty temper, and Mr. Costar, who horsed the coach,

received so many complaints of his servant's incivilities to the passengers, that he at length suspended him from his duties by way of a salutary lesson.

A coachman deprived of his box was a being intensely wretched, and Spooner haunted the Angel Hotel at Oxford, and increased his wretchedness by watching the coaches start. At length Mr. Costar took pity on him, and told him he might resume his duties, provided that he could keep a still tongue in his head.

Spooner determined to carry out this instruction literally, for that night, though the box-passenger asked many and repeated questions, not one word could he get in reply. At length being considerably puzzled he turned to the guard and inquired if the coachman was deaf.

" A little, sir," replied the guard who was in ecstasy, wondering how long it would be before Spooner's silence and temper alike gave out, when he looked forward to the pleasure of seeing the gentleman curl up under the lash of the coachman's tongue.

The passenger asked a few more questions but with no better result, so at last he desisted, and the night passed in silence. With the dawn the gentleman resumed his questioning, and, pointing to a country residence asked to whom it belonged. As he received no answer he repeated his question in a louder tone; finally, feeling that the coachman was nothing like so deaf as he pretended to be, he fairly shouted at him, and Spooner's anger could no longer be restrained.

"It's not mine," he roared in a rage, "nor yours or

you wouldn't ask such foolish questions." Then the remembrance of Mr. Costar's advice returned to him and he added bitterly: "Perhaps now you will try and say I am not civil!"

On a certain night Spooner had three inside passengers in the Gloucester mail, one of them being a well-known banker notorious for his meanness. At Henley the coachmen were changed and Spooner asked for his fee. Two of the travellers gave him a shilling apiece, but the banker searched his pockets for a sixpence. Spooner, to show his scorn for such a meagrely dole, jerked his arm as if to throw it into the Thames. The mail had just started when the banker discovered that instead of sixpence he had given the coachman half a sovereign. He immediately stopped the coach and demanded the return of the money.

"Well, you saw what I did with it," said Spooner, "I should think it is at the bottom of the Thames by this time."

The banker raved but to no purpose, and he drove off declaring his intention of writing to Spooner's proprietor.

He carried out his threat, and when Mr. Costar heard the circumstances he was fully inclined to take his servant's part, but having an extensive knowledge of coachmen in general and this one in particular he inquired, with a twinkle in his eye, if Spooner had actually thrown the coin into the river.

"No, sir," he replied, "it fell into my little side pocket, and I did the miserable niggardly banker."

Spooner looked on the majority of his passengers as

his sworn enemies, but he entertained something like friendliness for a certain sporting parson who lived in Oxford, and whose mania was coaching. One day, after a sharp dispute with another traveller who also desired it, he secured the box-seat on the Leamington coach, which a few minutes later upset and caused his death.

His funeral was unique, for as a tribute to his ruling passion his coffin was placed in a hearse drawn by four horses, and John Spooner deputed to drive it. To the horror and consternation of the mourners, Spooner had no sooner mounted the box than he whipped up the astonished black horses and drove off as hard as he could and arrived at the churchyard long before the rest of the procession. He was remonstrated with for his scandalous behaviour, but, feeling that he had known the dead man better than any of them, he replied coolly: "You couldn't drive fast enough for him when he was alive, so I thought I would give him a good shake up when he was dead."

Sporting parsons were somewhat rare and, as a rule, churchmen and coachmen were not affinities. One day a clergyman went to the Cheltenham booking-office and took the box-seat on the Isis coach which was driven by Ned Burford, who was notorious for the fluency of his language. The book-keeper, as he took the money, coughed and looked doubtful, and wishing to save the clergyman pain, said deprecatingly:

"I do not think you will feel quite at home with the coachman, sir."

"Why not?" inquired the parson.

"Oh, he occasionally talks rather so-so," was the reply, by which the book-keeper delicately implied that when things went wrong with Ned his remarks were such that no clergyman could listen to with propriety.

"Oh, never mind that," said the parson, and went headlong to his doom.

For the first part of the journey the coachman and box-seat passenger got on admirably. The talk fell on the recent balloon ascents, of which neither approved, and Ned gave his opinion thus:

"There, sir, I call it downright wicked presumption in the extreme, those balloons trying to solve more than they ought."

"I am of the same opinion," said the clergyman, thinking that Ned was a much maligned character, for his feelings, though forcible, were delicately and well expressed. At that moment one of the horses stumbled and nearly fell. The change in the coachman was instantaneous, for he began to curse and swear in a frightful manner. The clergyman during the whole of his blameless existence had never imagined such appalling nouns and adjectives as fell with ready fluency from Ned's lips. He remained speechless, rightly judging that any interference would render him the recipient of language more picturesque than polite, but he turned red, white, green, and other colours indicative of strongly suppressed emotions, and at the first opportunity hastened to exchange the lurid atmosphere of the box-seat for the chaste seclusion of the inside.

Many passengers delighted to draw out the coachman,

and two of them once proposed to Joe Stephens that they should have a competition as to who could compose the best piece of poetry before the coach reached the Chequers Inn at Whitway. The gentlemen soon made theirs, but Stephen found poetry a far tougher job than driving a coach, and they were within a hundred yards of the Chequers Inn when he saw two pigs belonging to Mr. Perkins, the landlord, which gave him an idea.

"Gentlemen," he announced, "I am ready," and at once repeated this oration:

"Mr. Perkins had two pigs
As fine as one another,
Robin Hood was one's name,
Little John t'other."

"Bravo!" cried the hugely amused passengers. "You have fairly beaten us and shall have the prize."

Stephens did not come off quite so well another time when he had a gay young spark on the box to whom he gave tuition in driving, to the no small alarm and apprehension of a Quaker on the seat behind. Anxious to show off, Stephens pointed to a tree and said:

"Now if I was to set these horses at full gallop, do you think I could pull them up before we got to that tree?"

The box-seat passenger, seeing that he was expected to reply in the negative, declared that such a thing would be impossible.

The coachman immediately set his team off at full speed, the coach rocked, and the Quaker held on for dear life.

Stephens pulled up at the tree, and looked complacently at his passenger who gave utterance to words expressive of excessive and staggering admiration. The Quaker said nothing but thought the more.

He got down at Newbury, when Stephens asked for his fee.

"Nay, friend," said the Quaker, "if thee hadst been a little stronger in thy head, and not so strong in thy arms, I should have given thee a shilling; I shall now give it thy guard."

CHAPTER V GUARDS

ARMED guards for the protection of the mail-coaches were from the first an outstanding feature of Mr. Palmer's scheme for complete postal reform. The Post Office officials, however, eyed them dubiously and entertained grave doubts as to their probity, declaring that the ale houses by the way would prove potent factors for their undoing.

When Mr. Palmer's plan came into force, the mail-guards gave the lie direct to the Post Office, anent their predilection for strong drink, but came perilously near fulfilling another of the objections raised against their institution. The heads of the department had expressed their horror at the idea of providing the guards with weapons of defence, declaring that such a course would inevitably lead to wholesale murder. That it did not was more by accident than design, for the first mail guards were so inflated with the importance of their position, and so exceedingly joyous in the possession of that fearsome weapon the blunderbuss, that they testified their delight in such sportive ways that the public were in a state of extreme terror. Before the mail-guards had been in existence for the space of one month, it was found necessary to issue stringent regulations forbidding them to fire off their blunderbusses when passing through towns or villages.

Apparently, the blunderbuss possessed an immense fascination for the guards and, like a small boy with a

popgun, they shot at anything and everything that in their eyes was a suitable target. The slugs with which they loaded the blunderbusses were intended to lodge in the bodies of highwaymen, but the "gentlemen of the road" looked askance at the mail-coaches which threatened to destroy their trade and, with great want of consideration for the feelings of the armed guards longing to display their valour, refused to present themselves as targets. The guards, thus baulked of their legitimate prey, varied the monotony of coaching by shooting at dogs, sheep, pigs, hens, etc., and by pointing their deadly weapons at innocent and terror-struck travellers, thereby frightening them nearly out of their lives.

These sportive proceedings were eyed with disfavour, and, in Wales, one Mr. Pennant, who hated mail-coaches and all that concerned them because they were exempt from tolls, determined that the next guard who erred ever so little from the direct path defined for mail-guards should be brought to judgment. He did not have long to wait, for word was brought him that a guard, nicknamed the "Prince of Wales" from the extreme elegance of his person, had not only shot a dog because it had barked at him, but also threatened to blow the turnpike-keeper's brains out.

Clear acts of violence both of these, and Mr. Pennant at once issued a warrant against him. The sequel was unexpected, for Mr. Pennant who had been praying that a guard might be delivered into his hands, for him to make an example of for the petrification of all mail-guards, was so softened by the charms of the "Prince of

Wales," that, after impressing on him that guards were entrusted with firearms for the protection of the mails and coaches, and not as he seemed to suppose for the express purpose of terrifying His Majesty's subjects, he dismissed him with a reprimand.

That the guards did not discontinue their evil practices is evident from the fact that subsequent regulations made them liable to a fine of £5 if they fired their blunderbusses without due cause or provocation.

The Post Office officials, undoubtedly, had the guards very much on their minds, and sought to regulate their conduct by an extensive list of rules which set forth what a guard was and was not to do in every conceivable emergency.

He was to see that the coachmen kept true time; and to report him if he did not. To blow his horn at specified distances and places, in order that toll-gates should be open, fresh horses waiting, mail-bags ready, carts drawn out of the way, that there might be no let or hindrance to the expeditious passage of that arrogantly important vehicle, His Majesty's Mail.

The guard's first and foremost duty was to the mail-bags, and the authorities could not sufficiently impress upon them the paramount importance of the mails and the comparative insignificance of the passengers.

If a coach broke down, overturned, stuck in a snow-drift, was stopped by highwaymen, or met with any of those reverses to which the best regulated coaches were liable at times, the guard was not to trouble himself unduly about the passengers. Their safety was no concern

of his, he had to attend to the far more important matter of the mails, which must arrive true to time whatever happened. For their safe conveyance the guard might take one or two horses as he chose and, leaving the coachman and passengers to get out of the difficulty as best they could, ride forward to the next change. There was no statute to the effect that he might not send some one to help the coach, but if the next inn stables contained only two horses, and the guard wanted them, he would most undoubtedly take them. He was, in fact, expected to go on to London as though nothing had happened, to take the mails either by chaise or horseback, to change at the appointed stages, and push forward at all hazards.

That the guards were loyally true to their trust is evident from the heroic efforts they made to get forward with the mails under the most adverse circumstances, and against overwhelming difficulties. Joseph James Nobbs, one of the old mail-guards, has left an account of his experiences during the terrific snow-storm of 1836. Several times his coach stuck in the drifts, and was unable to proceed, when Nobbs according to his instructions mounted one of the horses and set off with the mails, making his way as best he could through the snow-covered country. Once he was two nights and days without rest, battling all the while with a raging snow-storm, and nearly frozen with the intense cold. By way of reward for his strenuous exertion Nobbs received a letter of thanks from the Postmaster General, who thereby put an exalted value on his autograph according

Engraved by G. Reeves

MAIL COACH IN A SNOW-DRIFT

By James Pollard

Reproduced from a print lent by Messrs. Arthur Ackermann

to the estimate of the guard, who had expected a more material reward for his strenuous exertions.

The same winter the Birmingham mail-coach came to grief seventy miles from London, and the guard, exercising his prerogative, appropriated two of the horses to carry the mails and set out for London. A blinding snow-storm was raging so that he soon lost all traces of the road, and wandered across country over hedges and ditches, losing his way more often than he found it. When he eventually reached London he was in a distressing state of exhaustion, but he had done his duty and got his mails forward, a reward which in itself the Post Office deemed sufficient recompense.

That department, though expecting great things of the guards, was by no means disposed to err towards them on the side of generosity. It gave them a gorgeous uniform, it is true, no doubt realizing that an imposing and slightly bizarre appearance is of immense assistance to any public functionary, and goes a long way to inspiring respect. The guard's uniform consisted of a red coat with gilt buttons, dark blue waistcoat, and a hat adorned with gold lace and a cockade; these undoubtedly conferred great distinction on the wearer, who with his horn and key-bugle was an object of much admiration.

The Post Office only paid the guards ten shillings a week, out of which they had to provide the oil for their lamps, but they by no means depended on their official pay for a livelihood, and the position was eagerly sought after on account of the perquisites it entailed. A guard often received as much as three or four pounds a week

in tips alone, and there were many other ways by which they could add to their incomes. Very early in their career they discovered that there was a handsome profit to be made by purchasing goods cheaply in the country and selling them in London. Bayzand specialized in watercress, paying £1 for a sack, and receiving £2 for it from a London dealer.

The shopkeepers depended largely on goods brought up by the guards, and great indeed was their agitation when the snow-storm of 1836 caused the coaches to be snowbound in the provinces, and in consequence London was face to face with the awful prospect of a turkeyless Christmas.

When the Mazeppa coach managed to struggle through, it was met on its arrival by a harassed poulterer who breathlessly inquired of William Bayzand if he had any turkeys. The guard replied that he had; twenty of them in fact, but keep one for his own Christmas dinner he must and would.

The thought of nineteen birds to be divided among a turkeyless capital raised the poulterer's spirits considerably, and he begged the guard to sell them one and all to him, and to name his own price. This put Bayzand into a predicament, for he was afraid of opening his mouth too wide, and a great deal more afraid of asking too little. Seeing his hesitation, the poulterer, who was in an agony of apprehension lest a rival poulterer should get wind of the turkeys and come in pursuit of them, offered £20. The guard agreed and the bargain was struck, but how poignant must have been his feelings

when the purchaser, secure in the possession of the nineteen turkeys, remarked that he had been quite prepared to go as high as £30 or £40 in order to secure them.

Bayzand and Foules driving one night with an empty coach had a stroke of luck which occasioned them much joy. The Mazeppa suddenly gave a lurch which showed that she had gone over something and Bayzand got down to investigate. It proved to be a bacon pig, which had evidently fallen out of a waggon bound for Hereford market. Such a heaven-sent gift could not be neglected and the coachman and guard determined to have it at all costs. Bayzand tried to pull it towards the coach, but it was beyond his powers. In such cause, however, the coachman did not scruple to risk the coach and the proprietor's team of thoroughbred horses, and he left the box and went to his colleague's assistance. Together they started to drag the prize along, but the noise they made startled the horses, and Foules was obliged to rush to and fro to quiet them, so that it was some time before the pig was pulled up to the coach and made an inside passenger for the rest of the journey. When the Mazeppa reached its destination Bayzand drove off inquisitive porters, and at the first opportunity he and the coachman carried their find to the latter's house, where they divided the pig between them, and declared that their unexpected present proved the best bacon they had ever tasted.

Many queer customers went into the boot, ostensibly provided for the conveyance of passengers' luggage, but which at a pinch could be made to do duty as a larder or

a menagerie cage. It provided a snug receptacle for the conveyance of contraband spirits and unlicensed game, for smugglers and poachers soon realized that there was no safer conveyance than His Majesty's Mails. Occasionally officers of the law would appear unexpectedly with the avowed intention of searching the coach. Then was the time to see the guard in all the dignity of outraged officialdom, as he virtuously and indignantly upheld the inviolable sanctity of His Majesty's Mails, and averred his firm determination to defend them with his life and his blunderbuss. As he was strictly within his rights, and no one might tamper with or delay the mails without special authority, he was thus enabled to proceed on his journey and land his contraband spirit or bags of game in security. Some guards even went so far as to use the mail-bags for their own convenience, and one, who dealt extensively in fish, carried his goods in the official bags, whereat the sorters at the Post Office complained exceeding bitterly that they were nearly smothered with fish scales.

As the coaches constituted practically the only means of conveyance, it naturally followed that all sorts of things were carried through their medium, and when the Earl of Shrewsbury wished to send a valuable hound to Mr. Villebois, the master of the Hampshire hunt, he consigned it with many admonitions to the care of the guard on the coach. For better security it was put in the boot, but when the coach arrived at Sandwell Priory near Newbury, where Squire Villebois was anxiously awaiting his hound, he was considerably chagrined to find it had

gnawed a hole in the boot and escaped. Subsequently it was found that the animal had made the best of his way back to the Shrewsbury kennels.

The boot often held a pig, sheep, or calf belonging to the coachman or guard. Once it was known to contain a clergyman whose need to travel was urgent and the coach full; another time two sailors chose it as being the snuggest place in the coach.

They intended to travel by the Champion coach from Gloucester, and were probably none too sober, for just as the coach was about to start one of them fell off the roof, into a saddler's shop, and cut himself so badly that he was unable to proceed. His companion refused to go on without him, and though they had legally forfeited their fares the book-keeper sent them on next day by the Mazeppa coach.

The sailors entered into conversation with Bayzand, who soon elicited the information that they were on their way to London to join their ship, and they had not so much as a penny piece between them. Being a kind-hearted man, he bought them a loaf and a pint of shrimps at Cheltenham, and a glass of rum each at Northleach to keep out the cold. The tars were very grateful, and as the cold increased they spent most of the journey curled up fast asleep in the boot. When they arrived in London Bayzand presented them with half a crown each and put them in a cab.

"We'll never forget you, mate," cried the sailors, as they drove off to the Docks.

The guard thought no more of the matter, but long

afterwards the porter at the booking-office showed him a parcel and asked him if he could make anything of the direction which he confessed fairly beat him. The address certainly did not err on the side of lucidity being thus: "Ga-d-M -pha-c-h."

"Why, I do believe it's meant for me," said Bayzand after some cogitation, and translated the inscription as meant for the "Guard of the Mazeppa coach."

The porter thought it might as well be that as anything else, and suggested the parcel should be opened. When it was untied it was found to contain a thousand cigars wrapped up in greasy paper, and a dirty note bearing the words "for your kindness to us chaps. Hope to see you soon." The guard smoked the cigars and was much touched by the kindness of the gift, but he never saw either of the sailors again.

William Bayzand was known as the business guard from the number of commissions he undertook, whilst John Blyth on the same coach was called the musical guard from his skill on the key-bugle. Key-bugles were far more popular on the road than the orthodox coach horn, but they were eyed with disfavour by the Post Office, which went so far as to forbid the guards on the mail-coach to carry them. The key-bugles were, however, inexpressibly dear to the guards' hearts, and not to be thrown lightly aside for a mere whim of the authorities. As a matter of fact, the prohibition gave added zest to a performance on these instruments and, though the guards so far conformed as to blow their long coach horns decorously as they passed through the streets of

London, they were no sooner free from the metropolis than they drew forth their cherished key-bugles and commenced to play such classic airs as "The Flaxen-headed Ploughboy," "Cherry Ripe," "Oh, Nanny!" "Oh, dear, what can the matter be?" to their own inexpressible satisfaction.

Benson of the Union was a noted performer on the key-bugle, which served him in good stead one day when the coach broke down at Saxmundham. It happened that a conjurer about to give an entertainment was at a loss to provide the music with which to distract the attention of his audience whilst he performed various necessary adjustments for the successful performance of his tricks. He therefore came to Benson with the request that he would come and bring his key-bugle and supply the place of orchestra. Benson agreed, and the entertainment was a complete success.

Benson was also a clever ventriloquist, and once exercised his power for the mystification of two gentlemen. The coach was waiting at the Peacock Inn, Islington, when a gig with a dog tied beneath it drove by. Suddenly the air was filled with the most hideous sounds of a dog yapping and howling in the extremity of pain. The gentlemen supposing they had run over the animal jumped out of the gig, and were considerably surprised to find the dog blandly unconscious of anything untoward. They resumed their places in the gig, but scarcely had the horse started when the melancholy howls were renewed, and they again dismounted. The dog wagged his tail, and the shouts of the onlookers

warned the gentlemen that they had been hoaxed, and that the innocent looking guard had been exercising his ventriloquistic powers for their benefit.

Another time Benson entered an inn in a state of intense indignation declaring that some one had put a pig in the boot of his coach. If any proof was needed it was supplied by the agonized screams which proceeded from the coach.

The rustics gathered round and gave many suggestions as to how to secure the pig which was making a perfect pandemonium in the boot. Benson enjoyed their mystification till it was time to start, when he opened the door and showed the astonished villagers that the boot contained nothing but parcels and other inanimate goods.

In times of stress or emergency guards were often called upon to perform temporary repairs and for this purpose they were provided with a tool-box, which was in constant requisition when wheels came off, axle-trees gave way, or poles broke, which they did with distressing frequency. As a rule the coach carried a spare pole, but if it did not the guard on a stage-coach, who was not bowed down with the responsibility of the mails, had to get down and make the best job he could of it. The passengers, hardened by experience, were resigned to such contretemps and would settle down composedly to a game of cards, whilst the guard with the help of a commandeered sheep hurdle patched the broken pole to the best of his ability.

The guards on the stage were expected to render the

coachman every possible assistance, from the mending of a splintered pole to the putting on of the drag. The latter performance was not altogether devoid of danger, and one day Bayzand slipped and fell, catching his foot in the roller bolt; when his cries for assistance were at length heard he was extricated from his perilous position, with one of his toes broken. He was taken to the Staple Hotel at Witney, and a doctor came and put the matter right, but the luckless guard was destined to prove the trite maxim that misfortunes never come singly, for the old woman deputed to attend on him administered the dressing for his foot as internal medicine, and Bayzand's career nearly came to an abrupt termination in consequence.

A guard on every coach would seem an indispensable adjunct, but they were often looked on more in the light of a luxury than a necessity. A traveller from Ross refused Bayzand his tip on the plea that on a day coach he was a superfluity. The guard in question thought unutterable things, but his spirits revived a little when he discovered a bag belonging to the niggardly gentleman; if a guard was not needed it was clearly no place of his to look after the luggage, and he promptly sent it off to the receiving office.

Next day the passenger came in quest of his property and was told where to go for it. The incident apparently convinced him of the inadvisability of incurring the enmity of the guard, for on his return journey he took a seat next to him, and both tacitly ignoring their late difference of opinion chatted pleasantly together, and

at the end of the journey he presented Bayzand with a crown piece.

The Mazeppa occasionally had another passenger whose liberality in the matter of tips astonished both guard and coachman. This eccentric gentleman carried his money loose in his coat-tail pocket, and when he tipped on leaving the coach, he put his hand into his pockets and drew out a handful of coins without looking at them. On one occasion the coachman received three sovereigns and a sixpence, and the guard six sovereigns a shilling and a sixpence.

When things were lost during a coach journey passengers claimed compensation, and one day the horse-keeper of the Bolt and Tun Inn informed Bayzand that a gentleman from Cheltenham declared he had lost his cloak when on the Mazeppa—a very fine cloak it was, too, from the description given, "a rich camlet, lined with real fur" and the value he put on it £15, 15s.

Bayzand always made a point of taking the numbers of the hackney-coaches, and he distinctly remembered the gentleman in question had gone off in No. 666 and, moreover, his cloak had gone with him, for the guard recalled the fact that a tassel of it caught in the door as it shut.

When the gentleman appeared clamouring for the return of his cloak, or £15, 15s. in lieu thereof, he was escorted to the receiving office by Bayzand and the bookkeeper. Sure enough there was the cloak, but how different from the owner's description!—shabby and threadbare and not worth 15s.!

Bankers frequently entrusted the guards with immense sums of money, and paid them at the rate of half a crown a parcel, which, considering the responsibility incurred, was by no means adequate remuneration. Thieves were ever on the watch to intercept these bankers' parcels if possible, and one gang accomplished their design in a decidedly ingenious manner. They were all men of prosperous and well-bred appearance, and two of them booked seats inside the coach at the *Swan with Two Necks*, and the others got in at Islington. They left the coach at different places on the road, no suspicions were entertained that anything was wrong till the coach arrived at Coventry, where a bank clerk was waiting to receive the parcel which contained £300 in gold and a bill of exchange for £150. It was then discovered that the inside passengers had cut out a panel at the back of the coach, abstracted the banker's parcel, and got clean away with it without anyone being the wiser.

Bayzand was warned one day that an attempt would be made to obtain a parcel he carried for a banker, which information naturally threw him into a state of extreme consternation. He eventually placed the parcel beneath a seat where two elderly and blissfully unconscious old ladies sat on it throughout the journey. Some suspicious looking characters joined the coach at Gloucester, and Bayzand had an anxious time of it till he reached London and handed over the parcel to its rightful owners. After this fright he demanded a higher rate of payment, which, however, the bankers refused to allow, and

shortly after having occasion to send £500 they entrusted it to one of their clerks. He did not appear to be overwhelmed with the responsibility, for he dismounted from the coach at one of the changes, and it went on without him. Soon after the guard heard the noise of furious galloping, and the banker's clerk, white with fright, dashed up on one of the leaders of the last stage with its reins and traces still on.

"Where is my parcel?" gasped the clerk.

The guard disclaimed any knowledge of it, and the terrified clerk scrambled on to the roof of the coach in search of it, and to his intense relief discovered the bag hanging on the rail of the coach, from which it would have fallen in a few moments.

The guards were exposed to all weathers, but by enveloping themselves in an extensive collection of coats and waterproofs they managed to keep fairly dry themselves, but what annoyed them greatly was the fact that the rain made their seat on the coach wet and uncomfortable. William Bayzand, being of an ingenious turn of mind, had a bright idea; he purchased a gridiron, removed the hands, fixed it on his seat and strapped the cushions on the top. By this means he was able to keep his seat dry and comfortable, and the other guards from the *Bolt-in-Tun* and *Bull-in-Mouth* yards adopted his plan, and in honour of the inventor named it the Mazeppa patent.

CHAPTER VI COACHING COMPETITION

THE early coaching days knew no such thing as competition; the heavy cumbersome old coaches went their own way, and took their own time as it seemed best to them, secure in the comfortable conviction that however much the public might grumble they had no redress. Dissatisfied passengers could not then transfer their patronage to "the opposition," and had either to make the best of things as they were or remain at home.

The introduction of mail-coaches in 1784 altered this, for they set a standard of perfection heretofore undreamt of, and in consequence the proprietors of the old stage-coaches found their receipts dwindling with alarming rapidity. Passengers naturally preferred to travel by a conveyance which could be depended upon to arrive at the scheduled time, and not at any indefinite hour of the twenty-four as had hitherto been the leisurely custom.

The coach proprietors, seeing these things and realizing that they were inevitable, rose to the occasion and, with the intention of giving the "go by" to the mails, they built new and better constructed coaches, horsed them with superior cattle, employed brisker coachmen, and thoroughly reorganized their establishments.

The great disadvantage of the mails was that they travelled chiefly by night, and the stage-coach proprietors soon saw that if they put on the road a service of fast day coaches, in speed and appointments equal to the

mails, they would make a bold and probably successful bid for popularity.

In this supposition they were correct, and so great was the rivalry and emulation, not only between the stages and mails but among the different coaching yards, that in consequence everything connected with coaching was brought to the highest state of perfection.

"Nimrod," the celebrated sporting writer, contributed an article to the *Quarterly Review* for 1832, in which he eulogized the improvements in coaching, saying: "The fairy petted princes of *The Arabian Nights' Entertainments* were scarcely transported from place to place with more facility or despatch, than Englishmen are in A.D. 1832. From Liverpool to Manchester, thirty-six miles in an hour and a half! Surely Dædalus is come amongst us again."

To instance some of the great advances, he then gives the supposititious case of an old gentleman falling asleep in 1742 and waking up suddenly in Piccadilly in 1832, desirous of returning to his home at Exeter. Just then up drives the Comet with its team of greys.

"You must be quick as lightning," says a loafer standing by, and though the old gentleman declares the Comet is no stage-coach, but a private drag, he is shoved into it, "having been three times assured that his luggage is in the hind boot, and twice three times denied having ocular demonstration of the fact." He mistakes the coachman for a gentleman and, when he has been corrected, proceeds to expose his ignorance on other coaching matters.

The Comet arrives at Hounslow in five minutes under the hour, and the old gentleman has pleasurable thoughts of breakfast, but when he puts his head out of the window, to call to the waiter, he is thrown back with a jerk which renders him speechless. Recovering a little, he inquires why they did not change horses at Hounslow. His companion assured him they did—only one minute allowed for so doing.

"You astonish me; but really I do not like to go so fast," says the bewildered old gentleman of 1742.

"Oh, sir, we always *spring* them over these six miles. It is what we call the *hospital ground*." This alarming phrase is presently interpreted: it intimates that horses whose "backs are getting down instead of up in their work," some "that won't hold an ounce downhill, or draw an ounce up," others "that kick over the pole one day and over the bars the next"; in short all the reprobates, styled in the road slang *bokickers*, are sent to work these six miles—because *here* they have nothing to do but gallop."

The coach goes faster and faster as the "bokickers" feel their legs, the coach rocks and the old gentleman is convinced that the horses are running away. At Staines he gets out of the coach to see how it is possible for horses to be changed in one minute, instead of half an hour, as in his young days. He has been positively assured that the fresh team is a steady one, containing no "bokickers," but when he sees a fine thoroughbred horse led towards the coach with a twitch on his nose, he exclaims apprehensively: "Holloa, Mr. Horse-keeper, you

are not going to put an unruly horse in the coach?" The man replies that it is "the quietest hanimal alive," but the old gentleman is not much reassured, for he hears the coachman say urgently: "Mind what you are about, Bob, don't let him touch the roller bolt!"

The passengers take their seats. "Let 'em go, and take care of yourselves," says the coachman, and the "staid and steady team" start—"the near leader rears right on end, and if the reins had not been yielded to him at the instant he would have fallen backwards on the head of the pole. The moment the twitch was taken from the nose of the thoroughbred near wheeler, he drew himself back to the extent of his pole chain on his forelegs stretched out before him—and then, like a lion loosened from his toil, made a snatch at the coach that would have broken two pairs of traces in 1742."

The old gentleman has one glimmer of comfort, he is not asked to walk up the hills. Even that is shortlived, for going down a hill the coach presses on the thoroughbred, which annoys him so much that he breaks into a gallop, the rest of the team join in, and away goes the coach at a terrific rate, frightening the old gentleman nearly out of his senses.

At Bagshot he gets out of the Comet with all possible despatch, and declines to return to it at any price. He recounts his harrowing experiences to the waiter, and pathetically inquires if there is such a thing as a *slow coach* left.

"Why, yes, sir," replies John, "we shall have the Regulator down in an hour."

The very thing, thinks the old man and sits down to dinner.

When the Regulator arrives it is full inside, and the old gentleman mounts to the roof, and off they go at a steady pace, to the tune of "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled" on the guard's key-bugle. All goes well till they come to the "galloping ground," when the Regulator takes exactly twenty-three minutes to do the five miles and the coach, having a ton of luggage on the roof, rocks and rolls like a ship at sea.

The driver of the Comet, on his return coach, met the Regulator and thus described the unhappy situation of his late passenger. "He was seated with his back to the horses—his arms extended to each extremity of the guard-irons, his teeth set grim as death and his eyes cast downwards to the ground, thinking the less he saw of his danger the better."

The lurching was awful and, when the Regulator reached Hertford bridge, the old gentleman's nerves are shattered, and he exclaims: "I will walk into Devonshire!"

Feeling, however, that his legs could not accomplish this pedestrian feat, he inquired what it would cost to "post" to Exeter. Twenty pounds is the reply. Too much thinks the old gentleman, and is persuaded to give the Quicksilver Mail a trial on the assurance that it does not carry any luggage.

Now the Devonport Mail, commonly called the Quicksilver, was one of the miracles of the road, is a mile an hour faster than the Comet, and at least three miles

quicker than the Regulator, so the luckless old gentleman is in a worse situation than ever; his hat and wig blow off when he puts his head out of the window, to see if the horses are running away, and he is whirled away into Devonshire at a pace unprecedented in 1742.

The proprietors, at variance on most matters, all agreed that Shakespeare erred very considerably in his estimation as to the importance of nomenclature. A rose might thrive equally well under the unpoetical designation of onion; horticulture was not their province and they would not dispute the assertion, but coaches were a very different matter, and there was no doubt that the names painted on them very materially influenced their reputation and the class of their customers.

This fact being indisputable, coach proprietors vied with each other to invent names which should appeal to the public, and indicate to a great degree the nature of the coach, and the people it especially catered for. Sportsmen would naturally choose to travel by coaches whose very names caused their pulses to beat quicker, and recalled the delights of field or turf, as The Berkeley Hunt, The Beaufort Hunt, The Tally-ho, Hieover, Hieaway, Hark Forward, Rover, Tantivy, Flying Childers, Highmettled Racer, etc.

For the young bloods, whose nerves were good and whose fetish was speed, there were the coaches whose names indicated furious velocity: The Quicksilver, Meteor, The Dart, The Vivid, The Highflier, The Rocket, The Express, The Lightning, The Rapid, The Telegraph, and The Alert.

To the same class belonged those called after animals renowned for swiftness of limb or wing: The Greyhound, The Antelope, The Reindeer, The Stag, The Spread Eagle, The Swallow, and so forth.

The very sound of such names would be enough to terrify nervous old ladies and gentlemen nearly out of their seven senses. But, as old ladies and gentlemen formed no inconsiderable portion of travellers, they were provided with steady going coaches such as The Life Preserver, The Good Intent, The Accommodation, The Reliance, and others with names equally solid or respectable.

For the loyally inclined there were The Star of Brunswick, The Regent, The Royal Clarence, The Prince of Wales, The Princess Charlotte, The Queen, and The Royal William.

Soldiers and Patriots would be attracted by the names of famous commanders and their victories, such as The Duke of Wellington, The Lord Nelson, The Rodney, The Trafalgar.

Topical events were often utilized by astute proprietors, and the excitement caused by the Balloon ascents made that name a common one, whilst the appearance of a Comet in the sky gave rise to a number of Comets on the road, and the introduction of railways was responsible for such inappropriate titles as The Railway, and The Steam Horse coaches.

Names instinct with bitter rivalry were The Spitfire and The Vixen, which did their level best to run each other off the North Road. The Retaliator threatened

darkly if opposed; the Defiance boldly challenged competition; The Eclipse, arrogantly conscious of its merits; The Fearless, secure in its own perfection; The Magnet attracted customers; The Argus so wideawake that no subterfuge on the part of its opponent could escape it; and The Peerless, which disdained the possibility of a rival to its perfections.

Very different to these challenging names were those of coaches which pursued their own way and eschewed competition, as The Live and Let Live, The Give and Take, Economy without Monopoly, and others of like import.

The names painted on the backs of the coaches were by no means the only steps taken for their advertisement, for when competition was so keen coach proprietors were ever on the watch for some telling point that would proclaim the superiority of their coaches, or pour derision and ridicule on the opposition.

So fierce was the hatred and competition that existed, that proprietors would go to extraordinary lengths in their endeavour to drive a hated rival off the road, and persist in their endeavour until one or both were ruined.

The first bait to catch travellers was to lower the prices, and once two coaches started to do this there was no knowing where they would end. When one of these contests was in progress on the Bath and Cheltenham Road, the fares descended from £1, 1s. to 15s.; then with a run to 10s., 7s. 6d., 5s., 2s. 6d. and 1s. Matters did not stop even there, for neither of the coaches would give way or come to a compromise, and one of them adver-

tised its intention of carrying its passengers for nothing. The other coach, not to be outdone, immediately caused it to be noised abroad that not only would it take passengers free, but give them a good dinner into the bargain!

The usual way to settle rivalry was by trial of speed, and, though coach proprietors publicly deplored this dangerous custom, there is every reason to believe that many of them secretly connived at it. The coachmen openly gloried in it, and so jealous were they for the reputation of their respective coaches that the very sight of the opposition caused their blood to boil, and race they would, despite innumerable Acts of Parliament, and heedless of the safety of their unhappy passengers.

Away would go the coach at a gallop, grazing corners, careering down hills at breakneck speed, whilst the passengers clung despairingly to their seats, and threatened to report everything and everybody if they ever got safely to their destination, which, however, they entertained very little hope of doing. The coachman and guard were deaf to all entreaties, the latter far too occupied in playing "See the Conquering Hero Comes," whilst the former was conscious of nothing but the opposition coach thundering in the rear, and a grim determination not to allow it to pass at any price, even if he had to follow the desperate example of the driver of one on the Portsmouth road, who in order to prevent the opposition coach passing pulled his own leaders suddenly across the road in front of it.

Anything for the honour of the coach was the old

coachman's motto, so that it is little wonder that accidents became distressingly frequent and the newspapers contained harrowing accounts, of which the following taken from the *Oxford Journal* for July 26th, 1817, is a typical example:

"On Thursday last Spencer's opposition Gloucester coach, on its way to London, was overturned near Burford, by which Mr. Thomas Heath of this city had his leg so dreadfully fractured as to be obliged to suffer amputation. There were four inside and three outside passengers, most of whom were severely bruised; and the coachman was left in a dangerous state.

"We cannot deprecate in too strong terms the present infamous practice of coaches racing each other, by which the lives of the passengers are put in imminent danger, merely from the caprice of the drivers. The above coach was going at the rate of twelve miles an hour."

May-Day was the great time for racing and trials of speed, and by tacit agreement rules and penalties were suspended, it being understood that passengers who were foolhardy enough to get on a coach on May-Day did so at their own peril. The coaches, done up in honour of the occasion, were brilliant with red, yellow, blue, and green paint, or whatever happened to be their predominant colour, for, unlike the mails, the stages were not uniform in shape or design, but painted and decked out according to the fancy of their proprietors.

On May-Day, then, the stage-coaches appeared in all their glory, with horses groomed to perfection, resplendent in new sets of brown harness and embroidered

R. Havell

STAGE COACH AND OPPOSITION COACH IN SIGHT

By James Pollard

From a print lent by Messrs. Ackermann

saddle-cloths, whilst the stable-boys decorated them with rosettes and arches of flowers over their heads. Coachmen and guards cut a brave dash in new scarlet coats, white breeches, top boots, white hats, and wearing large bouquets of flowers. The coachmen had their whips tied with coloured ribbons, and the guards' bugles were equally gay. Festoons of evergreens and flowers hung down the sides of the coach, and gaily coloured arches spanned the luggage on the roof.

The villages on the different roads had a merry time of it when the May-Day coaches raced on their way enveloped in clouds of dust, as they bravely endeavoured to break all records in the matter of speed.

One of the most famous May-Day feasts was the race between the Age and the Royal William which for a long time ran in opposition on the Oxford Road. So keen was the rivalry, and so thoroughly did the different horse-keepers enter into the quarrel, that the whole length of the road was impregnated with the question of their superiority. One of the ostlers of the Age arranged a string of stable buckets across the road with the avowed intention of delaying the Royal William. The Royal William, however, was not going to be stopped by a miserable device of the opposition, and when Major Fane, an amateur driving at the time, saw the array of buckets designed for his undoing, he gathered his team together, put them at a gallop, and charged straight for the obstacle, cleared them in safety and went on triumphant, leaving the Age buckets a mass of splinters on the road.

The two coaches left Oxford at 11 o'clock and were due in London at 4.30, but the Age usually managed to beat its rival by a few minutes. This so weighed on the soul of William Snowden of the Royal William that he determined when May-Day came he would get the better of his rival. Accordingly on April 30th, 1834, he gave stringent orders to the horse-keepers down the road to have everything in readiness so that there might be no let or hindrance to his design of beating the Age all to nothing. It happened that the plan leaked out, and came to the ears of Joe Tollit, the coachman of the Age, who wasn't going to have his coach beaten if he knew anything about it, and he laid his plans accordingly.

The eventful morning came, and the Royal William left the *Golden Cross* at Oxford with four browns, whilst the Age started from the Vine Hotel in the High Street with a mixed team. The two coaches tore along the Oxford Road to the accompaniment of various martial airs on the key-bugles of their respective guards.

Joe Tollit on the Age won, getting into London at 2.40, thus doing the fifty-four miles in three hours and forty minutes: "I was just over two hours going to Wycombe, leaving that place exactly at 1 o'clock, and 1 hour 40 minutes going from Wycombe to London. The Old Blenheim coach left the Star Hotel at 9 o'clock, and we passed it at Gerrard's Cross twenty miles from London, and though we had to wait at Uxbridge for the horses were not harnessed, and at Acton I had to drive the same team back to town that had just come down, and had to help harness them. I had a lady just

behind me, and I asked her when at Notting Hill if she felt at all alarmed, and she said not in the least, her only fear was that her friends would not be at the *Bell and Crown*, Holborn, to meet her. This turned out to be the case, so I put her into a growler and sent her home. Sir Henry Peyton—of four-in-hand renown—met James Castle, the driver of the Blenheim in Oxford Street, and said: 'Well, what's become of the Age and Royal William; I thought they were to be in town before you to-day?' 'Well,' he said, 'so they are, I should think, for they passed me while I was changing horses at Gerrard's Cross, and I have not seen them since, and if they have not had a jolly good dinner before this time they have been very idle.'"

The famous Shrewsbury coach, The Wonder, considered the last word in coaching perfection, was the darling of its proprietors, and the wonder and envy of all other coach proprietors. In due time a presumptuous rival, named the Nimrod, was put on the road to compete with this coaching paragon. The proprietors of the Wonder would not allow it to imperil its precious reputation by engaging in such a vulgar performance as racing, but the very idea of its being eclipsed by the Nimrod was unthinkable. They sought a way out of the difficulty by putting another coach called the Stag on the road, whose avowed intention was to compete with, and beat the presumptuous Nimrod. For a year these two coaches raced daily at headlong speed, whilst the Wonder continued its accustomed pace, and attained such a reputation for accuracy that the people along the

road were accustomed to set their watches by it. At the end of the year the Stag was taken off, having accomplished its purpose and run the Nimrod off the road.

So dearly did the old coachmen love a race that, if they could not pit themselves against the opposition, they were perfectly ready to make a trial of speed with anyone of a sporting tendency, and many wagers were laid on horses and ponies backed to race coaches for certain defined distances. The York mail came to grief during one of these contests, for the coachman was so determined to beat the horseman in question that he lost all sense of prudence in his excitement and turned round a corner so sharply that the coach heeled over. One of the passengers was killed, and the others all seriously injured.

Such races were, no doubt, abhorrent to travellers not possessed of sporting instincts, but there were some trials of speed which, by their novelty, afforded coach passengers considerable amusement and entertainment. A miniature four-in-hand, which raced and often beat the coaches on the Great North Road, belonged to a cripple known as "Old Lal," and consisted of a light cart or trolly drawn by four foxhounds. A cripple boy at East Grinstead with his unicorn team of bulldogs frequently competed with the Brighton coaches. An even more original turn-out was owned by a farmer near St. Albans, for he used to trot briskly along the road in a cart drawn by four large hogs. One gentleman who witnessed the uncommon spectacle was so struck

with it that he offered £50 for the turn-out, but the farmer rejected it with scorn.

The greatly increased rate of speed at which the coaches ran during the golden age of coaching, naturally told considerably on the horses employed. Although the stages were materially shortened, and the number of horses used on a fast coach was at the rate of one for every mile of the distance, it was not often that the period of their usefulness exceeded three years. This did not necessarily mean that they were worn out, but that they were no longer equal to the pace the coach was timed at, and which had to be kept accurately year in and year out, irrespective of the state of the roads and weather. The horses on the slower coaches lasted proportionately longer, for it was the pace that told on them; one coach proprietor in the provinces had a mare who went a hundred miles a week in his coach for fourteen years, and at the end of that time was still considered the best stager on the road.

The coach horses were well fed and cared for, and the proprietors vied with each other as to who should possess the best teams, especially those used for the first stage out of London. The middle ground was not so well horsed, and there was often considerable difficulty to find coachmen willing to drive over those stages, where they were often hard put to it to keep time with teams possessing among them almost every vice to which equine flesh is heir. The proverbial "Three blind 'uns and a bolter," was by no means a mere fallacy, as likewise the coachman's soothing remark that "there was only one

eye between them," by which he inferred that all four horses were blind, and the task of keeping them on the road depended entirely on himself; and keeping the road on a dark night was none too easy at any time.

The value of a picked team often ran into three figures, but the average price of an ordinary coach horse was £25, and horses of all kinds, sorts, and conditions found their way into the coachyards, without much reference as to their adaptability for their new profession. Anything that could hold back was considered satisfactory for a wheeler, whilst an animal that would keep out of the way of the bars did for a leader. Possessing either of these qualifications, any horse could be made to run in a coach, even if inclined to jib, shy, bolt, or otherwise misbehave themselves. The new arrivals often objected strenuously to the service expected of them, and showed their disapproval, to the no little alarm of the passengers, who watched with feelings of extreme apprehension the trial of wills between horse and driver. Usually the man won, for the old coachmen were first-rate whips, and after a fierce struggle against overwhelming odds the most refractory horse eventually settled down to his work.

There was one horse, however, who drove coachmen and contractors innumerable to the verge of despair. His method was one of dignified simplicity; he permitted himself to be harnessed, went up to the coach like a lamb, and then when the rugs were pulled off, the ostlers stood away, and the coachmen gave him the office to start, he deliberately lay down. Coachmen swore, guards raved,

ostlers became hysterical with rage, onlookers gave gratuitous advice, and had it hurled back in their faces with opprobrious epithets. The only unmoved person in the general pandemonium was the chief performer who flatly refused to move for anything or anybody until he was unfastened from the coach, then he at once got up and returned in triumph to his stable.

This horse's eccentricity was so well known that once purchased it was by no means easy to dispose of him, and he travelled about from one part of the country to another. He got into Mr. Costar's stables at Oxford, defeated all his coachmen and was ordered to be sold. His purchaser, a coachman named Cross, bought the horse for £10, and as he was perfectly sound, only six years old, and in appearance well worth £35, he felt pretty sure that he was possessed of a shady past. When he had paid the money down for his new purchase, he was speedily informed that as a coach horse he was useless as go in harness he would not.

Cross very soon found out that report spoke only too true, for when the horse was harnessed he instantly lay down in the Cornmarket at Oxford and refused to move. Cross determined he would get the better of him somehow and, in pursuance of a plan he had formed, he obtained some straw and strewed it round the horse. If the animal imagined this was a delicate attention he was soon undeceived, for the coachman's next act was to set light to the straw. The horse lay till he was singed, then with a bound he got to his feet, leapt over the burning straw, and immediately threw himself down again.

Cross, determined not to be beaten, took his refractory charge down to the canal and had him harnessed behind two other horses who were towing a barge. The new pupil immediately threw himself down, but as the other horses kept steadily on he was unable to remain there, and in his struggles to retain his favourite position he eventually rolled off the towing-path and into the water. Finding that if he adhered to his usual plan of lying down he would assuredly be drowned, he scrambled back on to the towing-path, and it was a surprised and bitterly disillusioned horse who walked sedately behind the other two, and did his fair share of the work for a couple of miles. The ordeal by fire and water made a reformed character of him, and he became a coach horse of most exemplary character, to the intense astonishment of all coachmen and stable-boys who had previously been honoured with his acquaintance.

Hunters generally worked well in a coach, but their ruling passion was too strong to be denied, and the sound of a huntsman's horn caused them to break out into instant rebellion. A leader in the Dover coach completely lost her head when hounds crossed the road in front of her, and so bitterly did she feel the indignity of her position, and so determined was she to follow the hunt at all costs, that she instantly set to work to kick herself free of coach, harness, and companions, and would undoubtedly have accomplished her object and overset the coach if the guard and passengers had not managed to jump down and release her.

In 1807 the Liverpool mail was changing horses at

an inn in Cheshire, when Sir Peter Warburton's hounds came by in full cry. The four horses which had just been taken out of the coach were standing unattended, and with one consent they instantly started in pursuit of hounds, their harness clattering behind them. One of them, a blood mare, took the first whip for her pilot, and for two hours followed closely in his wake across country. At the end of the run, the enterprising coach horses were recaptured, seeming none the worse for their adventure, and performed their stage back to Congleton the same evening.

CHAPTER VII COACH PROPRIETORS

THE men who horsed the coaches were a power in the land in days gone by; especially was this so in London where the coaching contracts were held by a few men who owned enormous stables, and amassed huge fortunes.

Mr. William Chaplin, eventually M.P. for Salisbury, was the largest coach proprietor. His chief yard was at *The Swan with Two Necks* in Lad Lane, though he also owned *The Spread Eagle*, *The Cross Keys*, and *The White Horse* in Fetter Lane. After the fashion of the time, his coaches bore the symbol of the inn from which they started on their hind boot or door panel, and were in colour red and black.

Chaplin, being the son of a coach proprietor, in a small way of business, knew all the ins and outs of the road, and especially dangers and temptations which beset the coaching fraternity—a knowledge which proved no inconsiderable asset for a coach proprietor. When things went wrong, he could usually make a shrewd guess at the cause, and so unerringly did he put his finger on their weak spots that his coachmen nicknamed him "Billy bite 'em sly," which, though disrespectful, was a subtle testimony to his proficiency.

Chaplin possessed a bland, suave temperament, and a gift of sarcasm biting and defined; a talent greatly resented by the coachmen, who would have listened serenely to a string of profanities, but writhed uneasily under Chaplin's pointed satire.

Ostlers down the road stole the oats when they could; some did so by the device of a hole cut in the manger and a can adroitly arranged to catch the corn as it fell; others, more daring, manipulated the lock of the corn-bin. Could anything be more nerve-shattering than the following experience which happened to one of the fraternity? Going to the stable one night, as was his custom, with lantern and bag, he opened the lid of the corn-bin, and put in his hand to take out the oats. Instead, he was confronted with the horrid spectacle of "Billy bite 'em sly" curled up as comfortable as possible, who reared himself up in the corn-bin as if in a pulpit, and gave tongue with such appalling politeness that the ostler's blood fairly froze within him.

Chaplin had a keen sense of humour which was not always appreciated, although his toast at the annual coach dinner passed into an historic joke. He loyally proposed the health of the Sovereign, and then lifted his glass with the enigmatical remark: "Success to Shouldering—but do it well."

The first occasion on which he proposed this novel toast no doubt caused the assembled coachmen some uneasiness, and made them look askance at one another, wondering where "Billy bite 'em sly" meant to have them. Shouldering was an old-established custom, but coach proprietors were expected to feign ignorance of it. At any rate it was a subject only to be referred to between master and man, under most distressing circumstances, as when the latter had "shouldered" an informer unawares, or fallen victim to a too zealous "pikeman."

As a matter of fact the coach proprietors were perfectly cognizant of the fact that coachmen and guards were in the habit of sharing the short fares between them, and, except when the matter was carried to exorbitant lengths, they found it good policy to ignore it, so that Chaplin meant to imply that his coachmen might shoulder in moderation, but were not to do it so flagrantly that he would be obliged to take notice of it.

"What have you got in the boot, guard?" inquired the proprietor of a northern coach whose suspicions had been aroused. "Only a couple of guinea-pigs, sir," replied the guard, climbing up into his place as the coachman made a hasty start. "Stop!" called the proprietor, "I have never seen a guinea-pig." He opened the boot, and beheld, not a couple of small rodents, but two soldiers, ineffectually trying to hide themselves under the straw. "Well, they are two beauties," said the proprietor. "Where did you bring them from, guard?" The embarrassed guard named the place, and the proprietor entered the names of the "guinea-pigs" on the way-bill. The guard did not wish to see them there, neither did the coachman, for they had intended to pocket the fares between them.

Chaplin horsed fourteen of the mails out of town, and his best known coaches were The Liverpool Red Rover, The Machester Defiance, and the famous Tantivy in praise of which the Hon. R. E. Egerton-Warburton wrote the following song:

The Tantivy Trot

Here's to the old ones, of four-in-hand fame,
Harrison, Peyton, and Ward, Sir;
Here's to the fast ones that after them came,
Ford and the Lancashire Lord, Sir.
Let the steam pot
Hiss till it's hot.
Give me the speed of the Tantivy Trot.

Here's to the team, Sir, all harnessed to start,
Brilliant in Brummagen leather;
Here's to the waggoner skilled in his art,
Coupling the cattle together.
Let the steam pot, etc.

Here's to the dear little damsels within
Here's to the swell on the top, Sir;
Here's to the music on three feet of tin,
And here's to the tapering crop, Sir.
Let the steam pot, etc.

Here's to the shape that is shown the near side,
Here's to the blood on the off, Sir,
Limbs with no check to their freedom of stride!
Wind without whistle or cough, Sir.
Let the steam pot, etc.

Here's to the arm that can hold 'em when gone
Still to a gallop inclined, Sir;
Heads in the front with no bearing reins on!
Tails with no cruppers behind, Sir.
Let the steam pot, etc.

Here's to the dragsmen I've dragged into song,
Salisbury, Mountain and Co., Sir;
Here's to the Cracknell who cracks them along,
Five twenty-fives at a go, Sir.
Let the steam pot, etc.

Here's to Mac Adam, the mac of all macs,
Here's to the road we ne'er tire on;
Let me but roll o'er the granite he cracks,
Ride ye who like it on iron.
Let the steam pot
Hiss till it's hot,
Give me the speed of the Tantivy Trot.

Chaplin was shrewd and far-seeing and, realizing that the railways would oust the coaches, laid his plans accordingly. He saw that to attempt to fight the railways was useless, whilst to make friends with them in their infancy would mean much profit in the future. Eventually he sold out of his coaching business and invested his money in railway stock, which brought good return, and before his death he became chairman of the London and South Western Railway.

Benjamin Worthy Horne of the *Golden Cross* was a man of very different temperament to Chaplin, for he was nervous and irritable, and had a morbid hatred of seeing anyone doing better than himself. His chief hobby appears to have been opposition, for he was continually trying to run some coach or other off the road, and with such extreme bitterness did he enter into these competitions that he would go to any lengths to ruin rival proprietors. Once he went down the road over night and

brought up all the horses at a certain stage, so that next day the rival coach was brought to an ignominious stop there, while his own coach raced gaily by, shouting derision after the manner of opposition coaches.

Edward Sherman, another London coach proprietor, built up a large business by his own energy and perseverance, for being under the prevailing impression that London streets were paved with gold he came to town on foot, and thought himself lucky to earn 12s. a week. He saved his money and invested it wisely, but owed his success to another species of speculation no less worldly-wise, for he married three wealthy old ladies in succession. After being left thrice a widower, he possessed a substantial fortune and rebuilt the Bull and Mouth Inn. He was the first to introduce the fast, long distance day coaches, of which the most famous were the Shrewsbury Wonder, and the Manchester Telegraph, which did actually accomplish its 186 miles in one day by starting from London at five o'clock in the morning, and reaching Manchester at eleven at night.

Sherman shut his eyes resolutely to the fact that the railways would destroy the coaches. Other and wiser proprietors took their coaches off the roads as the railways advanced to completion, but Sherman fought them stubbornly and lost several thousand pounds before he gave up the unequal contest.

Thomas Fagg, another coach proprietor and landlord of the *Bell and Crown*, was an immense admirer of the Duke of Wellington, and indeed thought of changing the name of his hotel to *The Wellington*. He confided this

project to the "Iron Duke," who squashed it instantly, and told Fagg not to "be a d—— fool." A fool Fagg was not by any means, but, like many worthy men, blinded by hero-worship.

His choice of a coachman proves that he was possessed of sound common sense. To him came a swell dragsman with an inflated sense of his own importance. Fagg put the usual questions as to qualifications, and ended by asking if the applicant had ever had an accident when driving a coach. The dragsman felt insulted by the very suggestion. No, he had never had an accident; didn't know what the word meant. If he thought thus to impress Fagg he was woefully mistaken, for that worthy instantly told him to go about his own business, saying: "You're no good to me, then, my coaches are always being upset, and if you've never had a accident how the devil would you know how to get a coach on her legs again?"

Mrs. Nelson and Mrs. Mountain were two redoubtable women of great coaching repute, proprietresses of flourishing inns, and possessing large stables. Mrs. Nelson was especially solicitous for the comfort of her coachmen and guards, at the Bull Inn a comfortable room was set apart for their use, where they dined on the best the house afforded. In this sanctum where none unconnected with the road might enter, the company talked "shop" whole-heartedly and without reproach. Coachmen recounted their adventures on the road, and addressed one another, not by personal names, but after the manner of the peerage, as Oxford, Salisbury, Bristol, York, and other towns of their coaches' destinations.

Of the many large coaching establishments in the provinces Costar's and Waddell's of Oxford was among the best known. Old Costar was a noted character and, like Fagg, particular as to his coachmen, for when John Stacey, one of the four brothers of that name, applied to him for a place Costar looked him over critically, remarking to a friend that the young man was too much of a dandy for him. Jack altered his attire but he was never employed by Costar, although his brother, William, for some time drove the Alert in turn with Black Will.

Costar was a man of resource, and not easy to get the better of. One year when farm produce was scarce and dear, a farmer offered the coach proprietor a hundred quarters of oats for three hundred guineas. Costar bid pounds, but the farmer thinking he would be unable to buy elsewhere refused. Costar was so incensed that he at once ordered out his favourite black mare and drove down to the docks at Gloucester, where he bought a load of Irish oats, of excellent quality and at half the price. The farmer's short-sighted policy lost him his best customer, for Costar never bought from him again.

Like Chaplin, Costar believed in personal supervision, and did not leave his business in the hands of hirelings, but when things went wrong he looked into the matter himself. At one time John Bayzand, of the Southampton Oxonian, complained that the team from the Chequers Inn at Chilton pond seemed to have no life in them. The horses were good ones, so Costar knew there must be some reason for their being out of condition, and he at

once inquired if the oats and hay supplied were of fine quality. The coachman replied that they were, first-rate in fact; the hay came from a reliable farmer at Dorchester, and, as for the oats, they were Mr. Costar's own, and the coach carried a sack from Oxford every day.

Clearly the food supplied was not at fault, but the horses grew weaker, and the coachman's complaints more urgent, so that Costar determined to go to Chilton pond himself. Accordingly, he drove up to the Chequers Inn one morning just after the coach had changed. He went into the bar, had a chat with the landlord, and then strolled casually round to the stables. In the yard he stumbled on the solution of the puzzle, for his unfortunate horses, still smoking from their journey, and with their harness on, were wallowing in a dirty pond. The horse-keeper who should have attended to them was busily engaged in feeding six large hogs, and feeding them, moreover, on the horses' provender just brought up by the coach. Costar restrained his temper and determined to probe such iniquity to the depths.

"Good morning, young man," he remarked, "your pigs look well. They seem to like a mixture of beans and oats, though I never saw pigs fed with it before."

"Yes, sir," replied the young man. "They certainly thrive on it."

He then drove his hogs back to their styes, bedded them comfortably with what Mr. Costar shrewdly suspected was his straw and, without a thought of the unfortunate coach horses, went back to the bar for a drink. When he had refreshed himself at his leisure, he came out

THE ABINGDON MACHINE

Reproduced from the original picture by kind permission of the owner. A. E. Preston, Esq.

again and catching hold of the horses led them up the yard.

"Whose horses are those?" inquired Mr. Costar mildly.

"They belong to old Costar of Oxford," was the reply.

"Oh, they do, do they!" thought "old Costar," and followed them to their stables. There, to his chargin he beheld his horses put into dirty stalls, without any vestige of bedding, and with empty mangers. The man then considered he had done his duty to "old Costar's" horses, for he left them without any pretence of rubbing them down, or even removing their harness.

Mr. Costar drove back to Oxford and straightway consulted his solicitor, with the result that the horse-keeper in Chequers Inn soon found himself in Reading Gaol undergoing a sentence of twelve months' hard labour.

In 1767 John Alder, a cooper of Abingdon, drew a lottery prize of twenty thousand pounds. On hearing the news he "supported himself with great Decency," and was so lavish in his benefactions, that his wife said the money would be their ruin for her husband would give away everything they had. To his friend Mr. Blewitt, owner of the "Abingdon Machine," Alder presented a new coach. The delighted proprietor had a picture painted of it, with himself and his wife on the box-seat. This painting now hangs on the staircase of the Council Chamber at Abingdon.

A JOURNEY by coach was not a thing to be undertaken lightly or unadvisedly, but required due thought and deliberation before paying a visit to the booking-office, and securing a seat by the expedient of paying half the fare in advance. When the intending passenger had thus irretrievably committed himself, he returned home in deep depression at the thought of what lay before him, and evinced an hourly increasing solicitude as to the state of the weather. Then, as now, that important factor was never to be depended upon, whilst its influence on a coach journey was paramount; if it was fine few things were more delightful; if, on the contrary, it elected to rain or snow nothing could equal it for misery and discomfort.

The traveller who booked his seat in advance was usually a fatalist, being firmly convinced that if he took a place inside the coach the sun would blaze down so that the four insides were nearly stifled with the heat, whilst if he engaged a seat on the roof he was equally certain to be drenched with rain, or frozen with cold; unhappy alternatives which gave much food for thought.

The question of inside or out was in the latter coaching days one of individual selection; earlier travellers did not consider there was any choice in the matter. If they had the smallest respect for themselves or their position in society, they went inside as a matter of course. The outside passengers who balanced themselves uneasily on

the roof, and consumed oranges, shrimps, and other forms of sustenance peculiar to the constitution of outside passengers, were in the eyes of the exclusive "insides" a species of pariah, whose very existence they would have denied if it had not been so very forcibly demonstrated.

Such was the animosity of those within to those without, that even when seats were added to the roof, and in consequence a better class of people took to travelling thereon, they could by no means be permitted to eat their meals in the same room as the exclusive insides, who would have suffered a severe shock at the mere proposition. So also, if the interior of a coach was only partially filled and a drowned or frozen outsider besought permission to come within, his admittance rested with the "insides." If one of them with some stirrings of humanity gave his consent, the "outsider" was placed next to him, and for the remainder of the journey he was looked upon as self-appointed keeper of an uncivilized being, for whose good behaviour he was considered responsible.

To the schoolboys is due the credit of breaking down this social barrier, for chiefly because it was forbidden, and therefore doubly desirable, they discovered that the outside of a coach was a far superior place to the inside. Careful parents and masters booked places in the interior, and bade their charges good-bye, with many admonitions for their behaviour. These were listened to dutifully, and forgotten as soon as the coach turned the corner, when the little rogues immediately scrambled on to the roof of the coach.

This point of vantage afforded them unqualified joy,

and possessed so many advantages that one feels inclined to pity the modern schoolboys who travel by the dull monotony of railways, and miss what must have constituted the most joyous part of their great-grandfathers' holidays. The schoolboys evinced an intense interest in the horses, listened with becoming reverence (not accorded to their pastors and masters) to the words of wisdom which were to be culled from the lips of that all-important man, the coachman, scrambled up and down at the changes, and chaffed the stable-boys and chambermaids, who laughed at their precocity. They knew not the meaning of tedium, for they thoughtfully provided themselves with pop-guns, peas, and other missiles, for the confusion and undoing of all other users of the road. When all else failed they could extract rapturous joy by throwing pennies through shop windows, and shouting "fire" or "murder" at the top of their voices.

In *Tom Brown's School Days*, the guard of the Tally-ho tells how the Rugby boys behaved going to and fro on the coaches.

"Werry free with their cash is the young gent'm'n. But, Lor' bless you, we gets into such rows all 'long the road, what wi' their pea-shooters, and long whips, and hollering, and upsetting every one as comes by; I'd a sight sooner carry one or two on 'em, sir, as I may be a carryin' of you now, than a coach-load. 'What do they do with the pea-shooters?' inquires Tom. Do wi' 'em! why, peppers every one's face as we comes near, 'cept the young gals, and breaks windows wi' them too, some on 'em shoots so hard. Now 'twas just here last June, as we was a driving up the first-day boys, they was

mendin' a quarter-mile of road, and there was a lot of Irish chaps, reg'lar roughs, a breaking stones. As we comes up, 'Now, boys,' says young gent on the box (smart young fellow and desper't reckless) 'here's fun! let the Pats have it about the ears,' 'God's sake, sir!' says Bob (that's my mate the coachman), 'don't go for to shoot at 'em, they'll knock us off the coach.' 'Damme, coachee,' says young my lord, 'you ain't afraid; hoora, boys! let 'em have it.' 'Hoora!' sings out the others, and fill their mouths chock full of peas to last the whole line. Bob, seeing as 'twas to come, knocks his hat over his eyes, hollers to his 'osses, and shakes 'em up, and away we goes up to the line of 'em, twenty miles an hour. The Pats begins to hoora too, thinking it was a runaway, and first lot on 'em stands grinnin' and wavin' their old hats as we comes abreast on 'em, and then you'd ha' laughed to see how took aback and choking savage they looked, when they gets the peas a stinging all over 'em. But, bless you, the laugh weren't all of our side, sir, by a long way. We was going so fast, and they was so took aback, that they didn't take what was up till we was half-way up the line. Then 'twas, 'look out all,' surely. They howls all down the line fit to frighten you, some on 'em runs arter us and tries to clamber up behind, only we hits 'em over the fingers and pulls their hands off: one as had had it very sharp act'ly runs right at the leaders, as though he'd ketch 'em by the heads, only luck'ly for him he misses his tip, and comes over a heap o' stones first. The rest pick up stones, and gives it us right away till we gets out of shot, the young gents holding out werry manful with the pea-shooters and such stones as lodged on us, and a pretty many there was too. Then Bob picks hisself up again, and looks at young gent on box werry solemn. Bob'd had a rum 'un in the ribs, which'd like to ha' knocked him off the box, or made him drop the reins. Young gent on

box picks hisself up, and so does we all, and looks round to count damage. Bob's head cut open and his hat gone, 'nother young gent's hat gone; mine knocked in at the side, and not one on us as wasn't black and blue somewheres or other, most on 'em all over. Two pound ten to pay for damage to paint, which they subscribed for there and then, and give Bob and me an extra half-sovereign each; but I wouldn't go down that line again not for twenty half-sovereigns."

In due time the schoolboys grew up, and the coachmen who had driven them to Eton or Rugby for many years, and treated them with extensive patronage, took to touching their hats and calling them "Sir," when with lordly arrogance they once more travelled by coach, not as boys any longer, but men of one of the Universities. Their partiality for the outside still remained, though they ceased to think of it as a vantage ground for pea-shooting.

"The air, the freedom of prospect, the proximity to the horses, the elevation of seat—these were what we required; but, above all, the certain anticipation of purchasing occasional opportunities of driving," wrote De Quincey describing the struggle between inclination and convention which exercised the feelings of "young Oxford," who, though detesting the inside of the coach, yet smarted under the stigma which attached to all "outsiders." "We, the most aristocratic of people, who were addicted to the practice of looking down superciliously even upon the insides themselves as often very questionable characters—were we, by voluntarily going outside, to court indignities?"

The very idea was insupportable, and the Oxonians settled the matter by declaring that coach travellers had long laboured under a misapprehension as to the relative places on a coach, and that "the roof of the coach, which by some weak men had been called the attics, and by some the garrets, was in reality the drawing-room; in which drawing-room the box was the chief ottoman or sofa; whilst it appeared that the inside, which had been traditionally regarded as the only room tenable by gentlemen, was, in fact, the coal-cellar or garrets in disguise."

Did they require a precedent for their choice they found it in the historic example of the Chinese Emperor, who received a coach as a present from George III, a gift which stirred his pigtailed subjects to the depths. Anxious to create a sensation, and satisfy the curiosity of his people the Emperor decided to make a state progress. Horses were harnessed to the coach, and everything was ready, when a difficulty arose, for as a coach had never been used before no one knew the exact place which the Emperor should occupy. The matter was settled by traditional etiquette, it being clearly proved that as the Emperor was far too exalted a personage to sit behind or below anybody, much less his coachman, evidently the box-seat with its gorgeous hammer-cloth was the place expressly designed for him. The Emperor mounted the box with immense dignity, but the imperial hands with their preposterous finger nails could not touch anything so menial as the reins.

The coachman then desired to know where *he* was to

sit. The Court officials, scandalized at this presumption of a low-born one daring to find fault with the Imperial coach, bundled him inside with scant ceremony, gave him the reins through the windows, and bade him drive without more ado. The immediate result did not popularize coaching in the Celestial Empire, and the Emperor never again ventured his valuable life on such an unsteady conveyance as the coach proved itself to be.

The young Oxonians and Cantabs accomplished their revolution, and in time so completely had they reorganized coaching etiquette that the outside of a coach became the accredited place for gentlemen, and the inside was left to the possession of crusty old bachelors and fidgety old maids, who dozed, bumped against each other with every jolt and became very short in their tempers. We have it on the authority of Charles Dickens that, "the tendency of mankind, when it falls asleep in coaches, is to awake up cross, to find its legs in the way and its corns an aggravation."

If a passenger complained of cramp, and expressed a desire to stretch his legs, he invariably brought on himself the acid retort: "I pray, sir, you will do nothing of the sort, for they are far too long already." And a lady timidly inquiring, "I hope, sir, you won't be offended if my head should happen to fall on your shoulder during the night?" received the reply, "I should not be offended, madam, but I should take steps to remove it." "Why, how could you help it, sir?" "How could I help it? Why, I always keep a penknife stuck up in my hand, and if people choose to fall upon the point it's not my fault."

Not the least inconvenience attendant on coaches was the hours at which they started. The mails left London at eight o'clock in the evening, and the outside passengers on them dozed uncomfortably through the night, and were in imminent danger of falling off. Those inside were little better: "The gradual decline of talk, the incipient snore, the rustling and shifting of legs and night-caps, the cessation of other noises on the road, the sound of the wind or rain, of the moist circuit of the wheels, and of the time-beating tread of the horses—all dispose the traveller who cannot sleep, to a double sense of the little that is left him to observe. The coach stops, the door opens, a rush of cold air announces the demands and merits of the guard, who is taking his leave, and is anxious to remember us. The door is clapped to again; the sound of everything outside becomes dim; and voices are heard knocking up the people of the inn, and answered by issuing yawns and excuses. Wooden shoes clog heavily about. The horses are heard swilling the water out of tubs. All is still again, and some one in the coach takes a long breath. The driver mounts and we resume our way." [1]

Such being the discomforts of night travelling, many people preferred to go by the fast day coaches. These often started at six o'clock in the morning, which necessitated the traveller either sitting up all night, for fear of oversleeping, or trusting to the doubtful possibility of a servant waking him in time. When the latter alternative was adhered to, and the domestic thundered persistently

[1] Leigh Hunt on Coaching.

at the door in what was apparently the middle of the night, his master waking suddenly from a deep sleep grappled with him under the delusion that here was a burglar, or jumped out of bed with the impression that the house was on fire. When he thoroughly awoke to the fact that such things were not, he groped wildly for his tinder-box and, by its feebly inefficient aid, at length evolved a light. This successfully accomplished, he was seized with the conviction that he would miss the coach, and hurried into his clothes with feverish haste, seized his bag, rushed downstairs to a hackney-coach, not daring to wait for breakfast laid uninvitingly in the shuttered dining-room.

Charles Matthews, realizing that at five o'clock in the morning the flesh has dominion over the spirit, impressed on the Boots of a certain inn the importance of waking him thoroughly. "If you see me still inclined to sleep, don't leave the room; lift me out of the bed rather than fail to rouse me."

"Yes, sir," said the boots, and arrived punctually at five. He knocked at the door, receiving no response entered the room, and did all he could to convince his patron of the urgency of getting up at once. All to no purpose; Matthews grunted sleepily, turned over, pulled the clothes round his neck, and buried his face in the pillow. Persuasion being useless, Boots carried out his instructions literally, picked the actor up in his arms, and disregarding his struggles and strong language, deposited him on the floor, where he held him till he had his solemn word for it that he would dress forthwith.

As the intending passenger drove through the streets they looked dismal and deserted, with here and there a dissipated reveller, returning home unsteadily after a "wet" night. At the inn yard, however, all was bustle and confusion; porters and hangers-on fought for the possession of his bag, whilst all "the cries of London" seemed to be assembled for the express purpose of making him buy oranges, pencils, brooms, rat-traps, cucumbers, lavender, and various other commodities, all equally inappropriate as preparation for a long coach ride.

The coaches themselves were the great centre of attraction, for they were loading up with all speed and expedition. Luggage was piled up on the roof as high as Acts of Parliament permitted, and then covered with tarpaulin and secured with stout straps. Smaller articles innumerable were crammed into the boot, till even the guard was bound to admit that it could hold no more. Not to be outdone he tied bandboxes, game, baskets of fish, and other light articles on to the hind axle-tree, lamp irons, and all other available parts of the coach.

The inevitable old lady would be heard fussing about her luggage, being firmly of the impression that the guard meant to defraud her of it:

"Now, ma'am, make haste, put your best leg foremost, or you'll be just in time to be too late." "Wait a minute, coachman, till I just see that my luggage is all right: have you got the blue bandbox, Betty?" "Yes, ma'am." "Where's the large corded trunk?" "John's bringing

that, ma'am." "And my two caps?" "They are in a sheet of brown paper, ma'am." "Mind you don't scrunch that." "I can put it in the lining of the coach, they'll be safe enough there." "Put the sandwiches and the bottle of ratifia water into the coach pocket, I may want them. Coachman, be sure you don't put anything on the top of that bandbox, or it will be squeezed into a jelly, my best Leghorn bonnet is in it. Now, have you got all my luggage? Well, just run over it, one bandbox, one; in the boot, all right; one corded trunk, two; on the top, all right; one pair of pattens, three; inside, all right; one umbrella, four; inside, all right; one carpet-bag, five; in the boot, all right; and one reticule in my hand, six; all right, that will do."

Hackney-carriages hastened up and deposited sleepy occupants, who regarded everything with a jaundiced eye, for it required an exceptionally optimistic temperament to be cheerful at six o'clock on a dull morning, with a place booked on the outside, and a journey of two or three hundred miles ahead.

As the clock hand approached the hour, travellers buttoned up their large and varied assortment of wraps and coats, drew their shawls firmly over their ears and took their seats. The coachman came out of his office with his Way-bill, ran his eye over the team to see that all was as it should be, took up the reins and mounted the box.

"Right!" called the guard.

"Give 'em their heads, Bill," said the coachman.

The ostlers drew off the cloths, the horses leapt into their collars, and away went the coach, rattling over the

stones to the cheerful accompaniment of the guard's horn.

If the weather decided to smile on them, the outside passengers saw the sun rise, iris-tinted, through the grey dawn, watched the white mists roll away over the fields, and heard the choir of birds salute the coming of another day. If, on the contrary, the elements were adverse, they saw and heeded none of these things, but rammed their hats down over their ears, buried their noses in their shawls, and thought yearningly of home and creature comforts.

As the end of the first stage drew near, the guard sounded his horn with the twofold purpose of warning the ostler to get the fresh team out, and the barmaid to have ready those beverages which all travellers loved. When they had drunk a glass of rum and milk, brandied coffee, home-brewed ale, or whatever their fancy and the state of the weather dictated, the passengers began to take a more cheerful view of life.

Dinner soon became the loadstar of their existence, for the majority of passengers travelled from necessity not choice. They cared little for scenery and less for horses, and the only really enjoyable part of a coach drive was the appetite it gave them for meals. At no other time could they boast of such genuine hunger, but, alas, at no other time were they constrained to dine so hurriedly! Twenty minutes or half an hour, the time appointed, was in the eyes of travellers hopelessly inadequate. In summer, when they rushed from the coach into the dining-room, and fell to with all possible

despatch, it was not sufficient; but, in winter, several precious minutes had to be wasted taking off sodden coats or thawing fingers so numb that they refused to hold knives and forks, and etiquette forbade even "outsiders" to use their fingers.

The dinners provided at the different inns varied in quality, but were, as a rule, good, and the tables were spread with a profusion of dainties calculated to make a hungry man's mouth water. Waiters rushed frantically about carrying hot dishes and hot drinks, whilst travellers with their mouths full, and their eyes on the clock, cursed them freely for being so slow. If the soup was hot, and some innkeepers were darkly suspected of making it so on purpose, the passengers burnt their mouths trying to swallow it, being in deadly fear they would not have time to get to the meat course.

Alas, long before they had tasted half the good things, the guard would appear with the hated announcement: "Coach is ready, ladies and gentlemen." Passengers, grumbling darkly but aware of their own impotence, and the knowledge that if they were not in their places when the coach started they would most assuredly be left behind, sought desperately in their pockets for half-crowns and sixpences to appease the waiters; hurried into their greatcoats, and remounted the coach with their hunger only half appeased.

Here is a contemporary account of a coach dinner:

"Stay dinner here, sir—fifteen minutes allowed—two of them gone already—Dinner's on the table, here's the beef, sir."

"Yes, but where's the plate?"

"Fetch you one directly—here's the plate."

"A plate—oh! but where's a knife and fork?"

"You shall have one directly, sir. Now, sir, there your are, all right."

"Well then, now thank Heaven I can get a bit of peace."

"Time up, sir. Coach is just ready to start."

"Ah! but I shan't be ready to start for this half-hour."

"Can't wait, you ought to have done before this!"

"Done? Zounds! I've not begun—I wish you would let me enjoy my mutton, without giving me so much of your sauce with it."

"Three-and-sixpence a head, sir—trouble you for the money."

"Three-and-sixpence! Why, I have scarcely had a bite."

"No fault of ours, sir—it was there for you."

"A bite! By the powers, it's a bite altogether!"

Supper had to be consumed with equal celerity, and a scene typical of such occasions is thus described by Charles Matthews.

"The drowsy, reeling, unwilling passengers now alighted to take their supper in the town of Ware, and I question if ever a Flemish Tarboldolt or a Congress at Rhastadt, displayed such a miscellaneous assemblage as the room into which we were shown. Here were passengers from three different coaches, in the same room, stopped for the same purpose. In one corner of the room was a Miss, who declared it was the werry height of wulgarity to eat suppers. In another was an elderly lady and a little boy, who were regaling themselves with biscuits and brandy and water, and an old man, with a large hat, tied under his chin with a blue and white

pocket handkerchief. The guard of one of the coaches came in to announce the expiration of time. Oh, for the pen of Fielding or the pencil of Hogarth to describe the scene that ensued! (Horn) "Come, ladies and gentlemen, we're all ready—All ready, sir. What do you mean by all ready (pulling out his watch). We haven't been here ten minutes—Where's the bill?—Vat, four shillings for that ere little bit of weel, and that 'Foxhall' slice of ham?—I never see'd such an imposition in all my life: you treat people in stage-coaches more like convicts than gentlefolks. If ever I come by this here coach again, I'll bring my supper with me in my pocket—that's what I'll do.—Waiter, where's my cane I laid in the chair?—Talking of canes, where's my snuff-box I laid down on the table?—And waiter, where's the fishing-rod I put in that window?"

"Every man for himself, and the devil take the hindermost," was the maxim at a coach meal; manners were at a premium, it being generally conceded that there was no time to waste on civilities. George Field, desirous of paying Constable the highest tribute in his power, and to instance the artist's innate good breeding, did so by saying, "He was a gentleman in a stage-coach, nay, more, a gentleman at a stage-coach dinner."

Inexperienced travellers left the table more hungry than when they sat down; old hands learnt to dine "in the cracking of a whip" according to Leigh Hunt. "They stick with their fork, they joint, they sliver, they bolt. Legs and wings vanish before them like a dragon before a knight-errant. But if one is not a clergyman or a regular jolly fellow, one has no chance this way. To be diffident or polite is fatal. It is a merit eagerly acknow-

ledged, and as quickly set aside. At last you begin upon a leg, and are called off."

Two sailors travelling on the far-famed Tantivy from Birmingham to London, found the twenty minutes allowed for dinner at the Star Hotel in Oxford all too brief, but as they had paid for it they determined to have it at all costs. When the guard blew his horn to announce that the coach was on the point of starting, one of them seized a loaf of bread, the other a fowl, and bolted for the coach, closely pursued by the outraged waiter who indignantly demanded what they were going to do with the food.

"Eat 'em, mate," they replied with promptitude.

"But you are not allowed to take things off the table," protested the waiter. "Eat all you like but pocket none."

"Well then, you should give us time to do it in," said the sailors not one whit ashamed. "We have paid for our dinner and now we've got it, we mean to eat it." And eat it they did with great enjoyment as the coach drove through Oxford.

Innkeepers made a good thing of those unfinished coach dinners, for which, moreover, they often charged unduly high prices; as witness the apt rhyme that ran thus:

> "The famous Inn at Speedhamland
> That stands below the hill,
> May well be called the Pelican
> From its enormous bill."

Hard, indeed, was the lot of those travellers whose purses were poorly lined, as the passengers on the Paul

Pry found to their cost. The coach officially dines at the Star Hotel, Oxford, but it was the custom for those who could not afford the high prices to resort to the *Bell*, a cheaper place of entertainment. One night six Welshmen entered that house, warmed themselves before the fire, and frugally had one sixpenny tea between the six of them. This roused the exceeding wrath of Mrs. Charlton, the landlady, and she complained very bitterly to Bayzand, who, shocked at such parsimony, promised it should not occur again, for that he personally would take steps to prevent it.

The following day eight Welsh passengers on the Paul Pry came to the *Bell* and pursuant to Bayzand's instructions were shown into a room with a good fire, and eight sixpenny teas ready on the table. The door was then unostentatiously locked. Time passed quickly, and presently the guard blew his horn to announce that the coach was ready to start. The Welshmen seized their hats and coats, and rushed to the door, which to their consternation they found closed.

"Open the door!" they cried, hammering on it.

The guard blew another imperative blast on his horn which threw the Welshmen into a frenzy.

"Open the door, open the door!" they shouted.

"It shall be opened when you have paid 4s. for your tea," said Bayzand from the other side.

The Welshmen tried to compromise by offering one and six, protesting that only three of them had had tea. That, however, was regarded as no excuse whatever: tea for eight had been provided, and if they had not

eaten it that was their own look-out; it was there and they must pay for it. At last, fearing the coach would leave them behind, the Welshmen paid for the teas they had not eaten, and were released.

Miss Mitford, in *Our Village*, has left a vivid pen picture of the discomforts to which coach travellers were subject in times of extreme heat, or intense cold.

"I shall never forget the plight in which we met the coach one evening in last August, full an hour after its time, steeds and driver, carriage and passengers, all one dust. The outsides, and the horses, and the coachman, all seemed reduced to a torpid quietness, the resignation of despair. They had left off trying to better their condition, and taken refuge in a wise and patient hopelessness, bent to endure in silence the extremity of ill. The six insides, on the contrary, were still fighting against their fate, vainly struggling to ameliorate their hapless destiny. They were visibly grumbling at the weather, scolding at the dust, and heating themselves like a furnace, by striving against the heat. How well I remember the fat gentleman without his coat, who was wiping his forehead, heaving up his wig, and certainly uttering that English ejaculation, which, to our national reproach, is the phrase of our language best known on the continent. And that poor boy, red-hot, all in a flame, whose mamma, having divested her own person of all superfluous apparel, was trying to relieve his sufferings by the removal of his neckerchief—an operation which he resisted with all his might. How perfectly I remember him, as well as the pale girl who sat opposite, fanning herself with her bonnet into an absolute fever! They vanished after a while in their own dust; but I have them all before my eyes at this moment, a companion

picture to Hogarth's 'Afternoon,' a standing lesson to the grumblers at cold summers."

On a cold winter's day Miss Mitford met the coach again and, though greatly changed, the situation of the passenger was scarcely improved: "How much happier the walkers look than the riders—especially the frost-bitten gentleman, and the shivering lady with the invisible face, sole passengers of that commodious machine! Hooded, veiled and bonneted, as she is, one sees from her attitude how miserable she would look uncovered."

Fellow suffering engendered intimacy and, owing to the close contact necessitated by the cramped space assigned to them, it was impossible for coach travellers to observe that icy demeanour, the haughty indifference which seem inseparable from strangers in a railway carriage.

People of all classes and dispositions found themselves together in a coach, even the fiery and the fat learnt to bear with each other; though, to be sure, fatness was a thing hard to forgive. One can sympathize with the stout gentleman, who, anxious to ensure comfort both for himself and those who travelled with him, sent to secure two seats, but, on arriving at the coachyard, found, to his chagrin, that one was booked outside and the other in.

The four inside and twelve outside passengers were together for better or worse, and entirely under the authority of the coachman and guard, which gave them a sense of comradeship, so that when their first restraint

Drawn by M.F. Esq.

A STAGE COACH

Original lent by Messrs. Ackermann

Engraved by S. Hi[illegible]

had worn off they entered naturally into conversation. This hail-fellow well-met spirit was not always approved of; the great Duke of Wellington considered that one of the greatest drawbacks to coaching was the nonsense a traveller was constrained to listen to; whilst Felix Mendelssohn, when on a coach journey in 1829, wrote to his family that English conversation consisted of "walking, coals, supper, weather and Buonaparte."

Congenial companionship made all the difference to the pleasure of the ride, and the passengers usually assorted themselves accordingly; sporting folk, whose chief interest lay in the horses, gravitated naturally to the front of the coach, where they could talk "horse," and enjoy coaching to an extent not imaginable to the folk behind who did not know an off wheeler from a near leader.

Some friendships begun on a coach lasted through life, others were less fortunate. A farmer's daughter, travelling from Manchester to Margate, lent a too willing ear to the blandishments of a fellow traveller. Believing him prostrate with her charms, she smiled sweetly upon him, and when they arrived in London asked him to look after her luggage. He consented with alacrity, bidding her wait for him in the coffee-room. The young lady waited a long time and at length went in search of her newly made friend, but, alas, he had departed, and with him her luggage, so the disillusioned young lady was obliged to give up all thoughts of Margate and take the next coach home.

Still more tragic was the state of the elderly ladies

who came up in the Dover stage in company with a gentleman of most pleasing manners. So entirely did he manage to ingratiate himself with them that they invited him to come back to their house at Blackheath, and take some refreshment before proceeding to Woolwich, where he said he was going to join his regiment. The stranger accepted willingly, and the newly made friends passed a pleasant evening, playing whist far into the night. Whether or no the stakes were high and the ladies lost does not appear, but when at length the visitor got up to take his leave he gracefully apologized for having kept them up so late, adding that he must trouble them to hand over all the money and portable valuables they happened to have in the house. At first the ladies laughed, thinking it a joke, but they very soon found out it was far from being a laughing matter. The stranger saw his request carried out to the very letter before he departed with profuse thanks for their hospitality, which he said Mr. Richard Turpin would always remember.

Sometimes the coaches carried queer customers, and Maria Edgeworth in one of her letters gives an amusing account of Lord Longford's experiences. Getting into a coach one night, he dozed comfortably till morning, when to his consternation he discovered that the other occupant, he had supposed a gentleman in a fur coat, was in fact a live bear. Another time he fancied himself in company with a gouty gentleman of great importance from the extreme deference and solicitude of the man who accompanied him, but when the "gouty" traveller

dismounted it was seen that his rugs covered fetters, and he was a malefactor in irons accompanied by a Bow Street Officer.

Prisoners were frequently conveyed from place to place in coaches, and one of the entries in John Wesley's diary runs: "Then I took coach for London, I was nobly attended; behind the coach were ten convicted felons, loudly blaspheming and rattling their chains; by my side sat a man with a loaded blunderbuss and another upon the coach."

Other passengers were more fortunate, and the delightful and inquisitive Mr. Samuel Pepys when he returned from Cambridge on May 26th, 1667, had an adventure after his own heart.

"Up by four o'clock; and by the time we were ready and had eat, we were called to the coach, where about six o'clock we set out, there being a man and two women of one company, ordinary company and one lady alone, that is tolerably handsome, and mighty well spoken, whom I took great pleasure in talking to, and did get her to read aloud in a book she was reading in the coach, being the King's meditations; and then the boy and I to sing, and about noon come to Bishop's Stortford, to another house than that we were at the other day and better used. And here I paid for the reckoning 11s., we dining together, and pretty merry; and then set out again, sleeping most part of the way, and got to Bishopsgate street before eight o'clock, the waters being now most of them down, and we avoiding the bad way in the forest by a privy way which brought us to Hodsden."

Pepys considered his flirtation with the lady very

right and proper, but it was quite another state of things when his wife made friends with a gentleman on the coach, and invited him to come to supper. Pepys worked himself up into a great state of mind about it, and considered her conduct most reprehensible, but he need not have distressed himself, for the stranger did not come to the feast Elizabeth Pepys prepared for him, and thereby passed into obscurity instead of being immortalized in the pages of the famous diary.

Dr. Johnson's conversation showed to great advantage in the Oxford coach on June 3rd, 1764. His companions inside were the faithful Boswell and two American ladies who had seen the names on the Way-bill and were ecstatic at the prospect of travelling with such a celebrity. The elder could scarcely believe her good fortune, for she leant across to Boswell and inquired in a whisper: "Is this the great Dr. Johnson?"

Boswell, much gratified, replied that it was. The lady, encouraged, imparted the news that her husband had been a member of the American Congress. This gave Boswell considerable alarm, for Dr. Johnson was accustomed to state his views with complete disregard of his listeners' feelings, and he had on a previous occasion expressed his opinion of Americans thus strongly: "Sir, they are a race of convicts, and ought to be thankful for anything we allow them short of hanging."

Boswell therefore besought the lady earnestly not to betray her nationality, and then for their edification proceeded to draw out his tame lion, the said lion responding with the most gratifying result.

The ladies were enchanted. "How he does talk! Every sentence is an essay," said one.

The younger one amused herself with knotting, and Dr. Johnson informed her that, next to mere idleness, he considered knotting came in the scale of insignificance.

Idols are always prone to tumble down unexpectedly, and the American ladies, who had listened spellbound to the doctor's conversation, were considerably taken aback when he flew into a passion because the coach dinner was not to his liking. He roared at the waiter, scolded him for the mutton, saying: "It is as bad as it can be; it is ill-fed, ill-killed, ill-kept, and ill-dressed."

On the return journey Dr. Johnson, being out of temper, read Euripides and found fault with Boswell for not looking out of the window and observing the things on the road, saying: "If I had your eyes, sir, I should count the passengers."

Except that it was heresy to accuse Dr. Johnson of levity, it would almost seem that he was thinking of the Road game. This game enjoyed great popularity, for it served to while away the time, and gave sporting characters a chance to bet. One player took the right side of the road, the other the left; dogs, pigs, cats, sheep, magpies, donkeys and various other things likely to be met with had their relative number of points, the game being played till one of the competitors scored a hundred, or whatever number had been previously settled on.

"Being sworn in" at Highgate was another custom which lightened the tedium of travel, and gave rise to

much fun and amusement. When the coaches stopped, the question "Have you been sworn at Highgate?" was put to the passengers. Those who had not, and confessed to ignorance of the ceremony, were told:

"It's the custom of Highgate, that all who go through
Must be sworn on the horns, sir—and so, sir, must you."

The horns fixed on a long pole were then produced, and the new-comers, instructed by the landlord of the inn who acted as master of the ceremonies, took the following oath:

"Never to kiss the maid when he could get the mistress,
Never to eat brown bread when he could get white.
Never to drink small beer when he could get strong—unless
he prefer it."

CHAPTER IX *THE TRAVELLER'S ORACLE*

SO many and varied were the ills which beset the path of the traveller that an astute author, one William Kitchiner, M.D., conceived the brilliant idea of writing *The Traveller's Oracle*, which should set forth all the perils lying in wait down the road, and show how to avoid or, at any rate, circumvent them. Incidentally, the wily doctor managed to introduce puffs for his other literary wares, and to advertise many commodities, for which service no doubt the proprietors thereof paid him well.

The "Oracle" sounded a warning note from the very beginning, for though Dr. Kitchiner admitted that many travellers did actually reach their destination safely, yet such a happy termination by no means created a precedent. The intending traveller's first duty therefore was to make his will, and bequeath all his earthly possessions, so that, if despite the assistance of the "Oracle," he succumbed by the way, his death should occasion his relations as little inconvenience as possible.

Now mankind has always considered the making of a will a lugubrious and disagreeable necessity, but Dr. Kitchiner set out to prove that such was pure fallacy; if approached in the proper spirit, will making was an agreeable and pleasant pastime. To enjoy its delights to the full, it was necessary to follow closely the rules set forth in one of Dr. Kitchiner's own books entitled *The Pleasure of Making a Will*, a copy of which should be purchased forthwith.

His worldly affairs being settled, the traveller was next instructed how to go to the coach office and secure a seat on a coach. Like most things in life, the author proved there was a right and a wrong way of doing this seemingly simple performance. If left to himself the traveller was sure to choose the wrong one, but if he abided diligently by the advice of the "Oracle" he could rest assured that his actions and the coach office would be all that was circumspect and correct.

With respect to a seat on the outside of a coach, Dr. Kitchiner forestalled Mr. Punch's advice famous to those about to marry, and said "Don't," and said it, moreover, most emphatically. If the traveller ignored this advice, Dr. Kitchiner disclaimed all responsibility for one so rash, but that he might not be altogether abandoned he gave a few hints to alleviate the ills which must inevitably ensue. He counselled the "outsider" to wear two shirts and two pairs of stockings; to turn up the collar of his greatcoat, tie a handkerchief round it, and to make sure he had plenty of straw to bury his feet in.

Inside travellers received valuable advice which was warranted to add to their comfort very materially. They were told to change their position as much as possible; to lean back then forward, or sideways, by which contortions they might hope to avoid the cramp which so unerringly seized the limbs of inside passengers.

If the rest of the company were surly, and insisted on keeping both windows shut till the atmosphere of the coach was unbearable, the traveller was to ponder well

in his mind whether he would prefer almost certain suffocation, or the cost of three shillings, the price of a pane of glass. If he made up his mind to risk the 3s., he was told to knock his stick "accidentally" against the window so that the glass was shattered. He would then get the fresh air for which his lungs craved, and test to the full his fellow travellers' tempers.

Undoubtedly a night passed in a coach conduced to irritability, as Dr. Syntax found when he decided to leave his patient man Grizzle behind and return to London by stage-coach:

"A horn now told the near approach
Of some convenient, rapid coach;
And soon a vehicle and four
Appear'd at the Red Lion door:
Into his place the Doctor pounc'd:
The Coachman smack'd, and off they bounc'd.
The scene around was quite composing,
For his companions all were dosing;
So he forsooth conceiv'd it best
To close his lids, and try to rest.
When the morn dawn'd, he turned an eye
Upon his slumb'ring company:
A red-faced man, who snor'd and snorted,
A lady, with both eyes distorted,
And a young Miss of pleasing mien,
With all the life of gay sixteen.
A sudden jolt their slumbers broke;
They started all, and all awoke;
When Surly-boots yawn'd wide, and spoke,
'We move,' said he, 'confounded slow!'
'La, Sir,' cried Miss; 'how fast we go!'

While Madam, with a smirking face,
Declar'd it was o' middling pace,
'Pray, what think you, Sir?'—'I agree,'
Said simp'ring Syntax, 'with all three.
Uphill, our course is rather slow,
Down hill, now merrily we go!
But when 'tis neither up nor down,
It is a middling pace, I own.'
'O la!' cried Miss, 'the thought's so pretty!'
'O yes!' growled Red-face, 'very witty!'
The Lady said, 'If I can scan
The temper of the gentleman,
He's one of those, I have no doubt,
Who love to let his temper out,
Nor fails his thread-bare wit to play
On all who come within his way:
But we who—these stages roam,
And leave our coach-and-four at home,
Deserve our lot when thus we talk
With those who were ordain'd to walk.
And now, my niece, you see how wrong
It is to use your flippant tongue,
And chatter, as you're apt to do,
With anyone—the Lord knows who.'
Surly turn'd round, and friendly sleep
Soon o'er his senses 'gan to creep!
So Syntax thought he'd overlook
The embryo of his future book:
Thus all was silence till they came
To the great town we London name."

Dr. Kitchiner had a word to say anent companions on a journey, counselling that such should not be chosen lightly or with imperfect knowledge, for travelling was a sure test of a man's character and idiosyncrasies. As a

proof of which he pointed out how distressing would be the case of one who set out on a long journey with a casual acquaintance, and found out when it was too late to change that his companion was possessed of an insatiable curiosity that led him to examine everything by the way, and rendered him indifferent to weather and meals.

The "Oracle" laid down a few rules for general deportment and conduct when travelling. "Wear a plain Dress; upon no account display any Ring, Watch, Trinkets, etc. nor assume any Airs of Consequence." The traveller was to provide himself with pens, paper and pencil, and make careful notes of everything he heard or saw by the way. This was on no account to be neglected, and it was implied, though not expressly stated, that some awful penalty awaited those who failed to do so.

He was also to be liberal; both on his own account, because he would most certainly be made uncomfortable if he was not, and because it was the right and proper thing to do; which caused Dr. Kitchiner to branch off into a homily on the blessedness of giving. This diffuse habit the worthy doctor was much addicted to; on the slightest pretext or provocation he would launch out suddenly into such irrelevant topics as the observance of the sabbath, or the bringing up of children.

Also he dearly loved to point a moral, and to give awful instances of foolhardy men who had stepped aside from the path of virtue, as defined for them in *The Traveller's Oracle*, and were overwhelmed with disasters in consequence.

Washing, he considered, was good for both body and soul, and after advising a sponge down every day, and putting the feet into hot water at night to induce sleep, he ends with the trite observation that "a clean skin may be regarded as next in efficacy to a clear Conscience."

There was one awful spectre that haunted the pages of the "Oracle," and lay in wait for the innocent traveller. It leapt out at him in unexpected places, dragging before his startled eyes the dour shapes of death and disease. The name of this awful and menacing ghost was Strange Beds.

There were other perils which beset the path of the unwary, but if his steps were guided by the "Oracle" they might be avoided; but, alas, even Dr. Kitchiner could hold out no hope that the constant traveller could escape unscathed from the dangers which beset unaccustomed bedrooms and beds!

All the alleviation that Dr. Kitchiner's extensive experience could suggest was generously placed at the disposal of his readers, and he readily laid bare the most cherished secrets of innkeepers, whose iniquity must have made travellers aghast. Take the question of sheets, for instance; could anything be more electrifying than to read this: "Clean sheets are nor remarkably common at Common Inns, where, I am informed, that the practice is to take them from the Bed, sprinkle them with Water, to fold them down, and put them in a Press. When they are wanted again, they are, literally speaking, shewn to the Fire, and in a reeking state laid

on the Bed. The Traveller is tired and sleepy, dreams of that Pleasure or that business which brought him from Home, and the remotest thing from his mind is, that from the very repose which he fancies has refreshed him he has received the *Rheumatism.*"

To avoid these ills, "take your own Sheets, and promise to pay a handsome consideration for the liberty of choosing your Bed." Despite the lavish gratuity, it was more than likely that the chambermaid would neglect to put the warming-pan in the bed. In any case the traveller was to try an infallible test given in the "Oracle"; namely, to take a tumbler and place it in the bed and leave it there for a few minutes. If when he removed it, it showed the faintest trace of moisture there could be no doubt about it—the bed was damp!

When this was proved beyond doubt, he must instantly rend the offending sheets from off the bed, and if he was a careful traveller placing implicit reliance in the "Oracle," to replace them with leather ones which he carried about with him ready for such an emergency. Otherwise, his only alternative was to sleep between the blankets.

If the glass stood the test, and the traveller sank luxuriously into the sinless bed, he was by no means allowed to sleep in peace. Scarcely had his head touched the pillow when the dim spectres of whooping-cough, measles, mumps, scarlet fever, and chicken-pox crowded round him, and he started up shuddering at the remembrance of some words suddenly forced on his memory. Reference to the "Oracle" confirmed his

worst forebodings: "Travellers never can be sure that those who have slept in the Beds before them were not afflicted with some contagious disease."

An awful thought this to spring upon the mind of a hitherto trusting and unsuspicious man. As a remedy travellers were told "they should carry their own sheets with them, *i.e.* a light *eider down Quilt*, and two dressed Hart Skins should be put upon the Mattresses to hinder the disagreeable contact." If unprovided with these necessities, he was advised not to undress but to sleep in his clothes.

But what of the situation of the unhappy traveller who had neglected to bring his own bedding, had already undressed and stepped between the contaminated sheets? Sorry indeed was his plight, for Dr. Kitchiner, after making him a prey to nervous fears, gave no further counsel, and at such a crisis of his life he was left without moral or precept, and cast entirely on his own inadequate resources.

Dr. Kitchiner was evidently determined that his readers' sleep should be broken and uneasy, for if the traveller was proof against the beds he had another fear to insinuate and spoil his night's rest: "In Lonesome places, where an accident may oblige you to rest, if you carry Fire-Arms it may be well to let the Landlord see (as it were accidentally) that you are well Armed."

He then cited the meritorious example of a gentleman, who advised all who did not wish to be robbed to carry a brace of blunderbusses, and to put the muzzle of one out

of each coach window so that would-be robbers might see, and seeing beware.

Dr. Kitchiner recommended pistols, but he evidently thought they should be used more for show and intimidation than actual defence, for he earnestly counselled his readers not to use them merely to save their money: "If your Pistol takes effect you may preserve your Property, but it is a melancholy price you pay for it, if it costs the Life of a fellow Creature; and if it misses fire, you will most likely not only be Robbed, but Murdered."[1]

To circumvent the landlord's evil designs the traveller was urged to carry a supply of pocket door bolts and screws as "these may on many occasions save the Property and the Life of the Traveller." If the traveller had neither of these appliances, and the door could not be made to lock, then he was to drag the heavy furniture across the room and pile it against the door; place the jug and basin where they would rattle if disturbed; crawl under the bed to see if it did not harbour an assassin, and open cupboards for concealed robbers.

[1] Many people entertained a strong aversion to shooting at a highwayman. Boswell in his life of Dr. Johnson confirms this in his entry for April 4th, 1778: "He talked of going to Streatham that night."

Taylor—"You'll be robbed if you do: or you must shoot a highwayman. Now I would rather be robbed than do that; I would not shoot a highwayman."

Johnson—"But I would rather shoot him in the instant when he is attempting to rob me, than afterwards swear against him at the Old Bailey, to take away his life after he had robbed me."

When he had done all these things he had Dr. Kitchiner's sanction to go to sleep if he could, and forget damp beds, infectious diseases, and unscrupulous landlords thirsting for his blood.

The "Oracle," furthermore, contained a long list of all the things essential for a traveller's comfort and security, which was remarkable both for its length and the various uses to which the different articles could be put.

First and foremost he must provide himself with a tough blackthorn stick three feet long, marked so that it may be used as a measure. Although undoubtedly delightful as a yard measure, the chief use of this stick was as a weapon of defence against dogs, for every species of the canine tribe was in Dr. Kitchiner's eyes a sinister menace of hydrophobia; for which fell disease he very truly remarks "semi-drowning in the Sea" is no remedy.

Stray dogs and fowls were alike abominable in the eyes of Dr. Kitchiner, and he strenuously advocated that all such should wear collars with their names and addresses thereon. Legislation now decrees that our dogs shall walk thus labelled, but we have yet to see the day when the roosters and their lady wives shall strut round farmyards with neat leather collars round each feathered neck.

The next necessity was a knife, but not one of the common kind, for it was imperative that besides blades it should possess a saw, a hook, a turnscrew, a gun-picker, tweezers, and a corkscrew, the latter especially to be "long and large enough to be useful." The very thought

of such a paragon among knives would drive the prospective traveller to despair, for where could he hope to get one possessing so many perfections, and which if satisfactory as to tweezers should not fail lamentably as to the saw, or whose corkscrew fell short of the desired size. Dr. Kitchiner, ever ready to help, informed him that a knife possessing all narrated qualifications could be obtained from the maker, one Coleman at No. 4 Haymarket.

"Golashes or Parabones" were advised as protections against damp; and for a cheap and comfortable travelling cap nothing was so satisfactory as a "Welch Wig."

Whatever else he left behind the traveller was exhorted to take his umbrella; and such an umbrella, for, says the "Oracle," "the stick of which may contain a Telescope or a Sword."

The list is too long to give in full, but here are some of the things Dr. Kitchiner considered indispensable:

A Portable Case of Instruments for Drawing.
A Sketch and a Note-Book.
A folding one Foot Rule.
A Hunting Watch with seconds.
A Mariner's Compass; this may be in a Seal, on the top of a Snuff-Box, or Head of a Cane.
A Thermometer; this may be in a Tooth-Pick case.
A Barometer for measuring heights; this may be in a Walking-Stick.
Dr. Kitchiner's Invisible Opera Glass.
A Night Lamp.
A Tinder Box.

Added to these were of course the sheets, eiderdown quilt, and the hart skins, besides personal clothing, so that the reader who faithfully carried out the directions enshrined in the "Oracle" encountered a serious obstacle not referred to in those pages. Travellers generally were only allowed 14 lb. weight of luggage, extra weight being chargeable at 3d. per lb., and its carriage on a full coach uncertain.

Imagination refuses adequately to picture the harrowing situation of a traveller endeavouring to reduce his luggage within prescribed limits, and hesitating between sacrificing a change of linen, the hart skins, or the knife with the saw and adequate corkscrew.

CHAPTER X THE COACH AS NEWS-BEARER

PEOPLE who live in this twentieth century, and consider a daily paper, telegraph and telephone, necessities without which life would be unthinkable, cannot realize the time when there was no official organ for the distribution of news, and when Kings might die, empires totter and fall, and wars begin and end, without the inhabitants of the country districts being any the wiser, or hearing of the matter till long afterwards.[1]

News filtered through the provinces by the agencies of travellers who halted at the various inns on the road, it then circulated by word of mouth, so that by the time it reached the remote villages it was so distorted and garbled as to bear scant resemblance to the original matter.

The pedlars and pack-horse carriers were more reliable authorities, and they considered the latest news from London as part of their stock in trade, though, as they travelled slowly, it, like the goods they carried,

[1] Lord Macaulay says that the news of Queen Elizabeth's death was not known in parts of Devon and Cornwall till the Court of her successor had ceased to wear mourning for her. Bridgewater did not hear that Oliver Cromwell had assumed the Protectorship till nineteen days after the event. The execution of King Charles I was not known in parts of Wales till two months after it had taken place, whilst the churches in the Orkneys put up prayers for him long after he was beheaded, and their successors did the same for James II after he had left the kingdom.

was liable to be somewhat out of date by the time they reached the end of their journey.

When coaches began to ply their uneven way along the road, they became important factors in country life, for it was through their agency that the villagers in the provinces became acquainted with the happenings of the great world which pulsated far beyond the ken of their uneventful humdrum existence.

Samuel Crisp (the beloved "Daddy Crisp" of Fanny Burney's diary), in a letter written at Chesington in 1780, tells his sister that the Epsom coachman has just brought the news [1] "that there had been another Riot on Tuesday with the cry of *No Popery!* and that some of the Rioters were shot and others apprehended."

The summer of 1820 was a noteworthy one, both for the intense heat, which caused horses to drop dead in the roads and labourers in the fields, and for the excitement created by the trial of Queen Caroline. The populace sided with her enthusiastically, cheered wildly when she appeared in Court, hooted her enemies with equal fervour, and in the provinces "along the line of the mails, crowds stood waiting in the burning sunshine for news of the trial."[2]

During the stirring years of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when events of great magnitude followed each other in quick succession, it was by the coaches that the country-folk heard with horror of the atrocities of the French Revolution; followed the

[1] *Burford Papers.* W. H. Hutton.

[2] *A History of the Thirty Years' Peace.* H. Martineau.

progress of the French and Spanish wars; thrilled with pride at the news of Trafalgar; paled with dismay at the rumours that the all powerful Napoleon was about to invade England; slept more easily in their beds when they heard of his imprisonment; trembled with fear at the staggering news of his escape from St. Helena; and shouted themselves hoarse for the great victory of Waterloo. "I could wish myself in London to be three-and-forty hours nearer the news. Was there ever such a *land* battle in modern times!" wrote Southey from Keswick on July 10th, 1815.

When despatches arrived telling of some great English victory by land or sea, London rang its bells and went wild with joy, but to the coaches fell the proud distinction of spreading the joyful news throughout the length and breadth of the land.

To show that they performed this duty in no uncertain manner, I append De Quincey's account of such an occasion, and which for a piece of impassioned prose vibrating with the true spirit of coaching has never been surpassed:

Going Down with Victory

But the grandest chapter of our experience, within the whole mail-coach service, was on those occasions when we went down from London with the news of victory. A period of about ten years stretched from Trafalgar to Waterloo; the second and third years of which period (1806 and 1807) were comparatively sterile; but the other nine (from 1805 to 1815 inclusively) furnished a long succession of victories; the least of which,

in such a conquest of Titans, had an inappreciable value of position—partly for its absolute interference with the plans of our enemy, but still more for its keeping alive through central Europe that sense of a deep-seated vulnerability in France. Even to tease the coasts of our enemy, to mortify them by continual blockades, to insult them by capturing if it were but a baubling schooner under the eyes of their arrogant armies, repeated from time to time a sullen proclamation of power lodged in one quarter to which the hopes of Christendom turned in secret. How much more loudly must this proclamation have spoken in the audacity of having bearded the *élite* of their troops, and having beaten them in pitched battles! Five years of life it was worth paying down for the privilege of an outside place on a mail-coach, when carrying down the first tidings of any such event. And it is to be noted that, from our insular situation, and the multitude of our frigates disposable for the rapid transmission of intelligence, rarely did any unauthorized rumour steal away a prelibation from the first aroma of the regular despatches. The government news was generally the earliest news.

From eight p.m. to fifteen or twenty minutes later, imagine the mails assembled on parade in Lombard Street, where, at that time, and not in St. Martin's-le-Grand, was seated the General Post Office. In what exact strength we mustered I do not remember, but from the length of each separate *attelage*, we filled the street, though a long one, and though we were drawn up in double file. On *any* night the spectacle was beautiful. The absolute perfection of all the appointments about the carriages and harness, their strength, their brilliant cleanliness, their beautiful simplicity—but, more than all, the royal magnificence of the horses—were what might first have fixed the attention. Every

carriage, on every morning in the year, was taken down to an official inspector for examination—wheels, axles, linchpins, pole, glasses, lamps, were all critically probed and tested. Every part of every carriage had been cleaned, every horse had been groomed, with as much rigour as if they belonged to a private gentleman; and that part of the spectacle offered itself always. But the night before us is a night of victory, and behold! to the ordinary display, what a heart-shaking addition!—horses, men, carriages, all are dressed in laurels and flowers, oak-leaves and ribbons. The guards, as being officially His Majesty's servants, and of the coachmen such as are within the privilege of the post-office, wear the royal liveries of course ; and as it is summer (for all the *land* victories were naturally won in summer), they wear, on this fine evening, these liveries exposed to view, without any covering of upper coats. Such a costume, and the elaborate arrangement of the laurels in their hats, dilate their hearts, by giving them openly a personal connection with the great news, in which already they have the general interest of patriotism. That great national sentiment surmounts and quells all sense of ordinary distinctions. Those passengers who happen to be gentlemen are now hardly to be distinguished as such except by their dress; for the usual reserve of their manner in speaking to the attendants has on this night melted away. One heart, one pride, one glory, connects every man by the transcendent bond of his national blood. The spectators, who are numerous beyond precedent, express their sympathy with these fervent feelings by continual hurrahs. Every moment are shouted aloud by the post-office servants, and summoned to draw up, the great ancestral names of cities known to history through a thousand years—Lincoln, Winchester, Portsmouth, Gloucester, Oxford,

Bristol, Manchester, York, Newcastle, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Perth, Stirling, Aberdeen—expressing the grandeur of the empire by the antiquity of its towns, and the grandeur of the mail establishment by the diffuse radiation of its separate missions. Every moment you hear the thunder of lids locked down upon the mail-bags. That sound to each individual mail is the signal for drawing off, which process is the finest part of the entire spectacle. Then come the horses into play. Horses! can these be horses that bound off with the action and gestures of leopards? What stir!—what sea-like ferment!—what a thundering of wheels!—what a trampling of hoofs!—what a sounding of trumpets!—what farewell cheers—what redoubled peals of brotherly congratulation, connecting the name of the particular mail;—"Liverpool for ever!"—with the name of the particular victory—"Badajoz for ever!" or "Salamanca for ever!" The half-slumbering consciousness that, all night long and all the next day—perhaps for even a longer period—many of these mails, like fire racing along a train of gunpowder, will be kindling at every instant new successions of burning joy, has an obscure effect of multiplying the victory itself, by multiplying to the imagination into infinity the stages of its progressive diffusion. A fiery arrow seems to be let loose, which from that moment is destined to travel, without intermission, westwards for three hundred miles—northwards for six hundred; and the sympathy of our Lombard Street friends at parting is exalted a hundredfold by a sort of visionary sympathy with the yet slumbering sympathies which in so vast a succession we are going to awake.

Liberated from the embarrassments of the city, and issuing into the broad uncrowded avenues of the northern suburbs, we soon begin to enter upon our

EDINBURGH AND LONDON MAIL COACH PASSING A TOLL-GATE BY MOONLIGHT

From an engraving by G. Hunt after James Pollard. Lent by Messrs. Ackermann

natural pace of ten miles an hour. In the broad light of the summer evening, the sun, perhaps, only just at the point of setting, we are seen from every storey of every house. Heads of every age crowd to the windows—young and old understand the language of our victorious symbols—and rolling volleys of sympathizing cheers run along us, behind us, and before us. The beggar, rearing himself against the wall, forgets his lameness—real or assumed—thinks not of his whining trade, but stands erect, with bold, exulting smiles, as we pass him. . . . Women and children, from garrets alike and cellars, through infinite London, look down or look up with loving eyes upon our gay ribbons and our martial laurels; sometimes kiss their hands; sometimes hang out, as signals of affection, pocket-handkerchiefs, aprons, dusters, anything that, by catching the summer breezes, will express an aerial jubilation.

As the coach sped swiftly along the country roads the excitement by no means decreased, for its gay decorations gave actual demonstration of joyful tidings. Labourers at work in the fields paused to look, and seeing the triumphant laurels shouted hurrah with all the strength of their lusty lungs. Passengers felt an electric sense of kinsmanship with those men so strong and reliant, whose sons and brothers had stood side by side with theirs, as for the honour of Old England they faced and vanquished the common foe. Actuated by these feelings they stood up on the coach, waved their hats and shouted out the name of the victory. Children by the road-side yelled with joy as the coach passed by; for them the victory had a special significance, for they felt it had hammered another nail in the coffin of the

hated "Boney," whose terrifying personality exercised a spell of awe in all British nurseries.

At the different stages the guard retailed as much information as could be crammed into the brief period assigned by his Way-bill, which had to be strictly adhered to, victory or no victory, or the Post Office would require to know the reason; nor would they consider the news of a national victory a fitting excuse for lost time.

Where postal business had to be transacted, and the stoppages were in consequence of longer duration, the red coated guard became a person of the greatest importance, and was surrounded by a group of listeners eagerly demanding more definite and explicit tidings. Some of the questioners had relatives at the seat of war, and these awaited his news with fast beating hearts, for to them a battle had poignant and personal interest, and the word victory held no significance till they were assured it had not been purchased at the expense of lives they held inexpressibly dear.

Sometimes the guard would bring down a copy of a newspaper when his dignity was increased tenfold, for a newspaper was no everyday occurrence, and the country-folk had implicit belief in everything printed thereon; and since few of them could read they accorded unstinted admiration to the guard who could.

As the circulation of newspapers became general, and the provincial interest in politics in consequence more active, the result of some noteworthy trial or legislation was awaited with the keenest impatience.

This was especially the case at the time of the Reform Bill when the country was wild with excitement as to the result. There was no telegraph to flash the news to them, and the provinces were forced to wait with what patience they could muster till the London coaches came down.

That was a red letter day for the guards whose coaches carried the first papers, for so eager were people to buy them that there was practically no limit as to the price they were prepared to pay. At Shottenham a gentleman gave William Bayzand £1 for a copy of the *Times*; at Ross he parted with another copy for £2, and the farther the coach went west the greater was the excitement.

An up coach met the Mazeppa, and the guard shouted out:

"Has the Bill passed?"

"It has," said Bayzand, hoarse from replying to the same question, called to him at every village.

"Have you got a copy of the *Times* with the news in?" inquired the other guard.

"Yes."

"Then don't be surprised at anything that takes place, for the moment the Hereford people know they will carry your paper and all off the coach to the inn."

Sure enough they did, for politics ran high at Hereford, and before the coach stopped Bayzand was pulled from his seat, and carried on the shoulders of four men to the club room. The chairman gave the guard a five-pound note for a copy of the *Times*, which he

read amid shouts of applause, and afterwards framed and hung up in the club room.

When party politics ran high and an election was in progress, the coaches played an important part, and people who were rash enough to travel down the road on those occasions laid themselves open to distinct dangers.

Dickens throws a lurid light on the tactics employed, and it is small wonder that the amiable and credulous Mr. Pickwick felt agitated concerning the fate of the luckless old gentleman who trusted his person on old Mr. Weller's coach during a hotly contested election, and whose tragic fate was thus narrated by the versatile Sam Weller.

"'Lection time came on, and he was engaged by vun party to bring down woters from London. Night afore he was a going to drive up, committee on t'other side sends for him quietly, and away he goes vith the messenger, who shows him in;—large room—lots of gen'l'm'n—heaps of papers, pens and ink, and all that 'ere. 'Ah, Mr. Weller,' says the gen'l'm'n in the chair, 'glad to see you, sir; how are you?'—'Wery well, thank'ee, sir,' says my father; 'I hope *you're* pretty middlin',' says he.—'Pretty well, thank'ee, sir,' says the gen'l'm'n; 'sit down, Mr. Weller—pray sit down, sir.' So my father sits down, and he and the gen'l'm'n looks wery hard at each other. 'You don't remember me?' says the gen'l'm'n.—'Can't say I do,' says my father.—'Oh, I know you,' said the gen'l'm'n; 'know'd you when you was a boy,' says he.—'Well, I don't remember you,' says my father.—'That's wery odd,' says the gen'l'm'n.—'Wery,' says my father.—

'You must have a bad mem'ry, Mr. Weller,' says the gen'l'm'n.—'Well, it is a wery bad 'un,' says my father.—'I thought so,' says the gen'l'm'n. So then they pours him out a glass o' wine, and gammons him about his driving, and gets him into a reg'lar good humour, and at last shoves a twenty pound note in his hand. 'It's a wery bad road between this and London,' says the gen'l'm'n.—'Here and there it *is* a wery heavy road,' says my father.—"Specially near the canal, I think,' says the gen'l'm'n.—'Nasty bit that 'ere,' says my father.—'Well, Mr. Weller,' says the gen'l'm'n, 'you're a wery good whip, and can do what you like with your horses, we know. We're all wery fond o' you, Mr. Weller, so in case you *should* have an accident when you're a bringing these here woters down, and *should* tip 'em over into the canal vithout hurtin' o' 'em, this is for yourself,' says he.—'Gen'l'm'n, you're wery kind,' says my father, 'and I'll drink your health in another glass of wine,' says he; vhich he did, and then buttons up the money, and bows himself out. You vouldn't believe, sir," continued Sam with a look of inexpressible impudence at his master, "that on the wery day as he came down with them woters, his coach *was* upset on that 'ere wery spot, and ev'ry man on 'em was turned into the canal.'"

"And got out again?" inquired Mr. Pickwick hastily.

"Why," replied Sam, very slowly, "I rather think one old gen'l'm'n was missin'. I know his hat was found, but I an't quite certain whether his head was in it or not. But what I look at is, the hex-traordinary and wonderful coincidence, that arter what that gen'l'm'n said my father's coach should be upset in that wery place, and on that wery day!"

ROBBERY has existed from the very earliest times, and no doubt the socialistic doctrine that men should have all things in common started with the first primeval man, who by working strenuously amassed more goods than his neighbours. These considered that by so doing he had contravened their statutes, and at once proceeded to readjust matters by appropriating that which he had so hardly earned. This principle of taking from one man to supply the wants of another was closely followed throughout all ages, but those who took upon themselves thus to keep the balance of things were not looked on kindly, and were, in fact, spoken of unfavourably as robbers.

As the followers of this lucrative profession increased, there began to be distinctions amongst them, and robbers, foot-pads, and pickpockets, all indicated different branches of their calling. Those in the very front rank of all, the highwaymen, were such fine fellows that they would have been very grievously offended if anyone had presumed to call them rascals and ruffians, as in very truth they were.

Some of the earliest highwaymen were the Cavaliers;[1] who, when the Civil War ended so disastrously for their

[1] "Since the disbanding of the late army we heard of several robberies and mischiefs committed in many places in England. Many of the robbers having been seized and committed to prison upon the same account." *Newsletter.*

cause, took to the highway and robbed Parliamentarians for a livelihood. One of them, James Hind, the son of a saddler of Chipping Norton, so far prospered that he was able to plunder Peters and Bradshaw, two of the regicides. He narrowly escaped the proud distinction of robbing Cromwell himself, a deed which all Cavaliers, highwaymen and otherwise, would have accounted both just and righteous. Though they undoubtedly enjoyed their spoils the better when filched from the pockets of a Roundhead, the highwaymen were not blind to the fact that Royalist gold had every whit as much purchasing power, and was not to be despised when Parliamentary coin was scarce.

Later generations cared not from whence their booty came, but levied toll on all and sundry without distinction of persons or politics. These highwaymen of the eighteenth century held such an exalted opinion of themselves and their profession that even the term "highwaymen" was not sufficiently refined for their sensitive feelings, and "Gentlemen of the Road" or "Road Inspectors" were terms more to their liking. Incredible as it seems, these men who made it their business to rob and plunder on the highway considered themselves gentlemen, and constantly impressed this fact on their victims; even Dick Turpin, who was a ruffian even for highwaymen, returned a mourning ring with the remark that they were "too much of gentlemen to take anything a gentleman valued so much."

We have it on authority that the world takes people at their own valuation, and the highwaymen, with their

black masks, pistols, gay apparel and fine horses, forced the public, or at least that part of it which was not being robbed at the time, to regard them with romance. For the most part they were brutal, degenerate men, yet such was the glamour of their calling, and the fame of the stories gathered round their names, that they were quite unworthily regarded almost in the light of heroes by the country-folk; though the general supposition that they robbed the rich to pay the poor is not borne out by a close perusal of their lives. "Light come, light go" was their motto, and the proceeds of their robberies were spent in licentious and profligate pleasures.

The road came to be looked upon as such a respectable profession that men who would have scorned the very suggestion of soiling their hands with trade or honest work took to it as a means of repairing their fallen fortunes. Road-struck youths thought they saw in it a short cut to wealth, and in 1774 a newspaper recounted that seven highwaymen recently captured proved to be boys from eighteen to twenty belonging to well-to-do and respectable families.

There were not wanting instances of gentlemen who lived unsuspected among their neighbours, to all appearances honest country squires, leading monotonous and blameless lives, but who, as a matter of fact, were highwaymen who sallied out at night intent on robbery. The most notorious of these supposed country gentlemen, the brothers Weston, lived at Winchelsea and have been immortalized by Thackeray in his novel *Dennis Duval*.

The "High Toby" profession was, in fact, filled to overflowing; Macaulay says mounted highwaymen were to be found on every main road, Hounslow Heath, Finchley Common, Epping Forest, Maidenhead Thicket, and Gadshill[1] being of special ill-repute.

Horace Walpole wrote that, if the squires did not leave off shooting partridges and take to shooting highwaymen instead, society would be dissolved. In a letter to Sir Horace Mann, he declared "Our roads are so infested by highwaymen that it is dangerous stirring out almost by day. Lady Hertford was attacked on Hounslow Heath at three in the afternoon. Dr. Eliot was shot at three days ago, without having resisted, and the day before yesterday we were near losing our Prime Minister, Lord North; the robbers shot at the postilion, and wounded the latter. In short all the free-booters that are not in India have taken to the highway. The ladies of the Bedchamber dare not go to the Queen at Kew in the evening. The lane between me and the Thames is the only safe road I know at present, for it is up to the middle of the horses in water."

Walpole was himself robbed by Maclean "the gentleman highwayman," who excused his conduct by saying that he had that morning been "disappointed of marrying a great fortune." Maclean was a poor highwayman, but possessing a good figure and fine clothes, he sought industriously for an heiress, and then in despair took to "the road." On June 26th, 1750, Maclean

[1] It is on Gadshill that Falstaff and his companions rob the travellers in *King Henry IV*. Act II. Scene II.

and his accomplice, Plunkett, robbed the Salisbury stage-coach on Turnham Green. Amongst the booty they took a trunk of fine clothes belonging to one of the passengers, and these Maclean sold on his return to London. The rightful owner of them, however, promptly advertised his loss, which resulted in their recovery, and the arrest of the highwayman at his fashionable lodgings in St. James's Street. Maclean indignantly asked: "What should a gentleman like myself know of highway robbery?" A blunderbuss, twenty-three purses and other stolen property supplied adequate answer, despite the fact that several society ladies gave witness as to the integrity of the "captain's" character.

All fashionable London flocked to see the captured highwayman in his cell. The first Sunday after his imprisonment he had three thousand visitors according to Horace Walpole, who says: "The chief personages who have been to comfort and weep over the fallen hero are Lady Caroline Petersham and Miss Ashe—I call them "Polly" and "Lucy," and ask them if he did not sing: "Thus I stand like the Turk with his doxies around? "

Polly and Lucy were two characters in the popular *Beggar's Opera* which Gay had written to poke fun at highwaymen. When it was finished Congreve said: "It will either take greatly or be damned confoundedly."

It proved an instant success, so much so that the Bow Street magistrates endeavoured to get it suppressed on the grounds that its continued production would tend to increased highway robbery.

Undoubtedly there were romantic young ladies who would have been prodigiously thrilled if robbed by a fashionably dressed highwayman, but others, like Lady Walpole's friend, Lady Browne, had greater regard for their own property:

"Lady Browne and I were, as usual, going to the Duchess of Montrose's at seven o'clock. The evening was dark. In the close lane, under the park pale, and within twenty yards of the gate, a black figure pushed by between the chaise and the hedge on my side. I suspected it was a highwayman, and so, I found, did Browne, for she was speaking, and stopped. To divert her fears I was going to say, 'Is not that the apothecary going to the Duchess ?' when I heard a voice cry 'Stop!' and then the figure came back to the chaise. I had the presence of mind before I let down the glass, to take out my walet and stuff it within my dress under the arm. He said:

'Your purses and walets?'

'I have no walet,' I replied.

'Then your purse.'

I gave it to him; it had nine guineas in it. It was so dark that I could not see his hand, but I felt him take it. He then asked for Lady Browne's purse, and said,

'Don't be frightened, I will not hurt you.'

'No, you won't frighten the lady,' I said.

'No, I give you my word I will not hurt you,' he replied.

Lady Browne gave him her purse, and was going to add her walet; but he said,

'I am much obliged to you; I wish you good-night,' he pulled off his hat, and rode away.

'Well,' said I, 'you will not be afraid of being robbed another time, for, you see there is nothing in it.'

'Oh! but I am,' said she, 'and now I am in terror lest he return, for I have given him a purse with bad money in it, that I carry on purpose.'"

Jack Ovet, the son of a shoemaker, considered his prospects as highwayman so bright that he had the presumption to ask a lady to join them. He saw, and fell instantly in love with her when, in pursuit of his calling, he stopped the Worcester stage-coach. His infatuation did not prevent his robbing the lady of twenty guineas, though he protested that he only wished to borrow them, and would return them if she would favour him with her address. This she did and soon afterwards received, not her stolen property, but a bombastic letter from Ovet, in which he declared that, though he had taken a few paltry guineas, she had committed a far greater robbery, for she had stolen his heart. This he valued considerably higher than did the object of his affections, who replied with a letter which was calculated to pierce even a highwayman's self esteem:

"You have broken your word, in not sending me what you villainously took from me; but, not valuing that, let me tell you, for fear you should have too great a conceit of yourself, that you are the first to my recollection whom I ever hated; and sealing my hatred with the hopes of quickly reading your dying speech, in case you die in London, I presume to subscribe myself,—Yours never to command."[1]

[1] *Lives of the Highwaymen.* Johnson.

One woman possessed of a ready wit discovered an ingenious way out of a difficult situation. She was travelling from Gloucester to London, and at Braintree the coachman warned her that there were some suspicious looking characters ahead, and he was more than half inclined to think they were highwaymen. In this supposition he was right, for Nicholas Horner, one of the bright particular stars of his calling, rode up and commanded the coachman to stop. Almost before this request could be complied with, the lady, with her hair hanging wildly about her, jumped out of the coach crying: "Oh, Cousin Tom, dear Cousin Tom, save me." Seizing the astonished highwayman by the leg, she implored him to rescue her from the coachman, who, so she said, was taking her to Bedlam by her husband's orders.

Horner, considerably taken aback, declared that he was no cousin of hers, and that mad she most undoubtedly was, and Bedlam the best place for her. At this the lady wept and clung to him the more desperately, declaring that she would go with her dear Cousin Tom, and that she would not go to Bedlam.

Horner wished himself well out of the business, and appealed to the coachman who played up to his lady nobly, saying that he was ordered to take her to a madhouse, though not to Bedlam. Horner told the coachman to take her there, and, wrenching himself free of the lady's restraining arms, put spurs to his horse and galloped off, whilst she got into the coach, did up her hair, and took the jewels and money from their hiding-place beneath the cushions.

Passengers by stage-coach generally talked highwaymen, thought highwaymen, dreamed highwaymen, and saw a highwayman behind every tree, so that, when the travellers on a certain journey, having been jolted into intimacy, began on their favourite topic, a gentleman confided to them that he had ten guineas in his pocket and was very anxious to keep them in his own possession. A lady thereupon said that if such was his desire he had better put them in his boot. He accepted the advice thankfully and immediately did so. A few minutes later the coach halted abruptly, and a masked highwayman put his head in at the window and commanded an instant transfer of purses. The passengers sat petrified, while the gentleman with the gold in his boot thought complacently that it was safe. On this score he was rudely disillusioned, for he could scarcely believe his ears when the lady who had recommended the hiding-place calmly told the robber to look in the gentleman's boot.

The highwayman promptly commanded all present to remove their boots, a proceeding delicately referred to in the vernacular of the road as "shelling the peas." He took the money thus revealed and departed.

The coach proceeded, and the luckless gentleman, bewailing the loss of his ten guineas, relieved himself by telling the lady his plain unvarnished opinion of her. She owned that the case looked black, but declared she could clear herself if all present would come and dine with her next day. The company, after some indecision agreed to do this, and the following day they were

THE NORWICH COACH

riginal lent by Messrs. Ackermann

shown into a magnificent dining-room, and entertained to a sumptuous repast. At the end of the meal the hostess produced a pocket-book, and turning to the man who had been robbed said: "In this book, sir, are bank notes to the amount of a thousand pounds. I thought it better for you to lose ten guineas than me this valuable property, which I had with me last night. As you have been the means of my saving it, I entreat your acceptance of this bank-bill of one hundred pounds."

One highwayman appears to have carried his gentility to excess, for he is thus described in the newspapers:

"On Friday morning last a young highwayman genteelly dressed, attended by an accomplice dressed in livery, robbed several of the early northern stages near Holloway, and took from the passengers a considerable booty."

Another member of the same calling introduced an even more original touch into the business, for he would approach the coach with a loaded blunderbuss in one hand, and a dead rabbit in the other. Then, when the terrified passengers looked at his masked countenance with their eyes nearly starting out of their heads, he held up the rabbit—and the blunderbuss—remarking in the most dulcet tones: "Gentlemen, will you buy my rabbit?" which request coming from such an unexpected quarter nearly paralysed his victims. When sufficiently recovered to find their tongues, they remarked quaveringly that they one and all had an un-

conquerable aversion to rabbits. The highwayman in a fury shouted out: "But you must and shall buy my rabbit"; and buy they did at a most uncommonly high price.

The fear the highwayman inspired was extraordinary, for, though coaches might be filled with passengers armed to the teeth, it was exceedingly rare for a highwayman to meet with any resistance. At the word of command travellers instantly put down their blunderbuss and sought wildly for their purses. Many highwaymen, knowing this, did not trouble to load their pistols, relying on their telling appearance, and their own black masks to carry the matter through successfully. One robber boasted that he never used weapons, and his pistol was, in fact, nothing but a pewter candlestick, which could be pointed with gratifying success on a dark night.

A Huntingdon horse-keeper robbed the Peterborough coach with the same deadly instrument, but his confidence in it was not fulfilled, for when he attempted the same high-handed proceeding with the Stamford Fly the guard had the presence of mind to fire off his blunderbuss. The wounded highwayman horse-keeper was carried into Huntingdon to the astonishment of the inhabitants, who had known him only as a creditable and law abiding citizen.

Anthony Wood, too, in his diary tells how in 1692 a stage waggon was robbed near Gerrard's Cross, by a gang of highwaymen, "of whom Savage, sometime an Oxford mercer, was one." The *Oxford Journal* for 1755

speaks of a highwayman "Davis, the Tallow Chandler," who robbed the Cirencester mail, and was condemned to be hanged and his body hung in chains, "in some convenient place near where the robbery was committed."

Many stories, true and fictitious, have collected round the personalities of the most noted highwaymen, but probably the one which appeals most to the popular imagination is the account of Dick Turpin's fictitious ride to York, which originated in the inventive genius of Harrison Ainsworth. In real life Dick Turpin was a brutal and, it is hinted, cowardly ruffian, who never rode to York in one day, or owned the celebrated but mythical Black Bess. Happily, history does not deprive us entirely of the ride from Gadshill to York; it was an actual performance undertaken by a highwayman to prove an alibi, but the hero of it was one Nevison, better known as "Swift Nicks."

Though sceptics have thrown grave doubts on Claude Du Vall's famous dance on the heath, they have not been able to disprove it, so that the otherwise sordid history of highwaymen may be allowed that one bit of romance. Du Vall and his companions had received information that a knight with £400 in his coach was travelling towards them, and they promptly decided that before the night was over the £400 should have changed hands.

The knight, like all who carried valuables in those days, was anything but easy in his mind, and as night approached he continually looked out of the coach. At last he espied what he had been looking for, namely, the

sinister figure of a horseman evidently waiting for some one. The knight had every reason to believe that some one was himself—and his money-bags, and he hastened to acquaint his wife with his suspicion. To show that she, at any rate, was not afraid she took out her flageolet and began to play a lively air. Apparently, one of these instruments was considered part of a fashionable highwayman's equipment, for Claude Du Vall produced a similar instrument, and riding up to the coach he bowed low and asked if the lady would honour him with a dance.

The lady finding herself suddenly in the midst of such an unexpected and delicious romance assented willingly. Her husband only too glad of anything that distracted attention from his money-bags did nothing to deter her, saying to the highwayman: "I dare not deny anything, sir, to one of your quality and good behaviour; you seem a gentleman and your request is very reasonable."

Du Vall then handed the lady from her carriage with courtly grace, and together they danced on the heath, whilst the servants looked on and wondered, and the knight thought of his money-bags. For want of a better orchestra, Du Vall sang the "currant" himself. When the performance was over, and the lady resumed her seat, the knight would have driven off, but Du Vall with the greatest politeness stopped him suavely. "Sir, you forget to pay for the music."

The knight took the delicate hint and drew out a bag containing a hundred pounds. Du Vall accepted it,

remarking as he bowed with the most courtly grace: "Sir, you are liberal, and your liberality shall excuse you the other three hundred pounds."

A different form of entertainment was suggested by James Whitney and his followers, for after they had robbed a clergyman of £10 the humour seized them that he should preach them a sermon. The divine rose to the occasion, and took for his text the word "Theft," which was certainly applicable to his audience, but showed great daring on his part. His discourse ended thus: "Let him that stole steal no more, or else the letters of my text point to a tragical conclusion; for T, take care; H, hanging; E, ends not; F, felony; T, at Tyburn." Despite its extreme pointedness, the robbers approved of the sermon, and declaring that the preacher deserved his fee presented him with 10s. out of his £10.

Ned Wicks made a strange proposition to one of his victims, for when he stopped Lord Mohun with the usual polite formula of "Damee stand and deliver," his lordship replied with such a string of profanities that Wicks, who was no mean performer in that line himself, was quite taken aback. A man with such a command of language was quite out of the common run and entitled to any highwayman's respect. With a view to ascertaining who was the most proficient in the gentle art of swearing, Wicks proposed they should have a swearing match for a bet of £50, Lord Mohun's groom to act as judge.

The preliminaries settled, they fell to, and for a quarter of an hour they swore in a way that fairly

astonished each other. Then the groom was asked who had acquitted himself the best, and gave his vote in favour of the highwayman, saying: "Why, my lord, your honour swears as well as ever I heard any gentleman of quality in my life, but indeed, to give the strange gentleman his due, he has done better than yourself, and has won the wager if it was for a thousand pounds."

The introduction of the mail-coaches spoilt "the high Toby profession," but did not entirely ruin it. Dr. Routh, President of Magdalen College, Oxford, from 1791 to 1854, could remember seeing an execution. In reply to questions he would say: "What, sir, do you tell me, sir, that you never heard of Gownsman's Gallows? Why, I tell you, sir, that I have seen two undergraduates hanged on Gownsman's Gallows in Holywell—hanged, sir, for highway robbery!" As late as 1840 newspapers came out with such headlines as: "Notorious highwaymen taken," but in such instances the highwayman had degenerated into footpads or robbers, feeble imitations of their dashing forerunners.

The "gentlemen of the road" led a life crowded with incident and excitement, but their careers were not of long duration; after a few years came the inevitable end: a bullet aimed by an unusually courageous traveller; a wild flight across country with the officers of the law in hot pursuit; a gallant horse shot dead. A crowded trial, and sentence to death.

Bold and desperate to the last, they kept a gay attitude. Dressed in the height of fashion they received visitors of all ranks of society. Even on the last journey

to Tyburn they laughed and joked, bowed to the crowd, and went boldly and unflinchingly to their death.[1]

When the last grim rites were over, their bodies were cut down, and often hung in chains in conspicuous places on the roads where they had robbed during their lives, so that the dismal spectacle might deter others from following in their footsteps, and, incidentally, constitute a terror to belated travellers.[2]

[1] Executions were looked upon as a species of public entertainment. In *Ingoldsby Legends*, Lord Tomnoddy, inquiring of Tiger Tim, "What may a nobleman find to do?" received reply: "An't please you, my lord, there's man to be hanged."

[2] Mrs. Anne and I rode under a man that hangs upon Shooters Hill, and a filthy sight it was to see how his flesh is shrunk to his bones. *Pepys's Diary*, April 11, 1661.

CHARLES I appears to have been the first English Amateur to drive a coach and four, but of his exploits we know nothing beyond a brief mention of the fact in a poem of the Commonwealth, wherein is said:

> "And what distraction for the reputation
> Of Prince is that manly recreation
> More now, or then it was, when Charles of late
> For his disport upon the coach-box sate
> (As many times he did) and not disdain
> To let inferiors ride in Charles's Wain."

The occasion for the above lines was the famous coaching accident which occurred to Oliver Cromwell when he aspired to the box-seat. The Lord Protector, having received a present of six grey coach horses, decided to make trial of them on September 29th, 1654, when accompanied by Thurloe, his secretary, and a few other gentlemen he drove in state to Hyde Park. Presumably they made a merry jaunt of it, for Cromwell "caused some dishes of meat to be brought, when he made his dinner.[1] The repast finished, the Protector had a great desire to drive the coach himself, and therefore mounted the box.

Cromwell's friends had apparently no great faith in his coachmanship, for his secretary alone ventured himself as inside passenger. The Protector "drove pretty handsomely for some time," but the horses not

[1] Thurloe's *State Papers.*

going fast enough to please him he used his whip, which they resented, "and run so fast" that he was flung from his seat and, catching his foot in part of the harness, dragged some distance. To make his situation the more perilous, a pistol "went off in his pocket," so that it is surprising to find that he escaped with but little hurt, and after being taken home and let blood was soon well again. Thurloe, who jumped from the coach, injured his ankle, and kept his room for some days, "so that we have not been able to further or expedite any business this week," wrote the Dutch Ambassador.

Enemies of the Protectorate openly expressed their regret that the accident had not terminated fatally. This is what they said of it in Paris: "Sir—We hear of a misfortune befallen the Lord Protectorate, for playing the coachman. He had better have sat in his chair in the painted chamber to govern the Parliament, which is more pliable to his pleasure, than in the coach-box to govern his coach horses, which have more courage to put him out of the box, than the three hundred Members of Parliament have to put him out of his chair."

Poets, Royalists, and Parliamentarians alike, rushed into print on the subject, drawing morals widely divergent, according to their political opinions. Supporters of the Commonwealth professed to see in the accident a case of miraculous intervention:

> "When he did fall, was it not won'drous well
> That from his seat, into God's arms he fell?
> And that, he falling, fell not in such wise
> As they, who rise to fall; but fell to rise."

Royalists, as might be expected, found a very different inference; in their eyes the accident clearly foretold Cromwell's ultimate fall from his high estate:

> "His first reproach
> Is a fall from a coach
> And his last will be from a cart."[1]

Mythology was adduced as evidence on both sides. Cromwell's supporters cited Hippolytus whose horses took fright at Neptune's sea calves, thus showing that accidents were unavoidable and no slur on coachmanship. Royalists compared Cromwell to Phaeton, who having no experience of horsemanship, aspired to drive the chariot of the sun, with disastrous results.

John Cleaveland, the Royalist, wrote a none too complimentary poem called "The Coachman of St. James!"

> I'm pleased to fancy how the glad compact
> Of Hackney coachmen sneer at the last act.
> Hark how the scoffing concourse hence derives
> The Proverb 'Needs must go when th' devil drives!'
> Yonder a whipster cries, "tis a plain case
> He turned us out to put himself in th' place;
> But God-a-mercy horses once for aye
> Stood to't and turned him out as well as we.'
> Another not behind then with his mocks
> Cries out—'Sir, faith you were in the wrong box.'

---

[1] Criminals were taken to the gallows in a cart, which, after the rope was adjusted, moved on and left them hanging.

He did presume to rule because forsooth
He'd been a Horse Commander from his youth;
But he must know there's difference in the reins
Of horses fed with oats, and fed with grains.
I wonder at his frolic, for to be sure
Four pampered coach horses can fling a brewer;[1]
But pride will have a fall, such the world's course is
He that can rule three realms, can't guide four horses.
See him that trampled thousands in their gore,
Dismounted by a party led of four.
But we have done with't, and we may him call
This driving Jehu, Phaeton his fall;
I would to God for these three kingdom's sake
His neck and not the whip had given the crack."

Cromwell's upset seems to have checked coaching enthusiasm, for it is not till the close of the eighteenth century that amateur coaching became fashionable. Mr. John Warde, the Kentish squire of fox hunting fame, rediscovered the sport of the four-in-hand, when, for the sheer delight of the thing, he often took the place of the professional coachmen on the Gloucester old stage or the Birmingham Prince of Wales. It was owing to his persistent representation of the discomforts of the box-seat that Telegraph springs were first added, and the way of the "Amateurs" made easy in more ways than one.

Once introduced as a sport, coaching became all the rage, and to drive a four-in-hand was considered essential for a man of fashion. To attain proficiency in

[1] Cromwell was popularly but erroneously supposed to have started life as a brewer.

the art, the young bloods of the day went to the professional coachmen for tuition, and tried their prentice hands on the public coaches. The public, not unreasonably, resented this, and passengers would object if the reins were given to anyone but the rightful driver.

The professional coachmen took their work of tuition seriously, they were strict masters and merciless critics, as may be gathered from an article which appeared in the *New Sporting Magazine*, by a pupil of Old Bill Williams, driver of the Oxford Defiance:

"Never by any chance—confound him!—would he allow an error or an ungraceful act to pass unnoticed, and I have often got off his box so annoyed at his merciless reproofs and lectures that I vowed no power on earth should make me touch another rein for him. The first morning, in particular, that I was with him, I shall never forget. In spite of all my remonstrances, nothing would satisfy him, but I must take the reins from the door of the very office, at the Belle Sauvage, he himself getting up behind, in order as he said not 'to fluster the young 'un.' By great good luck we got pretty well into the street, and without anything worth telling, for some way past Temple Bar; but, as my evil star would have it, the narrow part of the Strand was uncommonly full, and having rather an awkward team, and being, moreover, in a particular stew, we had more than one squeak at sundry posts, drays, etc. Still not one word was uttered by the Artist, though by this time he had scrambled in front, till after a devil of a mistake in turning into the Haymarket, he touched my arm very civilly, with a 'pull up if you please, sir, by that empty coal cart.' I did so; at least as well as I could—and

found, to my utter horror that it was for the purpose of his requesting the grinning black-a-moor that belonged to it '*to lend him some six or seven sacks to take the drag home*, for,' said he, '*I am sure the gentleman won't take it up to the Gloucester Coffee House a coach!*'"

Amateurs driving the coaches were not always recognized and, in consequence, received the "tips" intended for the professional coachmen, circumstances which afforded them much joy, and they never tired of relating how they had been "tipped a bob, and returned a bow."

Sir St. Vincent Cotton, a gifted amateur, eventually joined the ranks of the professionals, and drove one of the Brighton coaches for a living, for so great was his propensity for gambling that he ran through two large fortunes.

A characteristic story is told of how one evening when he and his friends were at dinner they found some maggots among the nuts. Anything able to run or crawl could, in their eyes, be made the subject of a bet, and they instantly instituted a maggot race on the result of which the odds ran high. The maggots were ranged in a line, their backers provided with needles to spur them on. The starter gave the word, and the race began amid uproarious excitement. Sir St. Vincent's maggot was the favourite, and seemed safe to win, but the baronet to urge it to fresh endeavours pricked it so vehemently with his needle, that it suddenly curled up and refused to move, so that a rank outsider crept up and won, whereby, so it is said, Sir St. Vincent lost £30,000.

Another famous amateur on the Brighton road was

Mr. Stevenson, better known as the "Cambridge Graduate," who drove the Age, for "his passion for the *bench* got the better of all other ambitions, and he became a coachman by profession."

The Age, the best appointed coach of its time, in place of a guard carried liveried servants, whose duty it was to wait on the passengers offering them sandwiches and sherry when the coach changed horses. Mr. Stevenson got plenty of fun out of his coach, but as a business speculation it was conducted on too lavish lines to be successful.

Stevenson's career ended tragically soon, and when dying of brain fever he asked those near to lift him up in bed, then sitting in his usual attitude on the box, he imagined himself once more on the Age, and calling out, "Let them go, George, I've got 'em," fell back and expired.

Among others who drove regularly on the stage-coaches were Mr. Richard Backenbury, who with some friends put the Taglioni on the Windsor road, and tooled the piebald teams himself; and the then Marquis of Worcester (well known on the Brighton road), in whose honour the Hon. Martin Hawke wrote the following song, which appeared in the *Sporting Magazine* for 1840:

THE CRITERION COACH

As quick as thought, there see approach,
Swift glancing down the road,
The dashing gay Criterion coach,
With in and outside load.

'Tis Worcester's Lord who drives the team,
Thorough-bred, or near it,
Of all the talents, he's the cream—
Upset? who can fear it?

And now they change, and off again
Under half a minute;
So just each trace, so true each rein,
Really magic's in it!

Like bright Japan the harness shines
All chosen and select;
The brass—like famed Potosi's mines
A mirror to reflect.

And mark the flowers on each head—
The rose and lily fair
Around us all their fragrance shed,
Embalm the morning air!

The well-shaped yew, the tapering thong,
Proclaimed the workman's art;
But as the blood ones dash along,
They feel no useless smart.

Oh no! he tries each supple rein
To check their eager speed
Strong is the hand that can restrain
Each noble well-bred steed.

Here is all life, excitement, joy,
Our troubles left behind,
No cares our pleasure to destroy,
Our sorrows to the wind.

The hunter boasts his gallant steed
That flies o'er hill and dale,
But we can best his fastest speed,
And tell a brighter tale.

We've no blank days, no wants of scent,
To check our forward course;
Fresh teams await when this is spent,
This beats his second horse.

And hark! the bugle sounds alarms
Thro' every country place,
The village beauties show their charms,
Displaying every grace.

Then here's my toast, and fill it up,
"Success the road attend!"
And he that will not pledge the cup
To talent is no friend!

Lord Onslow, a good whip but of great eccentricity, had his coach painted black, and drawn by four magnificent black horses, the whole turn-out being strongly reminiscent of a hearse. He was the subject of many quibs and caricatures, one of which ran:

"What can Tommy Onslow do?
He can drive a curricle and two.
Can Tommy Onslow do no more?
Yes, he can drive a coach and four."

Amateurs who delighted in a four-in-hand, but did not desire to displace the professional coachmen, formed among themselves a driving Club. This was the famous Benson Driving Club popularly called the B.D.C., instituted in 1807, and which continued till 1853.

There were twenty-five members who drove twice a year to the *White Hart* at Benson in Oxfordshire—fifty-six miles—where they dined, and twice to the *Black Dog* at Bedfont—fourteen miles. From the names of the two inns, the B.D.C. was nicknamed the Black and White Club.

SONG OF THE B.D.C.

You ask me gents to sing a song,
  Don't think me too encroaching,
I won't detain you very long,
  With one of mine on coaching.
No rivalry have we to fear,
  Nor jealous need we be, sir,
We all are friends who muster here,
  And in the B.D.C., sir.

Horace declares the Greeks of old,
  Were once a driving nation;
But Shakespeare says "The World's a stage"
  A cutish observation.
The stage he meant, good easy man,
  Was drawn by nine old Muses;
But the Muse for me is the B.D.C.
  And that's the stage I chooses.

I call this age the iron age
  Of Railways and Pretension,
And coaching now is in a stage
  Of horrible declension.
The days gone by when on the Fly
  We rolled to Alma Mater,
And jovial took the reins in hand
  Of the Times or Regulator.

Those were the days when Peytons grays
To Bedfont led the way, sir,
And Villebois followed with his bays
In beautiful array, sir.
Then Spicer too, came next in view
To join the gay procession.
Oh! the dust we made—the cavalcade
Was neat beyond expression.

No turnpike saw a fancy team
More neat than Dolphin sported,
When o'er the stones with Charley Jones
To Bedfont they resorted.
Few graced the box as much as Cox;
But there were none I ween, sir,
Who held the reins 'twixt here and Staines
More slap up than the Dean, sir.

Those are the men who foremost then
To coaching gave a tone, sir,
And hold they will to coaching still,
Tho' here they stand alone, sir.
Then drink to the coach, the B.D.C.,
Sir Henry and his team, sir,
And may all be *blowed* right off the road,
Who wish to go by steam, sir.

Two other famous driving clubs were the Four Horse Club founded by Mr. Charles Buxton in 1808, and the Richmond Driving Club, of 1838, instituted by Lord Chesterfield, who insisted that the members "should drive like coachmen, but look like gentlemen," thus pointing the finger of derision at many of the Amateurs who outcoachmaned the professionals in manners and appearance.

The members of the Four Horse Club affected the following apparel: "The costume of each gentleman consisted of a bottle green body coat, a milk white double breasted great coat reaching to the heels, several large capes, and buttons of mother of pearl, as large as crown pieces; a many flowered bouquet in a buttonhole at the side; upon the head a low crowned, broad-brimmed hat, with a broad riband and buckle, the hair sleeked down under it, coachmanlike."

In the farce of *Hit or Miss*, Charles Matthews, in the part of Dick Cipher, caricatured coaching amateurs; "belonging to the honourable neck or nothing, having gone through all the gradations of buggy, gig and dog cart, tandom, curricle, unicorn and four-in-hand; neglected nothing, dashed at everything—pegg'd at a Jarvey—tool'd a mail coach, and now have attained the credit of being bang up."

The great hit of the piece was the *Bang up* coaching song:

"With spirits gay I mount the box, the tits up to their traces,
My elbows squar'd, my wrists turn'd down, dash off to Epsom races.
With Buxton bit, bridoon so trim, three chestnuts and a grey,
Well coupl'd up my leaders then, ya hip, we bowl away.
Some push along with four-in-hand, while others drive at random,
In whiskey, buggy, gig, or dog-cart, curricle or tandem.

Prime of life to go it, where's a place like London?
Four-in-hand to-day, the next you may be undone:
Where belles as well as beaux, to get the Whip hand strive,
And Mrs. Snip the tailor's wife, can teach her spouse to drive.

So Jackey Snip, his wife and all, to Dobbin's back are strapp'd on,
In one horse chay to spend the day, with neighbour Snip at Clapton.
Some push along, etc.

Thus 'tis with all who in London are striving
Both high and low at something are driving.
A peer and a prentice now dress so much the same
You cannot tell the diff'rence, excepting by the name.
On Epsom Downs, says Billy-Zounds, that cannot be Lord Jackey.
Egad! but now I see it is—I took him for his lackey.
Some push along, etc."

A foreigner who witnessed the performance was immensely taken with it, and wished to express his appreciation to the actor, but, unfortunately, he could not recall the name of the piece. Matthews feigned ignorance also, and the foreigner endeavoured to explain himself by personalities: "Cott (coat) *vite*?" (Mr. Matthews shook his head). "Large caps? (capes). De man vis de large buttons, *vite*?" (still Mr. Matthews pretended not to recognize *Hit or Miss*). "Large hat, *vite*? Noss-gay?" (no sign of intelligence from the actor). "Long veep! (whip). Oh, so droll at long veep!—Ah, now I know, I recollect in French de nom. It is 'FRAPPE OU MADEMOISELLE.'"

The literature of the early part of the last century made occasional mention of driving amateurs. In *Vanity Fair* Sir Pitt Crawley took Becky Sharp down to Queens Crawley by coach, and told the coachman to keep the box-seat for him.

"Yes, Sir Pitt," replied that worthy, with a touch of his hat and rage in his soul, for he had promised that

place to a young gentleman from Cambridge, who would have given him a crown to a certainty, whereas he knew well that the miserly Sir Pitt was not given to tipping. The undergraduate was no better pleased, but confided to Becky that Sir Pitt horsed some of the stages, and by way of revenge he meant to take it out of his cattle, saying viciously: "But won't I flog 'em on to Squashmore, when I take the ribbons!"

Another undergraduate tooled the coach when Arthur Pendennis went to Oxford, "in a well appointed coach, filled inside and out with dons, gownsmen, young freshmen about to enter, and their guardians, who were conducting them to the University. A fat old gentleman in grey stockings, who sat by Major Pendennis inside the coach, having his pale faced son opposite, was frightened beyond measure when he heard that the coach had been driven a couple of stages by young Mr. Folier of Saint Boniface College."

The engaging Verdant Green, too, made his first appearance at the University on the top of a coach—The Royal Defiance—and Mr. Green had the same cause for disquietude as the old gentleman in grey stockings. The coach cantered up, seemingly enveloped in a cloud of dust, but which on close inspection proved to be "not dust only, but smoke from the cigars, meerschaums and short clay pipes of a full complement of gentlemen passengers, scarcely one of whom seemed to have passed his twentieth year."

Besides pipes, the undergraduates were plentifully provided with other things deemed necessary for their

comfort and well being: "The passengers were not limited to the two-legged ones; there were four-footed ones also. Sporting dogs, fancy dogs, ugly dogs, rat-killing dogs, short-haired dogs, long-haired dogs, dogs like muffs, dogs like mops, dogs of all colours, and of all breeds and sizes, appeared thrusting out their black noses from all parts of the coach. Portmanteaux were piled upon the roof; gun-boxes peeped out suspiciously here and there; bundles of sticks, canes, foils, fishing-rods, and whips appeared strapped together in every direction; then all round the coach,

'Like a swarth Indian with his belt of beads,'

hat-boxes dangled in leathery profusion. The Oxford coach, on an occasion like this, was a sight to be remembered."

"Are you the two houtside gents for Hoxfut?" inquired the coachman in the husky voice peculiar to a dram-drinker.

Mr. Green replying in the affirmative, he and Verdant took their seats on the back part of the coach.

The undergraduates, "dressed in every variety of Oxford fashion, and exhibiting a pleasing diversity of Oxford manners," regarded the new-comers critically, and summed them up thus:

"Decided case of governor," said one.

"Undoubted ditto of freshman!" commented another.

"Looks ferociously mild in his gig-lamps," remarked a third, alluding to Verdant's spectacles.

"And jolly green all over," wound up a fourth.

THE ROADSTERS

By H. Alken

Reproduced from a print lent by Messrs. Arthur Ackermann

Mr. Green did not enjoy the journey; he hated smoke and dogs, and had far too much of both, but when the undergraduate on the box took possession of the reins his unhappiness was complete.

The new driver put the team along at a spanking pace; started downhill at a quick trot, the heavy luggage causing the coach to rock ominously; the trot merged into a canter; the canter broke into a gallop. Mr. Green's fears so wrought on him that he remonstrated with the coachman for suffering "a mere lad," he was about to say, but fortunately checked himself in time—"for suffering anyone else than the regular driver to have the charge of the coach."

The coachman answered that he knew his duty to himself and his proprietors, and never gave up the ribbons to anyone "but wot had showed hisself fitted to 'andle 'em. And I think I may say this for the genelman as has got 'em now, that he's fit to be first whip to the Queen herself, and I'm proud to call him my poople. Why, sir—if his honour here will pardon me for makin' so free—this 'ere gent is Four-in-Hand Fosbrooke, of which you *must* have heerd on."

Mr. Green replied that he had not had that pleasure.

"Ah! a pleasure you *may* call it, sir, with perfect truth," replied the coachman, "but, lor' bless me, sir, weer *can* you have lived?"

To add to Mr. Green's discomfort little Mr. Bouncer whiled away the time by producing weird and unpleasant post-horn effects, which he called "sounding his octaves;" moreover, he destroyed the cheerful airs

played on the guard's key-bugle, by joining in with his horn at improper times, and with discordant results.

Further cause for disquietude had Mr. Green, for he observed that the undergraduates who were destined to be the innocent Verdant's friends evinced "a great capacity for the beer of Bass, and the porter of Guinness, and were not averse even to liquids of a more spirituous description. Moreover, Mr. Green remarked that the ministering Hebes were invariably addressed by their Christian names, and were familiarly conversed with as old acquaintances; most of them receiving direct offers of marriage, or the option of putting up the banns on any Sunday in the middle of the week."

When Woodstock was reached, Four-in-Hand Fosbrooke resigned the ribbons to the professional coachman, whilst Mr. Bouncer in deference to the scruples of a sensitive University put away his post-horn, and consoled himself by chanting the following song chosen in compliment to the undoubted freshness of Mr. Verdant Green:

"To Oxford, a Freshman so modest,
I entered one morning in March;
And the figure I cut was the oddest—
All spectacles, choker and starch,
Whack fol lol, lol iddity, etc.

From the top of the Royal Defiance,
Jack Adams, who coaches so well,
Set me down in these regions of science
In front of the Mitre Hotel,
Whack fol lol, lol iddity, etc.

'Sure never man's prospects were brighter;'
I said, as I jump'd from my perch;
'So quickly arrived at the Mitre,
Oh, I'm sure to get on in the Church!'
Whack fol lol, lol iddity, etc.

THE accidents which occurred to the mail- and stage-coaches were many, and alarmingly frequent. When the railways menaced the popularity of the road, the old coachmen, with a calm ignoring of actual facts, endeavoured to point out the terrific dangers of the new system by remarking darkly: "When a coach upsets there you are, but when a train upsets where are you?" This sounded impressively convincing, but is scarcely borne out by a perusal of the old newspapers, from whence it appears that though the most likely place for inside passengers in a coach accident was underneath the coach, and the "outsides" among the plunging horses, yet there were many other means whereby passengers could break their legs, or imperil the safety of their necks. Coaches fell down chalk-pits, overturned into rivers, were buried in snow-drifts, ran into each other, and capsized in every conceivable manner.

One unlucky Friday no less than four of the northern coaches upset, and the passengers on the Glasgow mail had a miraculous escape when passing over a narrow bridge at Kirby Thore. The night was dark, the bridge dangerously narrow, and the coach going at full speed. Just as the bridge was reached, one of the leaders swerved, the coach rocked, struck the low parapet, and fell right over into the river. The passengers struggled frantically in the darkness, one gentleman displaying great bravery, rescued a lady and child from

the inside of the coach. All reached land eventually, but one of the horses was drowned, and the mare who had caused the accident so badly injured that she had to be shot. The guard's leg was hurt, but that did not prevent him going forward with his mails, riding one of the surviving horses to Appleby, six and a half miles distant. There he hired a chaise and experienced fresh adversity, for before he had gone any distance one of the wheels came off and he was thrown out on to the road.

Water in any form was the particular terror of all inside passengers, for when the floods were out, the water frequently came into the coach, and obliged the unhappy "insides" to stand on the seats in a cramped position necessitated by the lowness of the roof, where they grievously bewailed their unhappy situation and expected every moment to be drowned.

A great number of accidents were caused by parts of the coach being defective, or rotten harness unequal to any sudden strain. One of the wheels of the Rockingham coach came off with a suddenness that precipitated both coachman and guard on to the road. The horses took fright and went off at full speed, passing several waggons, and through the toll-gates without any collision, though the coach was sometimes sustained by its three remaining wheels, and sometimes by the axletree. The coach was eventually stopped by a gentleman who jumped from his gig, and seized the leaders as they were going uphill at a somewhat less devastating pace. There were seven outside passengers when the accident

happened; five of them jumped off the coach and sustained serious injuries, whilst the inside passengers who retained their seats escaped unhurt.

The fore axle of the Worcestershire Telegraph broke at the bottom of Hanwell hill, and the coach upset with a crash. The coachman and passengers were all seriously injured; two ladies so badly that little hope was entertained of their recovery. One gentleman, intrepid by nature, or callous by experience, had his collar-bone broken, but directly it was set continued his journey by another coach.

Broken reins were responsible for what might have been a very serious accident to the Bentham mail; when near Quernmore Park, one of the leaders shied violently and nearly upset the coach. The coachman endeavoured to steady his team, but the reins snapped, and the horses dashed off at full gallop, whilst the coach rocked from side to side, and seemed in imminent danger of overturning. The coachman threw himself from his box, the three outside passengers scrambled over the roof and jumped off the back of the coach, thereby sustaining various sprains and concussions. The turnpike man saw the coach coming with the runaway team and no driver, and promptly shut the gates. One of the leaders jumped the wall between the toll-house and the gates, but his companions not being like-minded remained on the other side, and the coach came to a standstill. There was one inside passenger, a lady, who kept her seat throughout, and escaped uninjured. A Bath coach upset at Marlborough, resulted in a broken leg

apiece for Jack Everett, the coachman, and a lady passenger. Willing helpers placed the two victims side by side in a wheelbarrow and trundled them off to the nearest doctor. Jack Everett stole a glance at his companion. She was neither young nor comely. He looked again. Not so ill favoured after all. "I've often kissed a young woman," said the coachman, "so why shouldn't I kiss an old one?" And kiss her he did too, full and fair, in the eyes of all beholders.

Many disasters were due to culpable carelessness on the part of coachmen, who saw red when the opposition coach came in sight, and cared little what risks they ran so long as they distanced their hated rival. In particular they grudged the time taken to put on the drag, and coachmen on speed-breaking records bent would go downhill at a reckless pace trusting on the wheelers to hold the coach back, with the very frequent result that accidents happened, and bones were broken instead of records.

An accident attributable to this cause occurred to the Halifax Hope in 1836, when the coach was heavily laden with passengers and luggage. The coachman urged his horses forward at a great rate, and started to descend a steep hill without moderating his pace. Halfway down the horses became unmanageable, the coach reeled from side to side and finally overturned. The coachman and guard were picked up insensible, two gentlemen killed, and all the passengers badly hurt.

The Phœnix and the Dart entered into competition between Patcham and Brighton, the driver of the Dart

being determined at all costs to pass the Phœnix, and the coachman of the Phœnix being equally determined that he should not; the unhappy passengers despaired of ever beholding Brighton, the Pavilion, or the *Prince Regent* again. The race ended by coaches, horses, passengers, and luggage coming together with a crash, and it was undeniably a "case," that being the polite term by which the coachmen referred to a thorough bad upset.

In Nimrod's *The Life of a Sportsman*, James Howell of the Birmingham day coach, who is thinly disguised as Jem Powell, gives an account of the heartless behaviour of an opposition coach:

"A gentleman comes up to me t'other day, and says: 'Jem, what will you take me to Birmingham for?' 'My fare, sir,' said I, 'is fifteen shillings.' 'I can go by the Rora (Aurora),' said he, 'for ten.' 'No doubt sir,' I replied, 'but then there's the doctor's bill!'

"He went with me that very day they had an accident with the Rora."

"Of what description?" asked Lord Edmonston.

"They was a galloping, my lord, against the opposition which was behind them, and over they went."

"And was anyone hurt?"

"Several, my lord."

"Of course the opposition stopped to afford assistance to the passengers?"

"Not a bit of it, my lord; one gentleman told me that as he was in the act of rolling away from the coach he heard the opposition coachman sing out to the other as he galloped by—'What Joe, your bees are swarming this fine morning, are they?'"

There were innumerable instances of horses starting when the coachman was absent from the box, and, though coaches were occasionally upset thereby, it is a remarkable tribute to the sagacity of the horses that more often than not they trotted soberly along till they reached the next stage, where they drew up at the accustomed halting place. The "outsides" had in the meanwhile hurled themselves into space, and injured themselves in divers ways, while the "insides" verified the proverb that ignorance is bliss, and were perfectly unaware that anything untoward had happened.

The Exeter mail met with an experience unique in coaching annals. One night in October 1816 the coach left Salisbury as usual and proceeded on its lonely way over Salisbury Plain. Presently a large animal crept out of the darkness and trotted along beside the horses. It being impossible to see the creature with any distinctness, there was some speculation as to its kind, but the coachman and guard eventually agreed that it was a calf. The horses did not like it whatever it was, and became more and more nervous and excited.

The mail drew up at Winterslow Hut to deliver the mail-bags, and instantly the strange animal sprang upon the off leader, and revealed itself to be not a calf, but a full-grown lioness. Instantly all was confusion, the horses plunged in extremity of terror and threatened every moment to overturn the coach. The coachman, a brave man who could not see his horse killed before his eyes, drew out his knife and prepared to attack the lioness with that ineffective weapon. The guard besought

him to abstain from such rashness, and drawing out his own blunderbuss was about to fire it off with a grim determination to kill something when voices were heard and a mastiff dog rushed up.

The lioness leaving the horse turned on the dog and for some moments they fought furiously; then some men appeared and the lioness hearing her keeper's voice slunk off and hid in a hovel under a granary where she was soon captured. It turned out that she belonged to a travelling showman, whose caravans had been broken into by thieves, who either by accident or design permitted the lioness to escape.

The outside passengers retained their seats throughout the encounter, but the "insides" fled precipitately into the inn, and never rested till they reached a room at the top of the house, where they locked themselves in.

The unfortunate horse was so badly injured that it was at first thought necessary to destroy it, but the showman, who saw the chance of a good advertisement, asked permission to buy it, and after careful nursing it recovered, and was exhibited in company with the lioness.

Another animal was responsible for an accident to a Cambridge coach, though instead of being a wild beast, it was in that case a mild and inoffensive donkey, who saw the coach coming towards him, and wishing to show that he had as much right to the public road as a coach and four, suddenly lay down and rolled, kicking up such a cloud of dust that the coach horses, who objected to donkeys at any time, were fairly panic

THE EXETER COACH

From an original picture by J. F. Herring by permission of Messrs. Bromhead, Cutts & Co.

stricken, and in their dismay took the coach into a ditch.

The state of the weather had an appreciable effect on the number of coaching accidents. Fog was the thing most dreaded by coachmen, for when walls of inky blackness surrounded the coach, and rendered the leaders almost indistinguishable, it was no easy task to keep the coach on the road. When the metropolis was enveloped in the yellow haze of a London fog, the mails used to be escorted out of town by men on horseback carrying torches, to enable the coachmen to discern the track at all. On such occasions progress was necessarily slow, and the string of coaches crawling one behind the other sometimes took three hours to get from London to Hounslow.

During a hard winter when England was in the grip of regular arctic weather, with ice on the Thames, and birds perishing from the intense cold, the streets of London were almost deserted, and the few hackney-carriages which ventured out were drawn by four horses, whilst the situation of the coaches in the provinces was one of extreme peril. The Post Office officials were in a great state of mind about their mails, and at once despatched superintendents to the country districts with the view of helping those guards whose coaches were unable to proceed. From all sides came reports of dangers and disasters.

The Wisbech coach was buried in a snow-drift; the guard took one of the horses and struggled forward with the mails, but before he had gone any distance he

fell into another drift, from which he escaped with much difficulty, and his horse died of suffocation before help could be obtained.

The Edinburgh mail bravely started on its return journey, but, though it had the assistance of eight waggon horses besides its own team, it could get no farther than Royston. The Liverpool mail overturned near Lichfield, and the Leeds coach gave up the attempt at Dunstable.

The Newmarket road was so blocked with snow near Bournbridge that the up and down mails stuck fast within sight of each other, and the coachmen and guards had to carry the mails and luggage across the snow. The up and down Yarmouth coaches were similarly situated at Saxmundham, whilst one coach was stuck at Walton, and another abandoned near Lowestoft.

Many of the abandoned coaches were buried beneath the snow, so that three months later the Post Office sent out the following circular:

"Several mail coaches being still missing that were obstructed in the snow since February last, this is to desire you, you will immediately represent to me an account of all the spare patent mail coaches that are in the stages where you travel over, whether they are regular stationed mail coaches or extra spare coaches, and the exact place where they are, either in barn, field, yard or coach-house, and the condition they are in, if they have seats, rugs, and windows complete."[1]

Coachmen and guards on all sides declared that

[1] The Royal Mail. J. Wilson Hyde.

their faces were numb and swollen by the force of the hail and snow, and that never in their lives had they experienced such a storm, an assertion fully borne out by a gentleman who travelled by the Chester mail:

"After leaving Northampton on Friday night we got on tolerably well notwithstanding the violence of the driving snow, to Broughton field from whence the guard for two miles explored a passage for the horses which could with difficulty be made to face the storm. At Hockliff we found numerous other coaches which were unable to proceed. We were told by a person who had just returned with the horses that the heavy Coventry and Chester coaches were stuck fast in the snow on Chalk Hill.

"Dawn having broken, I with a superintendent of the Post Office set off on horseback, and with much difficulty succeeded in reaching Dunstable, where we got a chaise with six horses and arrived in London at 12.30 on Saturday night."

Chalk Hill seems to have been a place of unenviable notoriety in a snow-storm, for in 1808 the Liverpool mail was unable to get up it, and the guard who brought on the mails declared that in many places the roads were ten or twelve feet under snow.

The same day the Gloucester and Worcester coaches could go no farther than Benson ; the Bristol mail had twice to be dug out of the snow, and the Exeter mail was stopped by the passengers at Overton.

At Bury St. Edmunds there was a grand subscription dance when one hundred and sixty persons were present, including a number of undergraduates from Cambridge,

"who came in their usual style in tandems, and on horseback, blowing horns." At four o'clock in the morning the dance ended, and the company attempted to depart but found to their consternation that snow had fallen heavily all night, making the roads impassable. Even those who resided within a few miles were unable to get home, and beds at the various inns were at a premium. Many ladies and gentlemen, who could not find any accommodation, sat up the rest of the night in the card rooms.

During the afternoon the Cambridge men with their tandems, gigs, and trumpets made a valiant attempt to get to their University, but were obliged to return to Bury. The weather-bound visitors renewed the ball for two nights, and the younger members, at any rate, extracted a good deal of amusement out of their novel situation.

The second day another attempt was made to get away, and though they had to abandon their carriages and proceed on horseback, a party managed to get as far as Newmarket, where they were forced to remain. Mr. Mills, the High Sheriff, reached his home near Saxham the third day, by having his carriage preceded by a heavy broad-wheeled waggon drawn by four horses abreast; whilst two families residing at Rougham were drawn across the open fields in a waggon with six horses.

Macready travelled with his company to Newcastle in January 1813, through a blinding snow-storm. Between Ross Inn and Berwick-on-Tweed the drifts

were so deep that for several miles men had to go on before and cut a passage for the coach. They did not arrive at Newcastle till two hours after midnight, and Macready had reason to congratulate himself that he had not delayed his journey, for the next day the snow was so deep that the coaches ceased to run, and for six weeks there was no means of communication between Newcastle and Edinburgh.

People who travelled on a coach in a snow-storm never forgot it; they were not anxious to repeat the experience. One man started on the Regulator from Bath at 6 a.m. on a bitter winter morning. It came on to snow, and snowed without ceasing throughout the day. The six horses harnessed to the coach could hardly draw it, and though due in London at eight at night it was three the following morning before the Regulator laboured up to *The White Horse*. The traveller attributed the fact that he arrived alive, to the stiff glass of brandied coffee he imbibed at every stage. As it was, his hands and feet were so numbed and incapable of motion that he was hauled out of his hammock of snow like a bale of goods. The landlady had him carried into the kitchen, where she thawed him gradually and administered consolation in the shape of hot possets of her own compounding.

Passengers underwent much discomfort and anxiety at such times, but there is no doubt they were sometimes unreasonable. Once when a blinding snow-storm swirled round a coach, and an unhappy coachman and guard wrestled bravely with their own numb fingers

and a broken pole, the box-seat passenger, plentifully enveloped with coats and shawls, exclaimed bitterly: "What are you fellows keeping me here in the cold for and warming your own hands at the lamp."

A traveller in a blinding snow-storm put his head out of the Oxonian coach and inquired of John Bayzand if he knew where he was. Bayzand, who had lost his bearings completely and was on the verge of losing his temper as well, replied that if his passenger was anxious for the truth, and nothing but the truth, he should have it, which amounted to the fact that he, the coachman, did not know where he was, and had no immediate prospect of finding out.

"Oh, indeed!" snorted the inside passenger in a rage, "a nice sort of fellow you are to be entrusted with the lives of Her Majesty's servants."

"Perhaps you will be kind enough to get out and show me the right road," said Bayzand.

The gentleman, feeling confident that he could perform this simple feat, immediately stepped forth, and landed unexpectedly in a snow-drift, where he cried out very lustily that he would be smothered. He was allowed time to cool his temper and then the guard extricated him.

The Oxonian wandered about indefinitely, till it met a countryman, who gave the coachman the cheering information that he was miles out of his way; that the road ahead was blocked up and utterly impassable; and it was exceedingly doubtful if he could get back along the road he had come.

Bayzand said he would try anyway, turned his coach round, and after many difficulties eventually succeeded in reaching Oxford, where the coach was snowed up for several days.

"Coachman, do you know how much of my valuable time you are wasting?" inquired a querulous passenger fretted by delay. To whom the coachman replied with dignity, "And will you please to remember, sir, that I am losing just as much time as yourself."

A pompous clergyman received an equally effective rebuke from a shepherd boy of whom he inquired the way to Horsepath. The youth grinned but made no reply.

"Boy," said the cleric haughtily, "do you know who I am?"

"Noa," drawled the boy indifferently.

"I am one of those lights sent to show you the way to heaven," said the clergyman impressively.

"Well, a nice 'un 'ee must be, an' don't know the road to Horsepath," scoffed the shepherd boy.

CHAPTER XIV TRAVELLERS' EXPERIENCES

IN order to gain an accurate idea of the pleasures and discomforts incidental to travel when the public stage and mail coaches constituted the only means of locomotion, it is necessary to read the diaries written by men who lived in those days, and who have left an account of their experiences. Some found coaching delightful and enjoyed themselves, others thought it hateful and were miserable; difference of opinion usually traceable to their own characters, the state of the weather, and the nature of their travelling companions.

Celebrities travelling unrecognized occasionally heard their merits and demerits discussed with considerable freedom. Macready heard his acting lauded to the skies by a fellow passenger who was transported with joy when he found himself in such close proximity to his hero.

Richard Brinsley Sheridan found less cause for pride returning to London from an electioneering campaign in Staffordshire, where he had swallowed quarts of Staffordshire ale, and eaten innumerable legs of pork, mutton, and turnips, "eating his way into the confidence of the burghers." His companions in the coach were three gentlemen who fell to discussing the political situation with great frankness. One, who sat opposite Sheridan, was especially vehement, and denounced Monckton (the present member) as "A madman or a fool," for taking under his wing "the adventurer Sheridan," and scandalously attempting "to bolster

him into the House of Commons." The only satisfactory thing about the matter was that both would for a certainty be defeated. The second passenger sincerely hoped it might be so, but at the same time he had an uneasy suspicion that Monckton had increased rather than decreased his popularity by his coalition with Sheridan.

"Who is the man?" drawled the third man.

Passenger number one immediately volunteered the information: "A low fellow, a fit companion for horse jockeys and grooms, so I hear: *for I don't know him, and don't wish to know him*—a fellow full of quips, jokes and jests and vulgar jocularities."

Sheridan, taken aback at this conception of himself, remained silent, and escaped further enlightenment as to his character by the stoppage of the coach and the appearance of the guard with the agreeable intimation: "Sup here, gentlemen."

Food and drink loosened restraint, and Sheridan entered into conversation with his companions, causing them much merriment by his ready wit. All too soon came the hated "Coach is ready," and as they left the inn Sheridan took one of the gentlemen aside and inquired the name of the man who had so bitterly denounced him.

"That gentleman, sir, is Mr. Richard Wilson, the eminent solicitor of Lincoln's Inn Fields."

The passengers resumed their seats, and began to question Sheridan, whom they termed a "devilish agreeable fellow."

"A stranger in these parts, sir?"

Sheridan—"Well, not exactly, more generally perhaps, than particularly known; and only waiting my time to become better acquainted with the good men of Staffordshire."

"Do you propose settling in this county?"

Sheridan—"That entirely depends on circumstances. My present journey to London is connected with that event; but when we have to deal with lawyers we can never calculate with any certainty on the issue."

This, as Sheridan expected, brought the first passage on the carpet.

1st Passenger—"The law, sir, committed to intelligent hands, and duly administered, is our only protection, the only security we have for our lives and property."

Sheridan—"You must pardon me, I do not complain of the law—I am a law abider. My complaint is of its practitioners who convert the law to their own ends, and then abuse it—who will pick the pockets of their client with a bland smile and involve him in a suit for the sake of the fees."

1st Passenger—"Sir, you are severe and unjust; your remarks cannot apply to the profession generally."

Sheridan—"I shall be happy if you will supply me with a case where I may be proved in error."

1st Passenger—"Many, sir—many."

Sheridan—"I presume you think so. But let me state a case in proof of my argument; and which, I think, will cover the whole of the fraternity. There is a low fellow who keeps his office in Lincoln's Inn Fields, high in his profession, who will sneak into your title deeds

and absorb the rental: he will *not* pick a pocket, but, soaring high for nobler game, hungering for a fee, will by his quirks and quidlebets, his chancery bills and his subtle pleas, corrupt the law; defeat the ends of justice, and drive his miserable beggared client to suicide or the mad-house."

1st Passenger (greatly excited)—"Name, sir, name. I know no such practitioner in Lincoln's Inn Fields: respectable men, sir—all respectable men."

Sheridan—(with pretended reluctance)—"I do not think I could justify myself in naming the man, *for I do not know him, and I do not wish to know him*; but since you desire it, I shall freely give you his name, leaving it to himself to absolve it of the calumny. His name, sir, is Richard Wilson."

1st Passenger (gathering himself up in insulted dignity)—"I, sir, am Richard Wilson."

Sheridan—"Indeed! why then we are quits, for I am Richard Brinsley Sheridan."

"The devil you are!" roared passenger number three, suddenly seeing the humour of the situation. The others joined in, and laughed immoderately at the neat manner in which Mr. Richard Wilson had been hoist with his own petard. The utmost good fellowship then prevailed for the rest of the journey and, in the lawyer, Sheridan gained a friend who stood by him to the end of his life.

Very similar was the case of Sydney Smith, who said, "Most people sulk in stage-coaches; I always talk." True to this principle he conversed amicably with a fellow passenger to York, who on nearing the city remarked: "There is a very clever man, they say, but a d—— odd fellow, lives near here—Sydney Smith."

"He may be very odd," assented the gentleman thus spoken of, taking off his hat and making a profound bow, "I dare say he is, but odd as he is, he is here, very much at your service."

"Poor man! I thought he would have sunk into his boots and vanished through the bed of the carriage, he was so distressed," commented Sydney Smith, adding with his accustomed humour, "but I thought I had better tell him, or he might proceed to say I had murdered my grandmother, which I must have resented, you know."

As he was going on a visit to Lord Brougham, by a night coach, two Scotch girls got in at Carlisle, one remarking as she arranged her bandboxes: "It's very disagreeable getting into a coach in the dark, it's impossible to see one's company."

"Very true, ma'am, and you have a great loss in not seeing me, for I am a remarkably handsome man," responded Sydney Smith with much promptitude.

"No, sir! Are you really?" exclaimed the ladies, pleasurable excited.

"Yes, and in the flower of my youth," cheerfully lied Sydney Smith, who was elderly and fat. The coach passed a street lamp, and the girls caught a brief and indistinct vision of the bulky form opposite them.

"La, sir, you seem very stout," said one doubtfully.

"Oh no, not at all, ma'am, it's only my greatcoat," he assured her earnestly.

"Where are you going, sir?" was the next inquiry.

"To Brougham Hall."

This made a sensation.

"Why you must be a very remarkable man to be going to Brougham Hall!"

"I am a very remarkable man, ma'am," Sydney Smith confirmed.

The ladies asked many more questions, vainly tried to discover their companion's name, and, as it was still dark when they left the coach, they did so under the impression that they had left behind them a perfect Adonis, and a nobleman at least.

Charles Matthews, the comedian, likewise used his inventive faculties for the bewilderment of fellow travellers, for on the way to Portsmouth he took it into his head to pretend that he was a madman. His companion, entering into the joke, posed as his keeper, and gravely informed the landlord of the inn where they halted that his friend, a major in the army, had been wounded in the head in Spain, which had quite deranged him. Matthews acted the part of madman so realistically that the people at the inn were terrified out of their lives. In the midst of the general excitement Lord Ormond arrived, and as a treat was allowed to have a peep at the lunatic, carrying on in an amazing manner. Lord Ormond recognized the actor, and nearly betrayed him, but, managing to control himself, he played up to Matthews and his friend in a manner which caused infinite merriment to all three.

Matthews' profession necessitated much moving about from place to place, and in consequence he had intimate acquaintance with the coaches of the time.

That he placed implicit faith in the morals and maxims contained in Dr. Kitchiner's *Traveller's Oracle*, can be gathered from the account of a journey to Liverpool in 1823.

Of his companions he wrote in no measured terms: "Three great hulking rascals, and afraid of the cold, pretty dears!" Have the windows open they would not. "There was no possibility of getting a breath of air, but by quarrelling. Not even the commonplace politeness of a coach traveller was practised. *Would it be agreeable to have this window up?*" No, up it went. I watched them to sleep, *stole* it down. In a few minutes up!—and down again; and so on, without a word.

"If this goes on I shall be smothered," thought Charles Matthews—then he remembered the "Oracle"; that invaluable work provided for just such a contingency. Seeing that the "pretty dears" were three to one, he hesitated to follow Dr. Kitchiner's advice, anent breaking the window, too literally, but when the coach halted at the next stage, he got out and whispered his plan to the willing ears of an Irishman whose seat was on the roof.

Paddy assented rapturously, and when clambering back to his place, "accidentally" kicked his boot right through one of the coach windows! Fresh air in plenty then, and Matthews hugged himself delightedly. Arrived at his destination, and no longer obliged to keep unwilling company with the three "pretty dears," he desired to reveal his duplicity, and calling for the guard, paid him the price of the broken pane. "The faces of

the party would have been a subject for Wilkie; particularly the Irishman and the guard, who evidently had a perception of the humorous."

The question as to whether the window should be open or shut, always a nice one, gave rise to a laughable encounter in a North Mail one cold winter's night. Charles Matthews, who said that he never entered a coach without encountering "either a baby in arms, a sick child, or a man in consumption," found to his delight that there were only two occupants, an Englishman and a Scotsman, who seated opposite each other left him the fourth place for his legs, a luxury greatly to be appreciated on a night journey. Matthews put up his feet, the Englishman wrapped himself up in a shawl, the Scotsman enveloped his head and shoulders in enormous folds of white linen, and their several preparations finished they all dropped off to sleep.

Suddenly the coach stopped with a jolt that shook them into half wakefulness. They had halted in front of a small inn, and a convivial party was bidding one of their number an uproarious but cordial farewell. He for his part shouted them "Good-night" in stentorian tones, and exhorted them to remember that he had paid *his* share of the reckoning.

Then, to the wrath of the three insides, the guard opened the door and in came a huge Yorkshire drover, his coat covered with snow. Instinctively they all drew back from the damp stranger, who, ignorant of the whereabouts of the vacant seat, and slightly muddled as to his senses, stumbled about in his endeavours to

find it. He trod on the toes of the other passengers, lurched up against them, only to be pushed off with much vigour, till Matthews, with a particularly vicious thrust, caused him to sit down in the fourth place.

The actor and his two companions all indignant and aggrieved at the intrusion, pulled up their wraps and once more composed themselves for sleep. This was not to be, for the drover, taking hold of the window-pull, demanded loudly: "Coompany! oop or down?"

Answer made they none.

Anxious to do the agreeable he again inquired: "Coompany! *oop* or down?" Still no one answered. A smothered oath bespoke his indignation at such discourteous treatment, and he demanded in some exasperation: "Dom it! I say, Coompany—oop or down?"

The other three, seething with wrath, would not deign to notice his existence, and with a "dom it," he let the window remain down. The cold night air rushing in made his companions shiver, but they were prepared to endure any sufferings rather than speak to the hated intruder.

For a short time he was silent, then suddenly he saw something which astonished him; when he entered the inn early in the evening he had left a world green and brown with the neutral tints of winter, now the ground was white; the change struck him as miraculous and he exclaimed:

"Eh! ma God! what's this? Whoight! the whole country's covered wi' snow—Eh! it's awful. *Coompany*—wake up and see th' snow! Eh! they're all asleep. Good

God! whoight it's wonderful and awful. Good Lord, what a noight—*what* a noight. Eh! God presarve all poor mariners on the Western coast this noight."

It struck him as so astounding, that he determined his fellow travellers should look at it, and roared out with increased vehemence—"Coompany! Eh! they're dead, I reckon. Eh! my God! what a noight. Awful!"

So he went on till the English gentleman became frenzied and spoke: "I wish, sir, you would show some feeling for *us*, and hold your tongue. We were all asleep when you came in, and you've done nothing but talk and disturb us ever since. You are a positive *nuisance*."

"Eh!" exclaimed the drover surprised, "I loike that, indeed! Aw've as much roight here I reckon as others—*dom* av've paid, haven't I?"

Hearing no confirmation for these statements, the sense of injustice rose in him, and he proceeded to recount his claims for consideration.

"Aw'm a respectable mon—my name's John Luckie—I owes nobody onything—I pays King's taxes—I'm a respectable *mon*, I say. Aw help to support Church and State."

On he went with all the senseless swagger of cup valour and self-laudation, till once more the Englishman gave vent to anger, and the huge drover again summed up his title to respect.

"Eh! dom!—what have I done? I coom'd into t'coich loike a gentleman—didn't I? I was civil—wasn't I? I said *Coompany, oop or down*. But ye none o' ye had the politeness to answer! Ye were not loike gentlemen!

Dom! I'm a respectable *mon* Aw say—I've no book larning, but I pays King's taxes, my name's John Luckie." His sense of oppression became so strong that he boldly declared he would not hold his tongue, nor be quiet. "No, not if Baron Hullock[1] or the great Mr. Brougham[2] were in t'coich."

This gave Charles Matthews an idea, and leaning forward he said softly and confidentially, "Hush! you are not aware that you have been speaking all this time to Baron Hullock himself!"

This dismayed the Yorkshire man considerably: "Whoigh, you don't say so?"

"Fact, I assure you," said Matthews hugely delighted, "and," pointing to the Scotsman with his white drapery, "Opposite him is Lady Hullock."

John Luckie was staggered. "Whoigh! Good God, don't tell me *that*! Eh! what *shall* I *do*? Good Lord! what have I said? Art thou sure?"

"I am indeed," said Mr. Matthews impressively, "they are Baron and Lady Hullock—and I am Mr. Brougham."

John Luckie went all to pieces.

"Eh!" he roared in terror, struggling with the coach door, "Let me go! Let me go! I'm no coompany for sitch gentlefolks; aw've no book larning; I'm no but John Luckie. Let me get out—here guard! Stop! Stop! I warn't roide here any longer!"

In his struggle he inconvenienced the other passengers, and Charles Matthews added to his terror by imitating the cry of a hurt child.

[1] Baron of the Exchequer. [2] Lord Chancellor.

"Eh, ma God! what is there a bairn in t'coach too? Eh, my Lord Baron, pray forgive me, I meant no offence. My name's John Luckie. Aw'm a respectable mon, aw pays King's taxes, I said Coompany *oop or down*. I meant to be civil. Eh! my Lady Hullock, I hope aw've not hurt thy bairn."

The child's cries increased; so did John Luckie's panic. "Eh! my poor bairn, where art thee? *Dom*! what *moost* I do? Guard! stop and let me out! Eh! what a noight! Guard! I'm no fit coompany for Baron Hullock and Mr. Brougham, I know. Let me out, I say."

At last the coachman did stop, and out rolled John Luckie begging the Baron and his lady and Mr. Brougham to overlook his mistake. He mounted to the roof, and as the coach went on its way the inside passengers ever and anon heard phrases of John Luckie's conversation as he related his adventures to the coachman and guard. "Baron Hullock—Respectable mon—Mr. Bruffen—Awful noight! Oop or down!—King's taxes——"

At the time when the first Balloon Ascents were causing great sensation, Matthews came down in the Liverpool coach, and among his fellow passengers was Sadler, the aeronaut. At Wolverhampton an outside passenger beckoned to Matthews, and said mysteriously: "Do you know wha's 'at inside t'coach?"

The actor shook his head.

"Why, Sadler, the *Aurora*."

Mr. Incledon, a friend of Charles Matthews, was a person of great eccentricity and caused considerable

embarrassment to his friend. Being on a coach soon after the death of his wife, he evinced great interest in a fellow passenger apparently in the last stage of consumption. On leaving the coach he said to him: "My good man, we're going to leave you. It's my opinion, my poor fellow, that you are bespoke; you're now, I take it, as good as ready money to the undertaker. In fact, you're *booked*, so there, there's a seven-shilling piece for you, my good man, and when you go to heaven and see my sainted Jane, pray tell her you saw me, and that I'm well."

On a coach journey one hot summer day Mr. Incledon was annoyed and terrified whenever a wasp entered the carriage. The journey lasted forty miles, but he could not be dissuaded from the firm conviction that it was the same wasp, who travelled the whole distance with the express purpose of alarming him.

"There's that cursed wasp again!" he would exclaim, and try, with many imprecations to destroy it, to the considerable disgust of a grave taciturn man who occupied a seat in the coach. Presently this gentleman fell asleep, and a wasp entering the coach Mr. Incledon redoubled his efforts to catch it. At last it settled on the face of the sleeper. Mr. Incledon caught his breath, lifted his hand, and brought it down with earnest violence on the face of the somnolent passenger, exclaiming triumphantly: "Ha! d—n you. I've done for you now!" The gentleman so unceremoniously awakened rose up in wrath, and even with the mangled yellow corpse on his cheek as evidence, and Incledon's earnest

A DOUBLE-BODIED COACH

Original lent by Messrs. Ackermann

assertions and many additional oaths, he could scarcely be convinced that it was not a deliberate attempt on his life.

Incledon, always extremely fastidious concerning his food, usually made direct for the larder the moment the coach stopped at an inn, and once while the horses were being changed he chanced to see a loin of pork upon which he set his affections. Going up to the landlord, a portly, independent person, he requested leave to purchase the delicacy to take on with him.

The landlord refused, saying the loin was destined to appear on the table for a coach which dined at the inn later in the day. This denial inflamed Incledon's anxiety, and he begged the landlord to let him have it at the price it would be charged to the dinner customers.

"No," said the landlord.

"At double the price, then?" coaxed Incledon.

"No."

Incledon grew desperate, and pulling all the loose silver out of his pocket he begged the landlord to take it and give him the coveted piece of pork.

"No," said the landlord, and Incledon nearly wept.

Charles Matthews, ashamed of his friend's childish behaviour, walked off not waiting to see the end of the transaction. When they resumed their journey, Mr. Incledon took a handkerchief out of his pocket and displayed the uncooked piece of pork triumphantly.

"What, you prevailed at last, how did you manage to coax that surly fellow out of it?" said Matthews.

"Charles Matthews?" replied Mr. Incledon solemnly,

"I did *not* prevail; my dear boy, the man was a brute. I offered him all the silver in my pocket. I had set my heart upon the thing, my dear Charles Matthews. I couldn't have eaten anything else, my dear boy, so what do you think I did? Don't be angry, Charles, don't be angry; a man like yourself can have no idea what I feel, who want little delicacies to keep up my stamina. My dear Charles, the man was unfeeling, nothing could move him; I waited till he left the door and then I went into the larder and took the pork, and left double the value in its place!"

Mrs. Carlyle, in a letter to a friend, describes her coaching experiences in September 1836.

"I got into the mail the other night with as much repugnance and trepidation as if it had been a Phalaris' brazen bull, instead of a Christian vehicle, invented for purposes of mercy—not of cruelty. There were three besides myself when we started, but two dropped off at the end of the first stage, and the rest of the way I had as usual half the coach to myself. My fellow passenger had that highest of terrestrial qualities, which for me a fellow passenger can possess—he was silent. I think his name was Roscoe, and he read sundry long papers to himself, with the pondering air of a lawyer.

"We breakfasted at Lichfield at five in the morning, on muddy coffee and scorched toast, which made me once more lyrically recognize in my heart (not without a sigh of regret) the very different coffee and toast with which you helped me out of my headache. At two there was another stop for ten minutes, that might be employed in lunching or otherwise. Feeling myself

more fevered than hungry, I determined on spending the time in combing my hair, and washing my face and hands with vinegar. In the midst of this solacing operation I heard what seemed to be the mail running its rapid course, and quick as lightning it flashed on me, 'There it goes! and my luggage is on the top of it, and my purse is in the pocket of it, and here am I stranded on an unknown beach, without so much as a sixpence in my pocket to pay for the vinegar I have already consumed!' Without my bonnet, my hair hanging down my back, my face half dried, and the towel with which I was drying it firmly grasped in my hand, I dashed out—along, down, opening wrong doors, stumbling over steps, cursing the day I was born, still more the day on which I took a notion to travel, and arrived finally at the bar of the inn, in a state of excitement bordering on lunacy. The barmaids looked on me with wonder and amazement. 'Is the coach gone?' I gasped out. 'The coach? yes!' 'Oh, and you have let it go away without me! Oh! stop it, cannot you stop it?' and out I rushed into the street, with streaming hair and streaming towel, and almost brained myself against—the mail! which was standing there in all stillness, without so much as horses in it! What I heard was a heavy coach. And now, having descended like a maniac, I ascended again like a fool, and dried the other half of my face, and put on my bonnet, and came back a sadder and wiser woman."

In the year 1830 speculation as to the railway was rife, and Charles Lamb travelled with a talkative gentleman who for twenty miles discussed "the probable advantages of steam carriages." Lamb knew nothing of the subject, but as it was one in which wild speculation

and vivid imagination might well pass for erudition he sustained his part with credit, and the gentleman "thought he had met with a well-informed passenger, which is an accident so desirable on a stage-coach."

Unfortunately, when the topic of railways was exhausted he changed the subject with some suddenness by asking "the probability of its turning out a good turnip season." Lamb, "not knowing a turnip from a potato," replied glibly, and with seeming irrelevance: "I believe it depends very much upon boiled legs of mutton." A reply which astounded the gentleman and set the other passengers laughing.

CHAPTER XV TWO FOREIGNERS ON COACHING

TWO good accounts of stage-coach travelling —one for and the other against—were written by foreigners, who regarded English customs with interested and critical eyes. Both, being possessed of fluent pens, wrote vivid accounts of their journeys and their associates by the way. The men were Charles Moritz, a Prussian clergyman who visited England in 1782, and considered coaching abhorrent; and Washington Irving, an American, who came over in 1815, and saw in the stage-coach a joyous and delightful thing.

Moritz was the forerunner of the modern tourist, for he came to England on a brief visit, determined to probe our national character to the depths. He noted down everything that struck him as new or unusual, for the edification of his Prussian friends. Though his feelings on the subject speedily changed, he was at first disposed to regard the stage-coaches rather favourably.

"Yesterday afternoon I had the luxury, for the first time, of being driven in an English stage. These coaches are, at least in the eyes of a foreigner, quite elegant, lined in the inside; and with two seats large enough to accommodate six persons; but it must be owned, when the carriage is full, the company are rather crowded.

"At the White Hart from whence the coach sets out, there was, at first, only an elderly lady who got in, but as we drove along, it was soon filled, and mostly

by ladies, there being only one more gentleman and myself. The conversation of the ladies among themselves, who appeared to be a little acquainted with each other, seemed to me to be but very insipid and tiresome."

"The gentleman, by way of introducing an appropriate topic, proceeded to relate hair raising stories of the different robberies which had been committed in the neighbourhood through which the coach was then passing. These blood curdling revelations alarmed the ladies, when the gentleman by way of soothing their fears, and at the same time proving to Moritz the incalculable superiority of everything English, dilated at length on 'the greatness of soul' displayed by English thieves compared to their low counterparts on the Continent.

"But to return to our stage," says Moritz, after making copious notes on highwaymen, "I must observe, that they have here a curious way of riding, not in, but upon the stage-coach. Persons to whom it is not convenient to pay a full price, instead of the inside, sit on the top of the coach, without any seats or even a rail. By what means passengers thus fasten themselves securely on the roof of the vehicles, I know not; but you constantly see numbers seated there, apparently at their ease, and in perfect safety.

"This they call riding on the outside; for which they pay only half as much as those pay who are within: we had at present six of these passengers over our heads, who, when we alighted, frequently made such a noise and bustle, as sometimes almost frightened us. He who can properly balance himself, rides not incommodiously on the outside; and in the summer time, in fine weather, on account of the prospects, it certainly is more pleasant than it is inside, excepting that the company is generally

low, and the dust is likewise more troublesome than in the inside, where, at any rate, you may draw up the windows according to your pleasure."

Moritz paid two shillings as coach fare from London to Richmond, from whence after a short visit he started to walk to Oxford on foot. He met with such scant civility at the inns and villages on the road that he came to the conclusion that the English were not a nation of shopkeepers but of horsemen:

"To what various, singular, and unaccountable fatalities and adventures are not foot-travellers exposed in this land of carriages and horses! . . . A traveller on foot in this country seems to be considered a sort of wild man, or out-of-the-way being, who is stared at, pitied, suspected, and shunned by everybody that meets him. At least this has hitherto been my case, on the road from Richmond to Windsor."

Moritz put up at the Mitre Hotel in Oxford where he was well treated though he came on foot, but he attributed this to the fact that, after a convivial evening with some exceedingly jovial clergymen, he in a moment of expansion told the waiter that he must not think that because he arrived on foot he would tip less, but quite the contrary.

Moritz decided not to expose himself to any more insults as a pedestrian, so took a place in the Birmingham stage-coach. He had for a companion a young officer who was going to pay a visit to his three sisters at school in Birmingham. Outside the coach were some soldiers

and their wives, and Moritz was much concerned for the women's safety. That the danger of their position was very real, he shortly afterwards proved, for when the time came to return to London he took a place on the roof of the Northampton coach, and soon repented the rashness that had led him to trust himself in such a perilous position.

"But this ride from Leicester to Northampton, I shall remember as long as I live," he wrote tragically. "The coach drove from the yard through a part of the house. The inside passengers got in, in the yard; but we on the outside were obliged to clamber up in the public street, because we should have had no room for our heads to pass under the gateway. My companions on the top of the coach were a farmer, a young man very decently dressed, and a black-a-moor.

"The getting up alone was at the risk of one's life, and when I was up I was obliged to sit just at the corner of the coach, with nothing to hold by, but a sort of little handle,[1] fastened on the side. I sat nearest the wheel; and the moment that we set off, I fancied that I saw certain death await me. All I could do was to take still safer hold of the handle, and to be more and more careful to preserve my balance.

"The machine now rolled along with prodigious rapidity, over the stones through the town, and every moment we seemed to fly into the air; so that it was almost a miracle that we still stuck to the coach, and did not fall. We seemed to be thus on the wing, and to fly, as often as we passed through a village, or went down a hill.

[1] These in the advertisements of the time were called "Bows on the top."

"At last the being continually in fear of my life became insupportable, and as we were going up a hill, and consequently proceeding rather slower than usual, I crept from the top of the coach, and got snug into the basket.

"'O, sir, sir, you will be shaken to death,' said the black; but I flattered myself he exaggerated the unpleasantness of my post. As long as we went up hill, it was easy and pleasant. And, having had little or no sleep the night before, I was almost asleep among the trunks and the packages; but how soon was the case altered when we came to go down hill; then all the trunks and parcels began, as it were, to dance around me, and everything in the basket seemed to be alive, and I every moment received from them such violent blows that I thought my last hour was come. I now found that what the black had told me was no exaggeration; but my complaints were useless. I was obliged to suffer this torture nearly an hour, till we came to another hill again, when quite shaken to pieces and sadly bruised, I again crept to the top of the coach, and took possession of my former seat. 'Ah! did I not tell you that you would be shaken to death?' said the black, as I was getting up; but I made no reply. Indeed, I was ashamed; and I now write this as a warning to all strangers to stage-coaches who may happen to take it into their heads, without being used to it, to take a place on the outside of an English post-coach; and still more, a place in the basket. . . .

"From Harborough to Leicester, I had a most dreadful journey. It rained incessantly; and as before we had been covered with dust, we now were soaked with rain. My neighbour, the young man who sat next to me in the middle, that my inconvenience might be complete, every now and then fell asleep; and as, when

asleep, he perpetually bolted and rolled against me, with the whole weight of his body, more than once he was very near pushing me entirely off my seat."

When Moritz arrived at Northampton he went straight to bed, and the next day resolved to continue his journey to London in some other stage-coach.

"The journey from Northampton to London I can again scarcely call a journey; but rather a perpetual motion, or removal from one place to another, in a close box; during your conveyance you may, perhaps, if you are in luck, converse with two or three people shut up with you. But I was not so fortunate; for my three travelling companions were all farmers, who slept so soundly, that even the hearty knocks of the head with which they often saluted each other, did not awaken them.

"Their faces, bloated and discoloured by their copious use of ale and brandy, looked as they lay before me, like so many lumps of dead flesh. When now and then they woke, sheep, in which they all dealt, was the first and last topic of their conversation. One of the three, however, differed not a little from the other two; his face was sallow and thin, his eyes quite sunk and hollow, his long lank fingers hung quite loose, and as if detached from his hands. He was, in short, the picture of avarice and misanthropy. The former he certainly was; for at every stage he refused to give the coachman the accustomed perquisite, which everybody else paid, and every farthing he was forced to part with, forced a *P—d d—m* from his heart. As he sat in the coach, he seemed anxious to shun the light; and so shut up every window he could come at, except when now and then I opened

them, to take a slight view of the charm of the country through which we seemed to be flying rather than driving.

"Our road lay through Newport—Pagnell, Dunstable, St. Albans, Barnet, to Islington, or rather to London itself. . . . At Dunstable, if I do not mistake, we breakfasted, and here, as is usual, everything was paid for in common by all the passengers; as I did not know this, I ordered coffee separately; however, when it came, the three farmers also drank of it, and gave me some of their tea. They asked me what part of the world I came from; whereas in Germany we generally inquired, what countryman a person is. When we had breakfasted, and were again seated in the coach, all the farmers, the lean one excepted, seemed quite alive again, and now began a conversation on religion and on politics. One of them brought the history of Samson on the carpet, which the clergyman of the parish, he said, had lately explained, I dare say, very satisfactorily; though the honest farmer still had a great many doubts about the great gate which Samson carried away, and about the foxes with the fire-brands between their tails. In other respects, however, the man seemed not to be either uninformed or sceptical.

"They now proceeded to relate to each other various stories, chiefly out of the Bible; not merely as important facts, but as interesting narratives, which they would have told and listened to with equal satisfaction had they met them anywhere else. One of them had only heard these stories from his minister in the church, not being able to read them himself. . . .

"We now frequently took up fresh passengers, who rode a short distance with us, and then got out again. Among others was a woman from London, whose business was the making of brandy. She entertained us

with a very circumstantial narrative of all the shocking scenes during the late riot in that city. . . .

"At length we arrived at London without any accident, in a hard rain, about one o'clock."

Moritz added that he looked "like a crazy creature" after his journey, and was most earnestly thankful to be at the end of it.

Washington Irving says:

"In the course of a December tour in Yorkshire, I rode for a long distance in one of the public coaches, on the day preceding Christmas. The coach was crowded, both inside and out, with passengers, who, by their talk, seemed principally bound to the mansions of relations or friends, to eat the Christmas dinner. It was loaded also with hampers of game, and baskets and boxes of delicacies; and hares hung dangling their long ears about the coachman's box, presents from distant friends for the impending feast. I had three fine, rosy-cheeked schoolboys for my fellow passengers, inside, full of the buxom health and manly spirit which I have observed in the children of this country. They were returning home for the holidays in fine glee, and promising themselves a world of enjoyment. It was delightful to hear the gigantic plans of the little rogues, and the impracticable feats they were to perform during their six weeks' emancipation from the abhorred thraldom of book, birch, and pedagogue. They were full of anticipations of the meeting with the family and household, down to the very cat and dog; and of the joy they were to give their little sisters by the presents with which their pockets were crammed; but the meeting to which they seemed

THE DAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS

Original lent by Messrs. Ackermann

to look forward with the greatest impatience was with Bantam, which I found to be a pony, and according to their talk, possessed of more virtues than any steed since the days of Bucephalus. How he could trot! how he could run! and then such leaps as he would take—there was not a hedge in the whole country that he could not clear.

"They were under the particular guardianship of the coachman, to whom, whenever an opportunity presented, they addressed a host of questions, and pronounced him one of the best fellows in the world. Indeed, I could not but notice the more than ordinary air of bustle and importance of the coachman, who wore his hat a little on one side, and had a large bunch of Christmas greens stuck in the buttonhole of his coat. He is always a personage full of mighty care and business, but he is particularly so during this season, having so many commissions to execute in consequence of the great interchange of presents. And here, perhaps, it may not be unacceptable to my untravelled readers to have a sketch that may serve as a general representation of this very numerous and important class of functionaries, who have a dress, a manner, a language, an air, peculiar to themselves, and prevalent throughout the fraternity; so that, wherever an English stage-coachman may be seen, he cannot be mistaken for one of any other craft or mystery.

"He has commonly a broad, full face, curiously mottled with red, as if the blood had been forced by hard feeding into every vessel of the skin; he is swelled into jolly dimensions by frequent potations of malt liquors, and his bulk is still further increased by a multiplicity of coats, in which he is buried like a cauliflower, the upper one reaching to his heels. He wears a broad-brimmed, low-crowned hat; a huge roll of coloured

handkerchief about his neck, knowingly knotted and tucked in at the bosom; and has in summer time a large bouquet of flowers in his buttonhole; the present, most probably, of some enamoured country lass. His waistcoat is commonly of some bright colour, striped, and his smallclothes extend far below the knees, to meet a pair of jockey-boots which reach about half-way up his legs.

"All this costume is maintained with much precision; he has a pride in having his clothes of excellent materials; and, notwithstanding the seeming grossness of his appearance, there is still discernible that neatness and propriety of person which is almost inherent in an Englishman. He enjoys great consequence and consideration along the road; has frequent conferences with the village housewives, who look upon him as a man of great trust and dependence; and he seems to have a good understanding with every bright-eyed country lass. The moment he arrives where the horses are to be changed, he throws down the reins with something of an air, and abandons the cattle to the care of the ostler; his duty being merely to drive from one stage to another. When off the box, his hands are thrust into the pockets of his greatcoat, and he rolls about the inn yard with an air of the most absolute lordliness. Here he is generally surrounded by an admiring throng of ostlers, stable-boys, shoeblacks, and those nameless hangers-on that infest inns and taverns, and run errands, and do all kinds of odd jobs, for the privilege of battening on the drippings of the kitchen and the leakage of the taproom. These all look up to him as to an oracle; treasure up his cant phrases; echo his opinions about horses and other topics of jockey lore; and above all, endeavour to imitate his air and carriage. Every ragamuffin that has a coat to his back thrusts his hands in

the pockets, rolls in his gait, talks slang, and is an embryo Coachey.

"Perhaps it might be owing to the pleasant serenity that reigned in my own mind, that I fancied I saw cheerfulness in every countenance throughout the journey. A stage-coach, however, carries animation always with it, and puts the world in motion as it whirls along. The horn, sounded at the entrance of a village, produces a general bustle. Some hasten forth to meet friends, some with bundles and bandboxes to secure places, and in the hurry of the moment can hardly take leave of the group that accompanies them. In the meantime the coachman has a world of small commissions to execute. Sometimes he delivers a hare or pheasant; sometimes jerks a small parcel or newspaper to the door of a public-house, and sometimes, with knowing leer and words of sly import, hands to some half-blushing, half-laughing housemaid an odd-shaped billet-doux from some rustic admirer. As the coach rattles through the village, every one runs to the window, and you have glances on every side of fresh country faces and blooming giggling girls. At the corners are assembled juntos of village idlers and wise men, who take their stations there for the important purpose of seeing company pass; but the sagest knot is generally at the blacksmith's, to whom the passing of the coach is an event fruitful of much speculation. The smith, with the horse's heel in his lap, pauses as the vehicle whirls by; the cyclops round the anvil suspend their ringing hammers, and suffer the iron to grow cool; and the sooty spectre in brown paper cap, labouring at the bellows, leans on the handle for a moment, and permits the asthmatic engine to heave a long-drawn sigh, while he glares through the murky smoke and sulphurous gleams of the smithy.

"Perhaps the impending holiday might have given a more than usual animation to the country, for it seemed to me as if everybody was in good spirits. Game, poultry, and other luxuries of the table, were in brisk circulation in the villages; the grocers', butchers', and fruiterers' shops were thronged with customers. The housewives were stirring briskly about, putting their dwellings in order; and the glossy branches of holly, with their bright berries, began to appear at the windows. . . .

"I was roused from this fit of luxurious meditation by a shout from my little travelling companions. They had been looking out of the coach windows for the last few miles, recognizing every tree and cottage as they approached home, and now there was a general outburst of joy—'There's John; and there's old Carlo! and there's Bantam!' cried the happy little rogues, clapping their hands.

"At the end of the lane there was an old sober-looking servant in livery, waiting for them; he was accompanied by a superannuated pointer, and by the redoubtable Bantam, a little old rat of a pony, with a shaggy mane and long rusty tail, who stood dozing quietly by the roadside, little dreaming of the bustling time that awaited him.

"I was pleased to see the fondness with which the little fellows leaped upon the steady old footman, and hugged the pointer, who wriggled his whole body for joy. But Bantam was the great object of interest; all wanted to mount at once, and it was with some difficulty that John arranged that they should ride by turns, and the eldest should ride first.

"Off they set at last; one on the pony, with the dog bounding and barking before him, and the others holding John's hands; both talking at once, and over-

powering him with questions about home, and with school anecdotes. I looked after them with a feeling in which I do not know whether pleasure or melancholy predominated; for I was reminded of those days when, like them, I had neither known care nor sorrow, and a holiday was the summit of earthly felicity. We stopped a few minutes afterwards to water the horses, and on resuming our route, a turn of the road brought us in sight of a neat country seat. I could just distinguish the forms of a lady and two young girls in the portico, and I saw my little comrades, with Bantam, Carlo and old John, trooping along the carriage road. I leaned out of the coach window in hopes of witnessing the happy meeting, but a grove of trees shut it from my sight.

"In the evening we reached a village where I had determined to pass the night. As we drove into the great gateway of the inn, I saw on one side the light of a rousing kitchen fire beaming through a window. I entered, and admired, for the hundredth time, that picture of convenience, neatness and broad, honest enjoyment, the kitchen of an English inn. It was of spacious dimensions, hung round with copper and tin vessels highly polished, and decorated here and there with a Christmas green. Hams, tongues, and flitches of bacon, were suspended from the ceiling; a smoke-jack made its ceaseless clanking beside the fire-place, and a clock ticked in one corner. A well-scoured deal table extended along one side of the kitchen, with a cold round of beef and other hearty viands upon it, over which two foaming tankards of ale seemed mounting guard. Travellers of inferior order were preparing to attack this stout repast, while others sat smoking and gossiping over their ale on two high-backed oaken settles beside the fire. Trim housema ds were hurrying backwards and forwards under the direction of a fresh

bustling landlady; but still seizing an occasional moment to exchange a flippant word, and have a rallying laugh with the group round the fire. The scene completely realized Poor Robin's idea of the comforts of mid-winter:

> "Now trees their leafy hats do bare
> To reverence Winter's silver hair;
> A handsome hostess, merry host,
> A pot of ale now and a toast,
> Tobacco and a good coal fire,
> Are things this season doth require."

CHAPTER XVI THE COMING OF THE RAILWAY

THE introduction of steam as a means of transport was an innovation that swept the coaches right off the road and irretrievably destroyed them. It was not merely a readjustment of an existing system as the mail-coaches had been, but the substitution of an entirely new order of things which revolutionized travel, and cut, as it were, a sharp dividing line between the leisurely day of our forefathers and the modern hustling, hurrying age.

When it was first suggested that steam should be utilized for draught purposes in place of horses, the idea occasioned much merriment down the road. The coachmen in particular regarded it as a huge joke: "The tin kettle drive us off the road!" they would exclaim with hearty guffaws of laughter at the very presumption of the thing. "It can never come to pass," they declared emphatically, "no country in the world has such travelling as we have; what do we want with railways?"

With coaches running twelve miles an hour, what more could men desire? "If that isn't fast enough for them, let them get out and run," said the swell dragsmen with withering scorn. Whilst, "If your head never aches till the railways come, you won't have much to complain of," was a favourite retort to anyone who thought "there might be something in it."

As a matter of fact, the railways came into existence at a critical time, for with the introduction of the penny

post in 1840 the national correspondence increased so enormously that the Post Office officials were at their wits' end to know how to cope with it. The heaviest nights were those when the American mails came in, and on such occasions the bags often weighed as much as 16 cwt. When this was the case, the capacity of the mail-box proved hopelessly insufficient, so the mail-bags had to be piled up on the roof, and fewer passengers could be carried in consequence.

The contractors too, owing to increased competition with the fast day coaches, evinced a growing disinclination to carry the mails. Instead of evincing anxiety for the privilege because it exempted the coaches from turnpike tolls, they demanded better contracts. The Oxford and Cheltenham coach, which had previously carried the mails free, put in a claim for £150 in addition to the turnpike dues, and this was paid by the Post Office till the coach ceased to run.

When it dawned on the country that railways, so far from being a mere fallacy, were about to become an important institution, it was startled from its position of smug superiority, and endeavoured ineffectually to drive the steam kettle from the land.

The railway question became the chief topic of conversation, and the country was divided into two factions: for and against. The columns of contemporary newspapers were the fields where the partisans of coach and railway fought their battles, and said exceeding bitter things of each other.

Whole towns with a blind disregard for futurity

rose up unanimous in determination to have no railroad near them if they could help it. Eton was positive its famous school would be ruined if the proposed Great Western line came anywhere near it. The authorities of Oxford even declared that if the proposed station was erected parents would cease to send their sons to the University. Railways might be all very well for places like Manchester or Liverpool, but "there was no trade to Oxford to justify or require so rapid a communication," and that it was never supposed that people would want to travel "like the wind from north to south, from east to west." The Mayor in 1838 said "he considered it most unjust and cruel that year after year the city should be taxed to oppose a bill so unjustifiable and so uncalled for."

Despite opposition the G.W.R. crept on and in April 1839 the newspapers reported:

The Opening of the Line to Reading

"The town of Reading, on Monday last, was much enlivened from an early hour in the morning, in consequence of the extension of the railroad to that place; numbers flocked from the surrounding country, and the town had the appearance of a grand holiday. Many of the inhabitants availed themselves of a cheap and expeditious ride to Twyford; some went as far as Maidenhead and Slough; and a few actually went by the first train to London, and back again to breakfast before 10 o'clock. The station was thronged the whole of the day by respectably dressed persons eager to view the arrival and departure of the trains. The extreme beauty

of the first spring day—the splendid scenery the station commands—the presence of hundreds of elegantly dressed females rendered the whole proceedings of a highly interesting nature."

So far back as 1791 Dr. Erasmus Darwin had published a remarkable prophecy, foretelling not only railways and motor-cars, but also aeroplanes.

> "Soon shall thy arm unconquered steam afar
> Drag the slow barge, or drive the rapid car;
> Or on wide, waving wings expanded bear
> The flying chariot through the fields of air.
> Fair crews triumphant, leaning from above,
> Shall wave the flutt'ring kerchiefs as they move;
> Or warrior bands alarm the gaping crowd,
> And armies shrink beneath the shadowy cloud."

By 1836 the victory of steam over horse seemed certain, and one writer was moved to prophesy what changes would have taken place in so short a period as seven years.

"Imagine the surprise of an Englishman coming to London (from a tour in *terra incognita*) in the year 1843. By that time the adoption of the new plan will be universal, and every description of wheeled carriage will be propelled by steam. What an interesting change will have taken place in the aspect and arrangements of the metropolis! Fuel, not horses, being the medium of impulse. The property of all public vehicles will naturally have changed hands; the *Golden Cross*, the *Bull and Mouth*, and the *Cross Keys*, will have ceased to exist! and the stage-coaches will be found setting off probably

from the magazines of our leading coal merchants—from The Old Barge House, Broken Wharf, Custom House and the dark arch under the Adelphi. Then the change in the detail of the road will be very whimsical at first. Instead of calling as now, for fresh horses, at a post town, we shall have only to call for a fresh scuttle of coals! Our coachmen will flourish huge pokers, instead of long whips. A very steep hill which would require an extra pair of nags, will then be met with the assistance of an extra pair of bellows, and as no thief would touch a steam coach for fear of burning his fingers, the guard to prevent accidents will carry a wet mop rather than a pistol. There would be some difficulty no doubt in the infancy of these arrangements, the turnpike acts for instance would in most cases be eluded; and the Post House duty, would be likely to become unproductive. Impositions as well as improvements would be likely to take place as the system advanced. Any smoke which proceeded from the furnace of the vehicle would (converted into gas) serve in time to direct its progress. The heat of the fire might perhaps be a little inconvenient in summer; but (to outside passengers especially) in winter it would be an advantage. And with respect to the possibility of an occasional blow up, there can be no doubt that as soon as the scheme gets into practice, any one of the insurance companies for a reasonable premium will guarantee, at so much per mile, the lives of steam passengers; and such insurance might either be made a subject of separate contract with the individual, or it might be done generally by the coach proprietor and included in the fare."

The writer in common with the rest of his generation was obsessed with the idea that trains and all steam propelled vehicles must inevitably be fashioned after

the pattern of horse carriages, no matter how greatly the motive power might differ.

Looking back, it seems surprising that motor-cars should have tarried so long after the railways, for, but for an Act of Parliament, which raised the turnpike dues for steam carriages to prohibitive heights, they would probably have preceded railways.

So far back as 1800 inventors had turned their attention to the subject, and steam carriages of one kind or another were put on the road from time to time. Walter Handcock, who in 1836 had three steam omnibuses running between Paddington and the city, had a great idea of running a regular service to Brighton and back. Even earlier, from February to June 1831 a steam carriage ran four times a day between Cheltenham and Gloucester. Colonel Maceroni advertised that he would take passengers in his new invention out to Harrow and give them a good dinner into the bargain. His steam carriages went on an average of twenty miles an hour, and for a time carried passengers between Paddington and the Bank.

Sir Goldsworthy Gurney, who lost a fortune over his attempts to perfect the new mode of transport, once had the Duke of Wellington for a passenger, but even such august patronage did not popularize the new innovation. Steam carriages terrified the country people, who, when they conveniently could, stoned the inventor, and wrecked his machinery, being firmly convinced that it was the innovation of his Satanic Majesty himself.

A turnpike keeper seeing a steam carriage for the first time, threw open his gates in dismay.

"How much toll?" asked the driver.

"There's nothing to pay, nothing at all, my dear Mister Devil, I assure you, only please drive on as fast as ever you can," quavered the terror-stricken gate-keeper.

Steam carriages were liable to a good many accidents, so that wits and poets waxed humorous at their expense:

"Instead of journeys, people now
  May go upon a Gurney,
With steam to do the horses' work
  By power of Attorney.

Tho' with a load it may explode,
  And you may all be undone;
And find you're going up to Heaven,
  Instead of up to London."

A correspondent of the *Sporting Magazine* for 1839 gravely discussed the pros and cons of railway travelling, and delivered himself thus: "When once the novelty has subsided we shall seldom hear of a gentleman condescending to travel to assume this hasty mode of transit, compatible only with men of business and merchantile travellers." One of the charges that he urged against the railways was their unpunctuality as compared to the coaches, but what he regarded as a bitter and insurmountable objection was the fact that travellers by rail were unable to keep their luggage under their direct supervision. When going by coach

they could see their luggage actually put into the boot, but such was the haughty arrogance of the railway officials that on a railway journey travellers and their luggage were separated in the most heartless manner. "Let a person have an opportunity of keeping his property in view," said the writer in all seriousness, and was really of the opinion that, until such a contingency was provided for, railways could never hope to succeed.

The opening of the Newcastle and Carlisle Railway in 1838 occasioned many doubts as to the success of the new venture, for, still struggling with the precedent of the coaches, a procession of trains was arranged to celebrate the occasion. All the engines belonging to the company were called into use, and open trucks provided with seats coupled to them for the accommodation of the intrepid company who were prepared to risk their lives on such an auspicious occasion. The start was timed for eleven, but it was long past that hour before a move was made, and eventually the procession of trains accomplished their journey of sixty miles in three hours and twenty minutes.

Colonel Peter Hawley, author of the sporting classic, *Instructions to Young Sportsmen*, has left an account of his first railway journey, when, presumably because he always travelled on the outside of a coach, he determined to go on the top of a railway carriage, so that it is little wonder that he found the experience rather terrifying.

"I was by my own choice, allowed to leave my seat and to be perched on the summit of the mail carriage, where

I had to lower my head on entering the subterraneous causeway. Fortunately I had a pair of spectacles, and by shipping them I had such an awful view of the whole concern as no other place could have afforded. But had I not been provided with these, my eyes could never have borne the intense current of air and the occasional volley of black dust that flew from the engine. The guard of the mail has a place on purpose with his back to the train, and well sheltered by his letter box. I am delighted at having sat where I did, now, thank God, it is safe over, but they'll not catch me there again; it was more awful to me than anything I have weathered at sea."

On May 22nd, 1838, the Post Office announced a new departure:

"The mails to Holyhead, Manchester, Liverpool, and Carlisle, are to be despatched to-night for the first time by the London and Birmingham Railway. The Coaches are to be drawn by horses to the terminus at Euston Square, and there to be placed on trucks and so run on the railway, retaining their coachmen, guards, passengers, etc., and only requiring horses when they reach the end of the railway to proceed on to their respective destinations. Despatching these four mails by this conveyance will accelerate the arrival of letters to a great part of England and Scotland by about two hours."

During the early days of railways it did not seem likely that trains would have much advantage over the coaches in point of speed. In 1824 one of George Stephenson's trains travelled at six miles an hour,

whilst a prize of five hundred pounds offered for the best locomotive in 1829 was won by The Rocket, going at fifteen miles an hour.

Even in 1838 it was possible to send messengers to overtake a fugitive engine:

"The train left Maidenhead at the usual time with the Thunder engine, when everything appeared perfectly safe, but about half-way between that place and Slough the passengers were surprised at suddenly finding the carriages not locomotive but stationary, the engine having broken away and gone thundering along by itself at a most rapid pace. Messengers were immediately despatched after it, but, strange to say, the engineer did not discover the loss of his train until he had proceeded near four miles. The engine was then turned back, and the train attached by means of ropes (the fastenings having broken away); but between Slough and West Drayton they also had burst asunder, and the engineer on his arrival at the latter station, found he had left the train he did not know where. The engine was then again turned back, and the train having been secured by stronger ropes, reached the Paddington terminus about nine o'clock instead of eight o'clock, its usual time of arriving."[1]

Accidents like this unnerved the public, and the Sovereign coach between Worcester and London after being withdrawn was put on the road again for a short time "in consequence of the irregularity of the railroad conveyance, occasioning it frequently to be considerably behind its usual time of arrival."

[1] The *Oxford Journal*, 1838.

THE LAST OF THE COACHES

From a lithograph in the possession of Mr. John Lane

Notwithstanding the many disadvantages under which the railway laboured at its commencement, it had come to stay, and when the initial difficulty of accurate time-keeping had been overcome, and passengers reconciled to parting with their luggage, the popularity of the new method of travelling increased rapidly.

Some coach proprietors realizing that steam would inevitably displace the coaches, severed their connection with the road, and threw in their lot with the railways. Others with stubborn determination waged unequal warfare and were ruined. "Why are the shareholders of a railway like bad actors?" became a favourite conundrum, the answer being, "Because they ruin the stage proprietors."

As the network of railways increased, the coaches were taken off the road. The crack ones went first, those famous long distance coaches whose names had become household words. Provincial coaches in out-of-the-way districts had longer life, some of them continuing to run till quite recent times.

The coachmen faced the world with their backs against the wall and bitterness in their hearts. They were men whose lives were bound up in their coach and the interests of "the road." One old coachman who had driven daily for eighteen years was at length persuaded to take a holiday, which he celebrated by travelling on the box-seat of the opposition coach. Men who had tooled the crack coaches to their own and every one else's admiration, declared they would never condescend to drive anything but a four-in-hand.

They were first-class whips but there their accomplishments ended, and they were unfit for any other calling.

It was the loss of prestige that embittered them; they could not forget what important personages they had been. They resented patronage, and repelled intimacy with those who had been formerly subservient to them, and were so ready to imagine an affront that even those anxious to help them found it difficult to do so.

Coachmen who had saved money, or successfully courted one of the landladies who had admired them in the heyday of their existence, set up public-houses. A few were provided for by wealthy patrons who had learnt to tool a coach under their able tuition; some obtained places in stables; others were forced to drive buses for a livelihood. Some whose pride could not brook their altered circumstances and the loss of everything that made life worth living, committed suicide rather than submit to the degradation which seemed inevitable. The tragedy of their lives lay in the fact that the railway shattered the coachmen's world, leaving them isolated figures of an obsolete past that never under any circumstances could be reconstructed.

The guards fared better than their colleagues, for they were the servants of the Post Office, and though the scene of their operations shifted from coach to railway, they quickly adapted themselves to the new order of things. If anything they were a little too zealous; one coach guard lost his life on becoming a railway guard, owing to a fixed idea that during the journey the third-class passengers would climb out of

their open trucks and get into the closed first-class coaches. In order to verify this suspicion he crawled along the train whilst it was in motion, but lost his foothold and was killed.

The dwellers in country districts mourned the passing of the coaches with the bustle and excitement consequent on their arrival, a loss which gave rise to the parody on Goldsmith's " The Deserted Village ":

"No more is heard the mellow winding horn,
Waking the drowsy slumbers of the morn;
No spicy 'change' now waits for the down mail,
For woe is me! the Bristol's on the 'rail.'
No longer now is heard the busy din
In the full yard that marks the prosperous inn;
Unheard is now the watching ostler's call;
The only 'pair' is weary of the stall.
Silent the joke of 'boots,' ne'er known to fail;
The keeper's whistle and the post-boys tale.
No waiter now bestirs him for the nonce,
To answer fifty summonses at once;
E'en Bessy's self, so long the bar's fair boast,
The cookmaids' envy, and the bagman's toast,
Whose winning smile was so well known to fame
That for a ray each traveller duly came—
E'en she—so hopeless, Hounslow, is thy case—
Hath packed her traps and bolted from her place."

The Railways have expedited travel and brought numerous improvements in their wake, but they have shorn the country of a picturesque spectacle which for so long had seemed an integral part of the national life.

THE END

INDEX

A

Aberdeen, 156.
Abingdon, Lord, 52.
Abingdon Machine, The, 113.
Accommodation, The, 91.
Acton, 96.
Adams, Jack, 45, 46.
Age, The, 95, 96, 97, 184.
Ainsworth, Harrison, 173.
Alder, John, 113.
Alert, The, 55, 90, 111.
All Souls' College, 20.
Alton, 17.
Anne, Queen, 4.
Antelope, The, 91.
Appleby, 197.
Argus, The, 92.
Ashe, Miss, 166.
Aston-under-Hill, 59.
Aurora, The, 200.
Axminster, 23.

B

Bagshot, 17, 88.
Bailey, Jack, 41.
Balloon, The, 29.
Bang up Song, 189, 190.
Barnshaw, John, 59.
Bath, 9, 23, 33, 34, 35, 54, 92, 198, 207.
Bayzand, John, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 111, 208, 209.
Bayzand, William, 55, 74, 75, 77, 78, 81, 82, 83, 84, 130, 159.
Beaufort Hunt, The, 90.
B.D.C. Song, The, 187–8.
Bedfont, 187, 188.
Benson, 187, 205.
Benson Driving Club, 186.
Benson Guard, 79, 80.
Bentham Mail, The, 198.
Berkeley Hunt, The, 90.
Berwick-on-Tweed, 206.
Birmingham, 129, 200, 249.
Birmingham Coaches, 46, 62, 73, 181, 200, 229.
Blenheim, The, 52, 96, 97.
Blewitt, Mr., 113.
Bobart, Tillimant, 60.
Bonner, William, 7.
Borrow, George, 49, 50.
Boswell, James, 136–7.
Bowers, Will, 60, 61, 62, 111.
Brackenbury, Richard, 184.
Brainford, 6.
Braintree, 169.
Brighton, 54, 98, 184, 199, 200, 246.
Bristol, 35, 110, 156.
Bristol Mail, 29, 205.
Brougham, Lord, 214, 220, 221.
Browne, Lady, 167–8.
Buckingham, Duke of, 8.
Burford, Ned, 65, 66.
Burton, Dr., 4.
Bury St. Edmunds, 205–6.
Butler, Captain, 10.
Buxton, Charles, 188.
Byers, 54.

C

Cambridge, 205–6.
Cambridge Coach, The, 202.
Campbell, Lord, 38.
Carlisle, 214, 248, 249.
Carlyle, Mrs., 224–5.
Caroline, Queen, 152.
Castle, James, 97.
Chalk Hill, 205.
Champion, The, 77.
Chaplin, William, 104, 105, 106, 108 111.
Charles I, 11, 16, 151, 178.
Charles II, 10, 11, 14.
Charlton, Mrs., 130.
Cheltenham, 65, 77, 82, 92, 242, 246.
Chesington, 152.
Chester Coach, 205.
Chesterfield, Lord, 188.
Chilton, 111, 112.
Cicero, 1.
Cirencester Mail, 173.
Civil War, The, 4, 11.
Cleaveland, John, 180.
Comet, The, 86, 87, 88, 89, 91.
Congleton, 103.
Constable, John, 128.
Costar, Mr., 62, 63, 64, 101, 111, 112, 113.
Cotton, St. Vincent, Sir, 183.
Coventry, 83.
Coventry Coach, 205.

Cowper, William, 31.
Cressel, John, 17, 18, 19.
Crisp, Samuel, 152.
Criterion Coach, The, 184–5–6.
Cromwell, Oliver, 151, 163, 178, 179, 180, 181.
Cross, Thomas, 101–2.

D

Dart, The, 90, 199, 200.
Darwin, Erasmus, 244.
Defiance, The, 92.
Denmark, Prince George of, 4.
De Quincey, 118, 119, 153.
Devonport Mail. See Quicksilver, The.
Dickens, Charles, 33, 120, 160.
Dorchester, 45, 46, 112.
Dover Coach, 102, 134.
Dunstable, 205, 233.
Du Vall, Claude, 173, 174.
Dye, Thomas, 20.

E

East Grinstead, 98.
Eclipse, The, 92.
Economy without Monopoly, 92.
Edgeworth, Maria, 134.
Edinburgh, 23, 156, 207.
Edinburgh Mail, 38, 204.
Egerton-Warburton, R. E., Hon., 106.
Elizabeth, Queen, 1, 6, 78, 151.
Eltham, 22.
Enstone, 62.
Epping Forest, 165.
Epsom, 25, 152, 189.
Eton, 118, 243.
Everett, Jack, 199.
Exeter, 23, 89.
Exeter Mail, 201, 205.
Express, The, 90.

F

Fagg, Thomas, 109, 110, 111.
Fane, Major, 95.
Fearless, The, 92.
Field, George, 128.
Finchley Common, 165.
Flying Childers, The, 90.
Fossett, John, 20.
Foules, 75.
Four Horse Club, 189.

G

Gadshill, 165, 173.
Gay, John, 166.
George III, 2, 9, 119.
Gerrard's Cross, 96, 97, 172.
Give and Take, The, 92.
Glasgow, 156.
Glasgow Mail, 196.
Gloucester, 77, 83, 94, 111, 155, 169, 246.
Gloucester Coaches, 24, 64, 181, 205.
Godalming, 5.
Good Intent, The, 91.
Grantham, 22.
Green, Verdant, 191–5.
Greyhound, The, 91.
Gurney, Goldsworthy, Sir, 246, 247.

H

Halifax Hope, The, 199.
Handcock, Walter, 246.
Hanwell, 198.
Hark Forward, The, 90.
Hatfield, 22.
Hawke, Martin, Hon., 184.
Hawley, Peter, Colonel, 248, 249.
Hazlitt, William, 39.
Henley, 64.
Hereford, 75, 159.
Hertford, 89.
Hertford, Lady, 165.
Hervey, Lord, 6.
Hieaway, The, 90.
Hieover, The, 90.
Highflier, 90.
Highgate, 137, 138.
Highmettled Racer, The, 90.
Hind, James, 163.
Hockliff, 205.
Holyhead, 249.
Hood, Thomas, 46.
Horne, Benjamin, 108.
Horner, Nicholas, 169.
Horsepath, 209.
Hounslow, 87, 165, 203, 253.
Howell, James, 52, 62, 200.
Hunt, Leigh, 50, 121, 128.
Huntingdon, 172.

I

Incledon, Mr., 221–4.
Irving, Washington, 227, 234–40.

Isis, The, 65.
Islington, 79, 83, 233.

J

James II, 10, 151.
Johnson, S., Dr., 32, 136, 137, 147.

K

Kensington, 6.
Kew, 165.
Kitchiner, Dr., 139–50, 216.

L

Lamb, Charles, 225, 226.
Lavengro, 52.
Leamington Coach, 65.
Leeds Coach, 26, 204.
Leicester, 230, 231.
Lichfield, 204, 224.
Life Preserver, The, 91.
Lightning, The, 90.
Lincoln, 155.
Live and Let Live, The, 92.
Liverpool, 86, 216, 243, 249.
Liverpool Mail, 102, 204, 205.
Long Compton, 46.
Longford, Lord, 134.
Lord Nelson, The, 91.
Lowestoft, 204.
Luckie, John, 219–21.

M

MacAdam, 38, 108.
Maclean, 165, 166.
Macready, William, 206, 207, 210.
Magnet, The, 92.
Maidenhead, 165, 243, 250.
Manchester, 24, 86, 109, 133, 156, 243, 249.
Manchester Defiance, 106.
Manchester Telegraph, 41, 109.
Mann, Horace, Sir, 165.
Margate, 133.
Marlborough, 198.
Matthews, Charles, 24, 122, 127, 189, 190, 215, 217–21, 223, 224.
Mazeppa, The, 74, 75, 77, 78, 81, 82, 84, 159.
Mendelssohn, Felix, 133.
Meteor, The, 90.
Mews, P., 20.
Mitford, Miss, 131–2.
Mohun, Lord, 175, 176.
Monmouth, Duke of, 9.
Montrose, Duchess of, 167.
Moritz, Charles, 227–34.
Mountain, Mrs., 110.

N

Napoleon, 133, 153, 158.
Nelson, Mrs., 110.
Nevison, 173.
Newbury, 59, 68, 76.
Newcastle-on-Tyne, 6, 156, 206 207, 248.
Newmarket, 204.
Nimrod, 29, 86, 200.
Nimrod, The, 97, 98.
Nobbs, Joseph James, 72.
North, Lord, 165.
Northampton, 205, 206, 232.
Northampton Coach, 230.
Northleach, 77.
Northumberland, Earl of, 9.
Norwich Coach (Illustrations), 170, 222.

O

"Old Lal," 98.
Onslow, Lord, 186.
Ormond, Lord, 215.
Ovet, Jack, 168.
Oxford, 19, 20, 54, 55, 63, 65, 95, 96, 101, 110, 112, 113, 129, 130, 155, 191, 192, 194, 209, 229, 243.
Oxford Balloon, The, 60.
Oxford Defiance, The, 183.
Oxford Stage-Coach, 23, 192.
Oxonian, The, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 111, 208.

P

Palmer, John, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 40, 69.
Parker, Edward, 21.
Paul Pry, The, 130.
Peerless, The, 92.
Pendennis, 191.
Pennant, Thomas, 8, 38, 70.
Pepys, Samuel, 10, 11, 12, 23, 135, 136, 177.
Perth, 156.
Peterborough, 172.
Petersham, Caroline, Lady, 166.
Petworth, 4, 5.
Peyton, Henry, Sir, 97, 107, 188.
Phœnix, The, 199, 200.

Pickwick, 33, 160, 161.
Pitt, William, 34, 35.
Plunkett, 166.
Portsmouth, 59, 93, 155, 215.
Prince of Wales, The, 41, 91.
Princess Charlotte, The, 91.

Q

Queen, The, 91.
Quicksilver, The, 89, 90.

R

Railway Coach, The, 91.
Rapid, The, 90.
Reading, 16, 113, 243, 244.
Red Rover, 106.
Regent, The, 91.
Regulator, The, 88, 89, 90, 207.
Reindeer, The, 91.
Reliance, 91.
Retaliator, The, 91.
Richmond, 229.
Richmond Driving Club, 188.
Rippon, Walter, 6.
Rising Sun, The, 59.
Rocket, The, 90.
Rockingham Coach, 197.
Roderick Random, 6.
Rodney, The, 91.
Ross, 81.
Routh, Dr., 176.
Rover, The, 90.
Royal Clarence, 91.
Royal Defiance, 45, 191.
Royal, William, The, 91, 95, 96, 97.
Royston, 204.
Rugby, 116, 118.
Rupert, Prince, 10.

S

St. Albans, 98, 233.
Salisbury, 23, 110, 201.
Saxmundham, 79, 204.
Sheridan, Richard B., 210–13.
Sherman, Edward, 109.
Shipston, 46.
Shooter's Hill, 177.
Shotover Hill, 23.
Shottenham, 159.
Shrewsbury, 77.
Shrewsbury, Earl of, 76.
Iough, 243, 250.
Smith, Sydney, 213–15
Smollett, Tobias, 6.
Snowdon, William, 96.
Soulbrière, Monsieur, 14.
Southampton, 17.
Sovereign, The, 250.
Speedhamland, 129.
Spitfire, The, 91.
Spooner, John, 62, 63, 64, 65.
Spread Eagle, The, 91, 104.
Stacey, John, 111.
Stacey, Will, 55, 111.
Stag, The, 17, 87.
Staines, 17, 87.
Stamford Fly, The, 172.
Star of Brunswick, 91.
Steam Horse Coach, 91.
Stephens, Joe, 67, 68.
Stephenson, George, 249.
Stevenson, Mr., 184.
Stroud Coach, 24.
Sussex, 4, 5.
Sydney, Philip, Sir, 8.
Syntax, Dr., 141–2.

T

Taglioni, The, 184.
Tally-ho, The, 90.
Tantivy, The, 90, 106, 107, 129.
Tantivy Trot, The, 107, 108.
Taylor, Bill, 58.
Taylor, John, 12, 13, 16.
Telegraph, The, 90, 181.
Thackeray, W., 164, 191.
Thoresby, Ralph, 22.
Thrale, Mrs., 32.
Thurloe, Secretary, 178, 179.
Tollit, Joe, 96.
Tom Brown's School Days, 116–18.
Trafalgar, The, 91, 153.
Turnham Green, 166.
Turpin, Dick, 134, 163, 173.

U

Union, The, 79.
Uxbridge, 96.

V

Vanity Fair, 190–1.
Villebois, Squire, 76, 188.
Vivid, The, 90.
Vixen, The, 91.

W

Walpole, Horace, 5, 165, 166.
Walpole, Lady, 167.
Walton, 204.
Warburton, Peter, Sir, 103.
Warde, John, 41, 107, 181.
Ware, 127.
Warrington Coach, 27.
Waterloo, 153.
Weller, Sam, 160, 161.
Wellington, Duke of, 91, 109, 133, 246.
Wesley, John, 28, 135.
Whitchurch, 57, 58.
Whitney, James, 175.
Whitway, 67.
Wicks, Ned, 175–6.
Williams, Bill, 182–3.
Wilson, Richard, 211, 212, 213.
Winchelsea, 164.
Winchester, 58, 155.
Windsor, 9, 184, 229.
Winterslow, 201.
Wisbech Coach, 203.
Witherington, James, 59.
Witney, 81.
Wolverhampton, 221.
Wonder, The, 97, 109.
Wood, Anthony, 172.
Woodstock, 46, 194.
Woolwich, 134.
Worcester Coaches, 168, 198, 205.
Worcester, Marquis of, 184, 185.
Wycombe, 96.

Y

Yarmouth, 204.
York, 23, 25, 38, 110, 155, 173, 213.
York Mail, 98.
Young, Arthur, 5.

BRITISH SPORTING ARTISTS

FROM BARLOW TO HERRING

BY

WALTER SHAW SPARROW

WITH A FOREWORD BY

SIR THEODORE COOK

AND TWENTY-SEVEN ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOUR
AND EIGHTY IN BLACK AND WHITE

Demy Quarto, **£2 2s.** *net*

Also a Special Edition, limited to Ninety-five Copies, numbered and signed, with two extra illustrations in colour from original drawings by Henry Alken, never before reproduced, text printed on handmade paper
£5 5s. *net*

JOHN LANE THE BODLEY HEAD LTD., VIGO ST., W. 1

EXTRACT FROM THE INTRODUCTION BY SIR THEODORE COOK

"It is with more than usual pleasure that I commend to the English-speaking world the very remarkable book in which these lines are granted a place of honour; for it accomplishes, far better than I ever dreamt, a vision I had long cherished, an ideal I have inevitably postponed, and it will be warmly welcomed on each side of the Atlantic. . . . The best of English open-air life is portrayed by men who knew it well because they shared in it. If we considered it only as a record of two and a half centuries of England, it would be invaluable. But as a collection of actual examples, beautifully reproduced, it stands alone in its contribution to our knowledge of a splendid company of painters. Any previous verdicts on Tillemans or Barlow (to take only two instances) will be transfigured by Mr. Shaw Sparrow's industry and taste. I have not merely admired his selection of pictures, I have read his text, and it is with full responsibility that I can recommend both to his readers. I only hope they may leave me some small share of their gratitude."

JOHN LANE THE BODLEY HEAD LTD., VIGO ST., W. 1

The following is a list of Artists represented in the book, some of the more important by several plates :—

COLOUR PLATES

Henry Alken.
Francis Barlow.
H. B. Chalon.
Abraham Cooper, R.A.
Gill.
J. F. Herring, Sen.
W. P. Hodges.
Samuel Howitt.
Ben Marshall.
George Morland.
Philip Reinagle, R.A.
Thomas Rowlandson.
James Seymour.
Loraine Smith.
George Stubbs.
George Stubbs and his Son.
Peter Tillemans.
D. Wolstenholme, Jun.
John Wootton.
H. K. Browne ("Phiz").

BLACK AND WHITE

H. Alken.
F. Barlow.
William Barraud.
J. E. Ferneley.
George Garrard, A.R.A.
Gainsborough.
Gilpin and Reinagle.
Sawrey Gilpin, R.A.
J. F. Herring.
Edwin Landseer and John Phillip.
J. Highmore.
Abraham Hondius.
J. C. Ibbetson.
Ben Marshall.
W. Mason.
George Morland.
J. N. Sartorius.
James Seymour.
William Shayer.
George Stubbs.
Peter Tillemans.
James Ward, R.A.
Francis Wheatley, R.A.
D. Wolstenholme the Elder.
John Wootton.
Wootton and Tillemans Period
John Wyck.

QUEEN ELIZABETH'S MAIDS OF HONOUR

And Ladies of the Privy Chamber

By VIOLET A. WILSON

Illustrated. Second Edition. Demy 8vo, **12s. 6d.** net

Sunday Times.—"This handsome and well-illustrated volume performs even better than its title promises. It not only gives full and entertaining biographies of various members of that extremely interesting group, Elizabeth's Maids of Honour, but a good deal of biographical and historical matter that is not closely germane to the ladies in question."

Westminster Gazette.—"Miss Wilson draws an interesting picture full of gaiety and intrigue."

Daily Telegraph.—"Her narrative is based upon wide research, and many of her stories, especially those of the Ladies Catherine and Mary Grey are full of genuine pathos."

Pall Mall Gazette.—"The book is really a very interesting picture of life in those far-off times wherein human nature, at least, differed not a whit from our own."

Daily Mail.—"A lively and amusing account of the bevy of fair women attached to Elizabeth and incidently of her Court and manner. . . . One of the great finds of the book is its account of what must have been the first game of lawn tennis ever played on one of the lawns of Elvetham, Hants."

JOHN LANE THE BODLEY HEAD LTD., VIGO ST., W. 1

Veterinary Library
Tufts Uni...
School of Vet... ...
200 Westboro Rd.
North Grafton, MA 01536