

The mail leaves Sydney once a week for Wellington Valley. There is some difficulty in procuring a seat, and the fare is thirty-two dollars and fifty cents; a very exorbitant charge considering the mode of conveyance, which was a two-wheeled vehicle, with seats for five persons. It had no top, and was in all respects a very uncomfortable conveyance. Formerly more commodious coaches were employed; but the government, finding that the contractors, in their anxiety to obtain passengers, were accustomed to delay the mail, ordered that none but two-wheeled vehicles should be used. The party left Sydney about 5 P. M. Three miles from town is an inn at which the mail-carts from all parts of the country meet, so as to enter the city in company at 8 A. M. For every minute of delay after this hour, the penalty of a shilling is exacted.

The post-office department is now under excellent regulations; the number of miles of mail route travelled in the colony is nearly three hundred thousand, and the gross revenue amounts to eight thousand three hundred and ninety pounds, being two thousand pounds more than the expenditure. The rate of postage is high, especially on ship-letters. The post was established in 1828, and at the end of the first year only eight post-offices were opened. In 1839, there were forty, showing the great increase of population and business.

The route towards Wellington Valley lay through Paramatta; and about 11 P. M. Penrith, thirty-six miles from Sydney, and on the Nepean, was reached. The mail left Penrith at four o'clock in the morning, and crossed the river on a raft. The Nepean, on its course towards the sea, assumes the name of Hawkesbury, and becomes the largest stream in the eastern part of the colony. At Penrith it is about one hundred and fifty yards wide, and forms the eastern boundary of the Emu Plains,—an interval of level ground, five or six miles broad, between the river and the Blue Mountains.

These mountains are the dividing range between the lands of the coast and the interior, and were, for many years after the establishment of the colony, considered as impassable, although many unsuccessful attempts to cross them were made previous to the administration of Governor Macquarie. During his administration, he sent out many expeditions by land and sea, and in 1814, a passage was effected, and the plains of Bathurst were discovered.

On reaching this part of the country, one is no longer surprised that these mountains were considered impassable. The barrier consists of a broad belt of mountainous country, about fifty miles in width, and varying in height from one thousand to three thousand five hundred feet, according to Mitchell. The route which was followed through