THE OLD NORTH ROAD.

Our good old topographer, William Harrison, whose *Description of England* is prefixed to Hollinshead's Chronicles, furnishes us with an itinerary of the principal post roads as they existed in the reign of Queen Elizabeth; amongst others, of the road from London, by York and Newcastle, to Berwick. The route at that date was precisely the same which was travelled till within a few years by her Majesty's mail, with the single exception of the stages between York and Northallerton. Leaving London by Shoreditch, the traveller proceeded by Waltham, Ware, Royston, Huntingdon, and Stilton, to Stamford; thence, by Grantham, Newark, and Tuxford, to Doncaster; Went Bridge, instead of Ferry Bridge, formed the next halting place; next Tadcaster, and then York. The next stage was of unusual length, sixteen miles by Harrison's computation, but certainly upwards of twenty by statutary measurement, to Topcliffe, the ancient seat of the Earls of Northumberland. The modern route from York to Topcliffe is, or rather was when highways were still the usual mode of communication, by way of Boroughbridge, but the old line kept on the eastern side of the Swale, through the forest of Galtres to Tollerton and Helperby, crossing the river at Thornton Bridge, and recrossing it at Topcliffe. Leland describes his ride over this ground on his northern tour. He proceeded onward from Topcliffe to Thirsk, but the direct route to Northallerton passes considerably to the west of that town. From Northallerton we are conducted, by Darlington and Durham, to Newcastle, and thence, by Morpeth, Alnwick, and Belford, to Berwick.

Harrison gives two routes from Berwick to Edinburgh—one by Dunbar and Haddington; the other by Earlston, Lauder, and Dalkeith. We may confine our attention to the former, which passes in the same general direction as the present coast road. The stages were Chirnside, Coldingham, "Pinketon," Dunbar, Linton, Haddington, Seaton, Musselburgh, and Edinburgh. From Dunbar to Edinburgh the line is free from engineering difficulties, and the old road is nearly identical with that now in use. Between Berwick and Dunbar the country is as nearly impracticable as any which has ever yielded a triumph to scientific

skill. No such skill was available in the sixteenth century, and we see the result in the extraordinarily circuitous course adopted. Chirnside, the first stage, lies five miles to the west, and the following stage, Coldingham, three miles to the east, of a direct line. North of Coldingham the line was sufficiently direct, but it is impossible to pass over it without being filled with amazement that a road which crosses ravine after ravine at such frightfully steep inclinations, could ever have been traversed, as at one time it certainly was, by wheeled carriages.

So long as journeys were performed exclusively on horseback, we have no complaints of the state of our roads. Steep gradients were of comparatively little importance if the surface were tolerably even. The main thoroughfares were sufficiently wide to enable the traveller to select his course: if the track was worn deep and dangerous in the centre, he had the choice of smoother ground to the right or the left; if he had to pass a slough or a morass, he had generally the accommodation of a paved causeway, of which some specimens may be seen in our own day. It was only when wheeled carriages came into general use that the roads fell into disrepair, and the means at the disposal of the parishes and townships through which they passed were inadequate for their restoration. Fynes Morrison, who wrote in 1617, describes the roads generally throughout England as "very dirty," with the exception of those in the neighbourhood of London, "which were sandy and very fair, and continually kept so by labour of hands." From this time the deterioration went on rapidly, but for a long time no remedy was applied.

The first, and for many years the only, attempt to introduce the system of turnpikes, now so general throughout England, was made on the Old North Road in 1663, when an act was obtained placing the management of so much of it as lies within the counties of Hertford, Cambridge, and Huntingdon under the controul of committees of the justices of the several counties, with power to erect a toll-gate in each, at Wadesmill for Hertfordshire, at Caxton for Cambridgeshire, and at Stilton for Huntingdonshire. We have no evidence that the powers of this act were ever put in force in Huntingdonshire; in Cambridgeshire the committee proceeded no further than the erection of a gate at Caxton, when it was found to be so easy of evasion, that no toll was collected: in Hertfordshire only was any substantial good effected. Here we are told—

"Divers gentlemen within the county have heartily set themselves to take care for the repairing of the said ways within their county; and in order thereto, finding that money could not be advanced by the toll in so speedy a manner as to repair those ruinous ways, and that none

would lend their money upon that security, did upon their own costs borrow 1,300*l.* on interest, which sum accordingly is laid out, together with such money as hath proceeded from the toll, by which means they have so amended the said road, lying in that county, leading from London to York, that they have made the same from a road impassable, to be to the satisfaction of all that travel that way very passable and convenient."

This statement is contained in the preamble of an act which was passed two years afterwards, by which the term of the trust, so far as regards Hertfordshire, was extended from its original limit of eleven years to twenty-one. At the same time power was given to the Cambridgeshire trustees to remove the Caxton gate to Arrington. Both acts were suffered to expire, and the toll-gates were removed; but eight years after the expiration of the longer term for which the tolls were leviable in Hertfordshire, the roads had again "become dangerous and impassable, by reason of great burdens and carriages used to pass through the same," and another act was passed reviving the former powers as regarded that county for a term of fifteen years. This act passed in 1692, and has been renewed from time to time, with various modifications, to the present time, being the only turnpike act in force, till four years afterwards one was passed for repairing the road from London to Harwich. From this time only ten new turnpike roads were sanctioned up to 1710, in which year the counties of Cambridge and Huntingdon again applied for a revival of their former powers. In 1712 the short piece of road from London to the borders of Hertfordshire was made turnpike, thus completing the entire distance from the metropolis to Wansford Bridge, near Stamford. Between 1713 and 1725 another line of road was formed, under various acts, known as the New North Road, from London to Alconbury Hill, a few miles north of Huntingdon, by Barnet, Welwyn, Stevenage, and Biggleswade. In 1739 a turnpike road was sanctioned between Stamford and Grantham. In 1741 a very important advance was made towards the improvement of the northern portion of the road by an act for making a turnpike from Doncaster to Tadcaster, one stage south of York, with a branch from Ferrybridge to Wetherby and Boroughbridge. The interval of fifty-two miles from Grantham to Doncaster, as well as the short distance between Wansford and Stamford, and the stage from Tadcaster to York, was still repaired by the parishes, nor is it necessary to trace the gradual absorption of those roads into the turnpike system. A brief enumeration, however, of the dates of the various turnpike acts north of York and Boroughbridge may with propriety be introduced.

In 1745 the line of turnpike from Boroughbridge, by Northallerton and Darlington, to Durham was sanctioned by Parliament. This was the first turnpike road which crossed the Tees, although Bailey, in his *View of the Agriculture of Durham*, gives precedence to that from Catterick Bridge to Durham, by Yarm and Stockton, fixing the date of the latter in 1742. This is one year previous to the passing of the act for the road from Boroughbridge to Catterick and Piercebridge, on which the other was dependant for its connection with the south. The true date of the Catterick, Yarm, and Durham act was in 1747. In the same year acts were also obtained for the road from Durham to Tyne Bridge, and from Cow-Causeway, near Newcastle, to Buckton Burn, north of Belford. Simultaneously with these extensions, the Corporation of Newcastle caused the intermediate portion of road within their jurisdiction "to be formed after the manner of turnpike roads" out of the Corporate funds. At the same time it was in agitation to continue the turnpike through North Durham, from Buckton Burn to Berwick and Cornhill, but the scheme was for a time abandoned. At length, in 1753, an act was obtained for making a turnpike road from Buckton Burn, through Berwick, to Lamberton, on the Scotch March, with certain branches therefrom, including a line from Tweedmouth to Cornhill.

The same year the distance between York and Northallerton was considerably shortened by a new line of road by Easingwold and Thirsk, in lieu of the former route by Boroughbridge. Boroughbridge, however, still lay on the shortest line between Newcastle and London, by Wetherby, avoiding York. Nothing had hitherto been done to improve the road north of the Tweed, but in 1754 a bridge was built over that river at Kelso, in connection with a new line of road through Northumberland by Weldon Bridge and Wooler, which was continued by the vale of Lauder to Edinburgh.

In 1759 an act was passed for building a bridge at Coldstream, in connection also with the Wooler road, and for forming a turnpike through Berwickshire towards Edinburgh.

In 1786 an essential improvement was effected on the old coast road north of Berwick, by the completion of the Pees Bridge across a ravine of that name on the confines of Berwickshire and East Lothian. This bridge, which was long considered the greatest engineering work in Scotland, being designed by Smeaton, spans a chasm whose almost perpendicular sides had hitherto presented an insuperable obstacle to the safe transit of passengers by this route. Some miles of new road were also made in connection with the bridge, avoiding all the most objectionable

passes, and this line long continued to be the principal communication between England and Scotland, although longer by some miles than either of the other routes.

Of the inns at the various stages on our great roads Harrison gives a very curious account. Of such inns there were in some of the towns as many as twelve or sixteen, "and such," he adds, "is the capacity of some of them, that they are able to lodge two or three hundred persons with their horses, and with a very short warning to make provision for their diet." The London inns were much inferior to those in the country, but even these "far better than the best in any foreign country." One great advantage consisted in this, that in England "the host or good-man of the house doth not challenge a lordly authority over his guests, but clean otherwise, since every man may use his inn as his own house, and have for his money how great or how little variety of victuals, and what other service himself shall think expedient to call for."

The outfit of the houses is particularly commended, "the napery, bedding, and tapestry, especially the napery." "Each guest is sure to lie in clean sheets, and if he have a horse his bed doth cost him nothing, but if he go on foot he is sure to pay a penny for the same. The horses in like sort are walked, dressed, and looked unto by certain hostellers or hired servants, who in hopes of extraordinary reward, will deal very diligently after outward appearance. Herein, nevertheless, are many of them blameworthy, in that they do oftentimes deceive the beast of his allowance by sundry means, except their owners look well to them." Fynes Morrison also gives some very interesting particulars, and applicable especially to the northern inns. In the south, we are told—

"Men of inferior condition use to eat at the host's table, and pay some sixpence a meal, but gentlemen have their chambers, and eat alone, except perhaps they have consorts or friends in their company. If they be accompanied, perhaps their reckoning may come to some two shillings a man, and one that eats in his chamber, with one or two servants attending him, may spend some five or six shillings for supper and breakfast. But in the northern parts, when I passed towards Scotland, gentlemen themselves did not use to keep their chambers, but to eat at an ordinary table together, where they had plenty of good meat, and especially of choice kinds of fish, and each man paid no more than sixpence, and sometimes but fourpence a meal. One horse's meat will come to twelvepence or eighteenpence the night, for hay, oats, and straw; and in the summer time commonly they put the horses to grass after the rate of twopence each horse." "English passengers," he adds, "taking any journey, seldom dine, especially not in winter, and withal ride long journeys." "In Scotland they have no inns as in England, but in all places some houses are known where passengers may have meat

and lodging; but they have no bushes or signs hung out, and for the horses, they are commonly set up in stables at some out lane, not in the same house where the passenger lies. If any man be acquainted with a townsman, he will go freely to his house, for most of them will entertain a stranger for his money. A horseman will pay for oats and straw (for hay is rare in those parts) some eightpence day and night, and he shall pay no less in summer for grass, whereof they have no great store. Himself at a common table will pay about sixpence for his supper or dinner, and shall have his bed free; and if he will eat alone in his chamber, he may have meat at a reasonable rate."

Sir William Brereton, who visited Newcastle in 1635, describes Mr. Carr's inn, in that town, as "the fairest built inn in England that I have seen." His own lodging was at the Swan, kept by Mr. Swan, the postmaster, where he "paid 8*d.* ordinary, and no great provision." Newark was especially celebrated for its inns. The *Talbot* is described in a deed of the 14 of Edward III. (1341) under the Latin term *Vertagus*. The Saracen's Head dates from the same year, the White Hart from 1413, and the Swan and Salmon from 1521.

Saddle-horses for riding post were established on the principal roads at a very early period, and it was probably by this means, and not by relays of horses of his own, that Sir Robert Carey made his extraordinary journey from London to Edinburgh to announce the death of Queen Elizabeth to her successor King James. On this occasion he performed fully one hundred and fifty miles in each of two successive days, sleeping the first night at Doncaster, and the second at his own residence at Widdrington, twenty-two miles north of Newcastle; the third day his progress was less rapid in consequence of a severe fall, but he still reached Edinburgh at night.

"In England," says Morrison, "towards the south and west parts, and also from London to Berwick, upon the confines of Scotland, post-horses are established at every ten miles or thereabouts, which they ride a false gallop after some ten miles an hour sometimes, and that makes their hire the greater; all the difficulty is to have a body able to endure the toil."

This was exactly what the active frame of Sir Robert Carey was fitted for, and we must remember that the ten miles per hour of Fynes Morrison's day were at least equal to twelve miles of our reckoning, which would make the time spent actually in the saddle little more than twelve hours each day; and we may be sure that there was little delay in changing horses, the journey having been long in contemplation, and all preparations no doubt duly made.

"With a commission," continues our authority, "from the chief Post-master, or chief Lords of the Council (given either upon public business, or at least upon pretence thereof), a passenger shall pay two-pence-halfpenny each mile for his horse, and as much for his guide's horse: but one guide will serve the whole company, though many ride together, who may easily bring back the horses, driving them before him, who know the way as well as a beggar knows his dish. They who have no such commission pay threepence for each mile. For these horses the passenger is at no charge to give them meat, only at the ten miles' end the boy who carries them back will expect some few pence in gift. Likewise carriers let horses from city to city, with caution that the passengers must lodge at their inn, that they may look to the feeding of their horse; and so they will for some five or six days' journey let him a horse, and find the horse meat themselves for some twenty shillings. Lastly, these carriers have long covered waggons, in which they carry passengers from city to city. But this kind of journey is so tedious, by reason they must take waggon early, and come very late to their inns, as none but women and people of inferior condition (as Flemmings with their wives and servants) use to travel in this sort. Coaches are not to be hired any way but only in London; and hired coachmen do not ordinarily take any long journeys, but only for one or two days any way from London. For a day's journey, a coach with two horses used to be let for some ten shillings the day, (or the way being short for some eight shillings, so as the passengers paid for the horses' meat), or some sixteen shillings a day for three horses, the coachman paying for his horses' meat. For the most part Englishmen, especially in long journeys, use to ride their own horses, or, if any will, he may hire a horse either by the day, or if the journey be long, he may hire horse at a convenient rate for a month or two," and this as well in other parts of England as in London, the charge being somewhat higher in the latter.

Although carriages, under the various denominations of *chares, cars, caroches* and *whirlicotes*, are noticed at intervals from the reign of Richard II., they were not in ordinary use in England till the time of Elizabeth, when they occur under the name of coaches. Many curious particulars respecting them will be found in a paper of much research in the 20th volume of the *Archæologia*. The first wheeled carriage which ever crossed the Tyne adapted for the conveyance of passengers, was probably that in which the ladies of the Princess Margaret, daughter of Henry VII., accompanied their mistress on her nuptial journey into Scotland. It is described as "a chare richly dressed, with six fair horses, led and conveyed by three men, in which were four ladies, lasting the voyage." Considering the state of the roads and the absence of springs, which were then unknown, it seems marvellous that the ladies did *last the voyage*. Whilst they were thus jolted in this splendid but uneasy

vehicle, the Princess herself was mounted on "a fair palfrey" with the additional convenience of "a very rich litter born by two fair coursers, very nobly dressed, in the which litter she was born on entering the good towns, or otherwise at her good pleasure."

Horse-litters, according to Morrison, were of great antiquity both in England and Scotland "for sickly men, and women of quality." The same author says, writing in 1617, "sixty or seventy years ago coaches were very rare in England, but at this time there be few gentlemen of any account (I mean elder brothers) who have not their coaches," that the streets of London are almost stopped up with them." Morrison's account of carriages kept for hire has been already quoted, but stage coaches were not yet in existence. The author of the paper in the *Archæologia* is of opinion that some of the short stages, as from London to Reading, were introduced in the latter years of Charles I., but it is certain that those which performed longer journeys did not commence running till some time after the restoration of tranquility under the protectorate of Oliver Cromwell. The earliest positive information on the subject of stage coaches, is obtained from an advertisement in the *Mercurius Politicus* of 1658, which has been transferred, with much other curious matter, to the pages of the *Quarterly Review*, in an article on advertisements, (Vol. xcvii., p. clxxxix.) Coaches were then established on all the main thoroughfares from London, by Salisbury and Exeter, to Plymouth; by Coventry, to Litchfield and Chester, with a continuation to Warrington, Preston, Lancaster and Kendal; by York, to Newcastle and Edinburgh; also to Bristol, Dover, and other principal towns.

The following particulars refer to the Great North Road. Coaches left the George Inn, without Aldersgate, every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, for York, the Monday's coach being continued every week to Newcastle, and once a fortnight to Edinburgh; the Friday's coach had a branch to Wakefield, from which were conveyances to Leeds and Halifax. The time occupied on the road. with the fares to the principal towns, was as follows:—

To Stamford, in two days	£1 0	To Helperby and Northallerton,	£2 5
To Newark, two days and a half.	1 5	To Darlington and Ferryhill,	2 10
To Bawtry, three days.	1 10	To Durham,	2 15
To Doncaster and Ferrybridge,	1 15	To Newcastle,	3 0
To York, in four days	2 0	To Edinburgh,	4 0

The time occupied north of York is not stated, but early in the next century the journey to York still took four days, and two more were

allowed to Newcastle, whilst the extraordinary period of thirteen days was required to perform the journey from London to Edinburgh, being six days between Newcastle and Edinburgh, even on the assumption that Sunday was spent as a day of rest at Newcastle.

The new mode of travelling was looked upon with very different feelings by the advocates of progress and the lovers of things as they were. Chamberlayne, in his *Angliæ Notitia*, says—

"Besides the excellent convenience of conveying letters and men on horseback, there is of late such an admirable commodiousness both for men and women of better rank to travel from London to almost any great town of England, and to almost all the villages near this great city, that the like hath not been known in the world; and that is by stage-coaches, wherein one may be transported to any place, sheltered from foul weather and foul ways, free from damaging one's health or body, by hard jogging or other violent motion, and this not only at a low price (about a shilling for every five miles), but with such velocity and speed that the posts in some foreign countries make not more miles a day."

On the other side, we have a curious pamphlet, published in 1672, and reprinted in the *Harleyan Miscellany*, entitled "The Grand Concern of England explained," in which, amongst other salutary provisions, the author recommends the suppression of stage coaches and caravans. They are described as ruinous to the innkeepers on the great roads, inasmuch as "out of 500 inns on each road, these coaches do not call but at 15 or 16 of them;" they are "neither advantageous to health nor business," causing the traveller "to be called out of bed an hour before day, and hurried from place to place till one hour, two, or three within night; stifled with heat and choked with dust in summer, freezing with cold and choked with filthy fogs in winter, brought to his inn by torch-light too late for supper, and forced into the coach next morning too early for breakfast." He expatiates on the misery of "travelling with tired jades; being laid fast in the foul ways; forced to wade up to the knees in mire; and afterwards to sit in the cold, till teams of horses are sent for to pull the coach out." He enlarges on "rotten coaches, broken axle-trees and perches," with the concomitant delays, and deprecates "the mixed company, and surly, dogged, cursing, illnatured coachman." Finally, he deplores the necessity of "lodging and baiting at the worst inns on the road, where there is no accommodation fit for a gentleman, and this merely because the owners of the inns and the coachmen are agreed together to cheat the guests."

A curious letter has been preserved from Mr. Edward Parker of

Browsholme, in the county of Lancaster, describing a journey from Preston to London in 1663. Whilst he gives a much more favourable account of the company which he met with than our anonymous pamphleteer, he by no means corroberates Chamberlayne's commendation of the easiness of the vehicle, and the absence of "hard jogging and violent motion." The letter is printed in the *Archæologia*, but an extract may not be out of place here.

"I got to London on Saturday last. My journey was nowise pleasant, being forced to ride in the boot all the way. The company that came up with me were persons of great quality, as knights and ladies. The journey's expense was thirty shillings. This travel hath so indisposed me, that I am resolved never to ride up again in the coach. I am extremely hot and feverish. What this may tend to I know not, as I have not as yet advized with any doctor."

Several other notices of stage-coach travelling in the seventeenth century will be found in the same paper in the *Archæologia*, and many others might be collected from contemporary letters and memoirs; but as they are not immediately connected with the North Road, and throw little additional light on the subject, we may pass to an advertisement which some of us probably recollect to have seen hanging in a frame over the chimneypiece of the Black Swan coffee-room at York. It does not, as might be supposed, announce the commencement of a new coach; but only, as was usual at this season, the arrangements for the summer running, the number of journeys during the winter months being fewer, and the time occupied on the road greater.

"York four-days Stage-Coach begins on Friday the 12th of April, 1706.

"All that are desirous to pass from London to York, or from York to London, or any other place on that road, let them repair to the Black Swan in Holborn, in London, or to the Black Swan in Conney Street, in York, at both which places they may be received in a Stage-Coach every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, which performs the whole journey in four days (if God permits), and sets forth at five in the morning; and returns from York to Stamford in two days, and from Stamford, by Huntingdon, to London in two days more; and the like stages on their return; allowing each passenger 14lb. weight, and all above 3*d.* per pound.

"Also this gives notice, that the Newcastle Stage-Coach sets out from York every Monday and Friday, and from Newcastle every Monday and Friday."

The arrangements appear to be the same as in 1658, except that the communication between York and Newcastle was now twice a week instead of once, and that the continuation to Edinburgh is no longer ad-

vertised. If this were discontinued in the meantime, it was at all events revived in 1712, as appears by the following advertisement copied from the *Newcastle Courant*.

"Edinburgh, Berwick, Newcastle, York, and London Stage-Coach begins on Monday the 13th of October, 1712.

"All that desire to pass from Edinburgh to London, or from London to Edinburgh, or any place on that road, let them repair to Mr. John Baillie's, at the Coach and Horses at the head of Cannongate, in Edinburgh, every other Saturday, or at the Black Swan in Holborn, London, every other Monday, at both which places they may be received in a Stage-Coach, which performs the whole journey in thirteen days, without any stoppage (if God permits), having eighty able horses to perform the whole stage, each passenger paying four pounds ten shillings for the whole journey, allowing each passenger 20lb weight, and all above to pay 6*d*. a pound. The Coach starts at six in the morning."

When Lady Nithsdale travelled from Dumfriesshire to London, previous to effecting the escape of her lord from the Tower in 1716, she rode, by way of Carlisle, to Newcastle on horseback, as the nearest point at which she could take coach.

In 1728 the Edinburgh coach was still running,[1] but it seems to have been discontinued the following year as a regular conveyance, although the coach and horses were still retained by the proprietors to let out to parties requiring them, on giving a fortnight's notice.[2] On the 16th of December, the same year, a weekly coach was established between Newcastle and London, starting on Mondays, independent of the York coaches, by which "any passenger may be sure of their places, without writing to York, only taking them of Mr. Pratt, in Newcastle aforesaid." Mr. Pratt kept the White Hart in the Flesh Market, from whence the coach started.

In 1754 the York coach is again advertised, with a continuation to Newcastle, but no further, under a new arrangement commencing from the 24th of March. Four days are still allowed between London and York, and two between York and Newcastle, the latter portion of the

[1] "Lost, between Alnwick and Felton Bridge, *from the Stage coach*, a pair of Leather baggs, wherein were some wearing linen, coffee, coffee-cups, and other things: Whoever brings them to Mrs. Smith, Post-Mistress at Morpeth, shall have a guinea reward, and no questions asked."—*Newcastle Courant*, Jan. 6, 1728.

[2] "This is to give notice to all gentlemen, ladies, and others, that have a mind to go in a coach from Newcastle to London, Bath, Edinburgh, or any other place, that they may repair to Mr. Bart: Pratt, in the Flesh Market, Newcastle, to Mr. George Gibson, in Lendall Street, York, or to Mr. George Clerke, in Cannongate, Edinburgh, giving only a fortnight's notice, and shall have good cattle to perform the same."

journey being still performed only once a week, between London and York thrice. It now left London by the Barnet and Bugden road, instead of by Ware and Huntingdon. For the first time the Turk's Head is announced as its quarters at Newcastle. On the 30th of March, 1761, an acceleration was effected, by which the journey between London and York was performed in three days instead of four, and the weekly coach from Newcastle started on Tuesday instead of Monday, still getting into London on Saturday. On the up journey the passengers slept at Northallerton, York, Barnby Moor, and Stilton; on their return, at Darlington instead of Northallerton, getting into Newcastle at noon. The fare from Newcastle to London was now 3*l.* 5*s.*, from Newcastle to York 1*l.* At Old Michaelmas day it reverted to its old time of four days between London and York for the winter, leaving Newcastle on Monday. It now ran by Thirsk and Easingwold.

In the spring of 1764 the down coach began to leave London at ten at night, halting the following night at Grantham, and proceeding the second day to York. On the 21st of May a further acceleration was made, by which the distance between York and Newcastle was performed in one day by way of Boroughbridge. The coaches between London and York now ran every day except Sundays, and between York and Newcastle twice a week, on Mondays and Thursdays. They are advertised as the "Newcastle, Durham, and York Flying Post Coaches, on Steel Springs, with Postillions."

Hitherto one company had monopolized the coaching traffic between Newcastle and London, but in the commencement of 1765 a second coach was advertised to run by way of Wetherby, which route was stated to be eleven miles shorter than by York. It started from the George and Blue Boar, London, and the Bull and Post-boy in the Bigg Market, at Newcastle, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, at four o'clock in the morning, staying all night at Wetherby and Grantham on the up journey, and at Grantham and Boroughbridge down. The "Flying Coach" is now advertised as the "Newcastle, York, and London Fly, to set out every Monday and Thursday morning at four o'clock, breakfast at Durham, dine at Northallerton, lie at York; breakfast at Ferrybridge, dine at Tuxford, lie at Grantham; breakfast at Stilton, dine at Stevenage, and thence to the Bull in Bishopgate Street."

In August, 1772, the coach by Wetherby began to run daily, Sundays excepted, reverting to three days a week in the winter months. This is the date of Mr. Murray's excursion to London, which he has

commemorated in the little work entitled *Travels of the Imagination in a Stage Coach.* Unfortunately, he gives us few particulars of his journey, which, at this distance of time, would have been infinitely more interesting than his flights of imagination. The halt for breakfast at Durham seems to have been a very long one, for his companions and himself had time to go through the cathedral and walk about the city. From Durham he skips off to Grantham, the sleeping-place of the second night. Here, by an inconvenient arrangement, he got in early in the evening, only to be hurried off the next morning at two o'clock to finish his journey.

In May, 1784, the London coach by Wetherby was transferred from the Bull and Post-boy (Nelson's) to the Turk's Head (Brodie's), and the following year was arranged to start at ten at night both from Newcastle and London, stopping all night at Doncaster and Stilton in going up, and at Grantham and Boroughbridge on its way down. It was now the only London coach, but the Old York Fly continued to run from the King's Arms (Mordue's) as a local accommodation, and a diligence carrying three passengers was established between Newcastle and Leeds, starting from the Cock (Hall's) at the Head of the Side.

A few years earlier the coaching communication, which had been interrupted since 1729, was re-established with Edinburgh. The first coach travelled by the new road recently opened by Wooler and Kelso, and commenced running in connection with the London coach from the Bull and Post-boy in 1763. It started every Monday morning, by Morpeth, Glanton, Wooler, and Mindrum, to Kelso, where it stayed all night, proceeding on Tuesday, by Channelkirk, to Edinburgh. On its return it left Edinburgh on Saturday, remained all night at Wooler, and arrived in Newcastle on Sunday afternoon. In 1771 it ran thrice a week, leaving Newcastle at five and Edinburgh at six on the mornings of Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. In 1784 it was transferred, at the same time as the London coach, from the Bull and Post-boy to the Turk's Head, when it was converted into a diligence, carrying three passengers, and running six days a week. The route also was altered north of Wooler, from whence it proceeded by Coldstream Bridge and Greenlaw instead of Kelso.

In 1786 two other communications were opened between Edinburgh and Newcastle, both by way of Berwick, where they stayed all night in going and returning. The first was a coach to the White Hart (Loftus') in connection with the diligence to Leeds, at which place it communicated with coaches to London, Birmingham, and all the principal manufacturing towns; the second a diligence to the Queen's Head (Turner's)

in connection with the Old York Fly. Newcastle had thus three distinct lines of communication north and south at the period when Mr. Palmer's scheme for the establishment of mail-coaches was carried out. The mail from London to York commenced running from the Bull and Mouth, London, by the Old North Road, through Huntingdon, to the York Tavern, on the 16th of October, 1786; but this was not immediately extended to Newcastle, the Leeds route being in the first instance adopted. On the 13th of November, the London, Leeds, and Newcastle mail-coach started from the Bull and Mouth to the Old King's Arms, Leeds, and Cock, Newcastle. On the 27th it was extended to Edinburgh by Berwick. The impolicy of adopting a route so circuituous as by Leeds was soon apparent, the new undertaking being unable to contend against the opposition by which it was met, as well on the two more direct roads to London, as for the local traffic on the Leeds line itself. After a struggle of a few months, the mail was transferred to the York route, and has ever since run to the Queen's Head, Newcastle. This seems an appropriate period for closing this branch of the annals of the Old North Road, which has already perhaps been rather too prolixly treated. Up to this time it is remarkable that none of the coaches which communicated with Newcastle had any distinctive name, like the Wellington and the Highflyer of our own days. The first instance of any such specific name being conferred was in the case of the coach which was started between York and Newcastle to run the mail off the parallel road, by the innkeepers of every opposing interest, who now combined against what they considered the common enemy: this coach was named the Coalition.

The stage-coaches of earlier times were very unlike those admirably constructed vehicles with which we were familiar under that title. The wood-cuts in the old Newcastle newspapers represent them as very similar to the bulkiest of the hackney-coaches which used to ply in the streets of London before they were superseded by cabs. They carried six persons inside, but did not profess to carry outside passengers, although room could be made for one beside the driver. Neither did they stow away human beings in the *Boot* on the North Road, as was the fortune of Mr. Parker in the Preston machine, which renders it unnecessary to explain here what the boot was, referring the curious to the description and engravings of early stage-coaches in the 20th Volume of the *Archæologia* for information.

In 1763 the proprietors of the London and Newcastle coach for the first time advertise that they will convey outside passengers at half-fares, restricting them from carrying any luggage whatever with them.

The very next year they return to the old system, and appeal to those who travel inside to aid them in preventing the coachmen taking up outside passengers on their own account, as a practice quite as dangerous as it was fraudulent. They also discourage the transmission of heavy boxes, but undertake the carriage of parcels and game. The mails undertook the conveyance of four insides and one out, and this was found so convenient by persons having a servant with them, that the plan was adopted by the other coaches, and gradually extended.

In 1784, for the first time, a guard was appointed, not, however, to accompany the coach for the whole journey, but merely to attend it for a few miles out of London, coming in the early morning as far as Hatfield, and returning on the up journey to London late in the evening. This arrangement, however, did not last long, as the following year "superintendents" were employed for the whole journey. The passengers were requested to allow these parties to "ride inside" when there was room, and they were informed at the same time that no gratuities were expected from them, as "genteel salaries" were allowed. The establishment of the mail-coach, with a guard throughout, was immediately followed by the adoption of the same plan by the other coaches, which are also advertised to be "well-lighted" during the night.

Considering the numerous robberies of which the Old North Road was the scene during the eighteenth century, and that the coaches performed a considerable portion of their journey after dark, it is extraordinary that they were not more frequently attacked. The only instance recorded in the local newspapers subsequent to the days of Jack Shepherd and Turpin was in 1755, as noticed in the *Newcastle Journal* of the 17th of May in that year.

"On Wednesday last, about six in the morning, the York stage coach was stopped on Finchley Common by a single highwayman. Upon his demanding the passengers' money, one Mr. Duncan Robertson (formerly in the service of Genl. Campbell, and now employed by the King of Poland to buy up horses in England) being upon the box, fired a pistol at the highwayman, which missed; whereupon the latter, quitting the passengers and advancing towards the box, fired a pistol at Mr. Robertson, which only grazed upon his shoulder, and then with a great deal of ill language, challenged him to fire again. But Mr. Robertson gallantly chose to receive a second and third fire from the highwayman, rather than discharge his own last resource; upon which the fellow was glad to make off without his booty: but the country being alarmed, pursued him to a wood side, and his horse endeavouring to leap a very wide ditch, fell and broke his leg; whereupon the highwayman, after being shot in his thigh, leg, and arm, surrendered; and being carried before a Justice of Peace, was ordered to the care of a surgeon,

some of his wounds being apprehended to be mortal. The above account may be depended on, being given by one of the passengers."

Besides the London, York, and Edinburgh coaches, short stages ran between Newcastle and the neighbouring towns. The earliest of these was established in April, 1748, to run on alternate days between Durham and Newcastle, and Durham and Sunderland. Within a very few weeks it was obliged to be discontinued "on account of the late rains, and the bad roads occasioned thereby"; but the public was assured that "the coach will be set up again as soon as the roads mend." In the course of a few years coaches were established between Newcastle and Sunderland, Hexham, Morpeth, and Shields. To the last place they ran three times a-day when Pennant visited Newcastle in 1769.

In 1786 a diligence ran between Newcastle and Carlisle, by way of Hexham, Haydon Bridge, and Haltwhistle, leaving Newcastle every Friday at seven o'clock, and arriving at the Blue Bell in Scotch Street, Carlisle, at one o'clock the following afternoon. From Carlisle it returned on Sunday, at one o'clock p.m., but did not arrive in Newcastle till three p.m. on Monday. No details are given of the stoppages on the road. The fare each way was fifteen shillings. The diligences seem to have been constructed precisely like the post-chaises of that day, being, according to the representations in the newspapers, rather more imposing in their appearance than similar vehicles in our own time.

The success which attended the first establishment of stage-coaches greatly alarmed the post-masters, who combined the duties of mail-contractors with the business of letting post-horses, the whole being under the control of the Postmaster-General.

In June, 1658, two months after the appearance of the advertisement of the Chester, York, and Exeter Coaches, we find a notice that the "Postmasters on the Chester road, petitioning, have received order, and do accordingly publish the following advertisement." Then follow various regulations for expediting the system of riding post, by arranging to have horses ready on the coach days, by which passengers may be forwarded with the same speed and certainty as by coach, to Chester, Manchester, Warrington, and intermediate places. The charge of the guide's horse is also abolished, the whole cost being reduced to threepence per mile.

The apprehensions of the post-masters seems to have been ill-founded, the majority of travellers preferring horseback exercise to the jolting and "jogging" of the stage. At the same time, however, an extensive demand sprung up for job-coaches, which were furnished by liverymen

in London, who no longer restricted their journeys to one or two days out of town. The following interesting particulars on this subject are given by Don Manoel Gonzales, a Portuguese merchant, who compiled an account of England in the reign of Charles II.:—

"I can not avoid" he says, "taking notice of the vast number of coach-horses that are kept to be let out to noblemen and gentlemen, to carry or bring them to and from the distant parts of the kingdom. There are some of these men that keep several hundreds of horses, with coaches, coachmen, and a complete equipage, that will be ready at a day's warning to attend a gentleman to any part of England. These people also are great jockies. They go to all the fairs in the country, and buy up horses, with which they furnish most of the nobility and gentry about town. And if a nobleman does not care to run any hazard, or have the trouble of keeping horses in town, they will agree to furnish him with a set all the year round."

By degrees the business of letting coaches for journeys was extended to all the large towns in the kingdom, and ultimately post chaises were kept at every stage. Long, however, after the general establishment of this convenience, job-coaches, driven through with the same horses from London, were the favourite mode of conveyance to the remotest parts of the kingdom, and eager were the enquiries for "return coaches," which could generally be engaged on very easy terms by parties travelling to the metropolis. In reading correspondence of the middle of the last century, and some years later, we perpetually find the time of a contemplated visit depended on the contingency of a return-coach; and advertisements constantly occur announcing such opportunities, or proceeding from parties anxious to avail themselves of them, or sometimes wishing for a partner in the expense.

The following advertisement from the *Newcastle Journal* of the 17th of August, 1740, is the earliest intimation of any vehicle being kept for hire north of York:—

"This is to give notice that there is a coach and chaise at the Queen's Head, near the Nun's-gate, Newcastle, with good horses, which may be hired to any part of England, and will be drove by a thorough-road coachman.

To begin on the 23rd inst. by me: Thomas Abbot, from York.

In the same paper of the 1st of September, 1743, is an account of the Earl of Stair, Lord Lindores, Major Stuart, and a large retinue, having passed over Stainmoor to Bowes, the post-chaise in which their lordships were conveyed being the first vehicle of the kind which was ever seen there.

Within a very few years chaises were kept at the inns on the post-road to the very extremity of Northumberland. Arthur Young, writing in 1760, mentions, amongst the improvements which had been effected by Mr. Abraham Dixon within the last twelve years, the building of an inn at Belford, at which post-chaises were kept.

The charge for a pair of horses varied from sixpence to ninepence a mile. In 1764, the innkeepers from Newcastle southward advertised the hire of a chaise and pair at sevenpence per mile in summer, and eightpence in winter, one shilling per mile for four horses: those on the new line of road from Newcastle to Edinburgh, by Cornhill, charged ninepence per mile for a chaise and pair.

The stages, with the milage, is given as follows:—

Newcastle to Morpeth	14 miles.
Morpeth to Whittingham	20 miles.
Whittingham to Wooler Haugh-head	11 miles.
Wooler Haugh-head to Cornhill	14 miles.
Cornhill to Greenlaw	12 miles.
Greenlaw to Winnepeth-ford	11 miles.
Winnepeth-ford to Blackshiels	10 miles.
Blackshiels to Edinburgh	14 miles.
Newcastle to Edinburgh	106 miles.

On the more frequented portions of the road much competition sprung up between rival innkeepers, who advertised the superior accommodation of their respective carriages and the fleetness of their horses. This spirit of rivalry was developed in a very singular manner between an innkeeper at Durham and the landlady of a roadside house near that city, where chaises were kept, as appears from the following paragraph extracted from the *Newcastle Journal* of the 31st of July, 1756.:—

"We hear from Durham that a Chaise-match is to be run between Mrs. Richardson of Farewell-hall, and Mr. Green of Durham, to drive themselves between Farewell-hall and Ferry-hill and back, for a considerable wager; to start on Monday next, at four o'clock."

The glory of the North Road in our own days was no doubt the posting. On other roads the coaches were as well, in some even better, appointed, and the speed greater; but nowhere else could you drive up to an inn door with the certainty that as you drew up, a relay of horses with mounted post-boys would issue from the yard, and that one minute's delay was all that was required to replace the steeds that had brought you twelve miles within the hour by a fresh team to carry you forward at the same rate. This system, however, which was brought

to such perfection, was destined to "flourish and to fade" in a single generation; and some of those who had seen it supplant the jog-trot pace of the last century lived to witness its prostration before the energies of railway enterprise. The roadside inns also, where the wealthiest magnate could be regaled as sumptuously as in his own castle, are many of them altogether desolate, all shorn of their former honours; if a stray pair of horses is required, they have to be taken from the hay-cart or the plough, and if the unfrequent traveller finds a well-aired bed, it is due to the providence of his hostess, and not to the frequency of its occupation.

The Old North Road is numbered amongst the things which have been almost forgotten by the present generation, unknown to that which is springing up; and a few pages have perhaps not been ill bestowed on its annals.

JOHN HODGSON HINDE.