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THE
Adhesive Postage Stamp.

PETITION TO THE LORDS OF H.M. TREASURY

FOR

Restoration of Official Correspondence

Removed by Sir Rowland Hill.

BY PATRICK CHALMERS,

Fellow of the Royal Historical Society.

"James Chalmers was the Inventor of the Adhesive Postage Stamp in the year 1834."—*Encyclopaedia Britannica.*

"The true story of the Adhesive Stamp."—*Saturday Review.*

"The invention of James Chalmers, of Dundee."—*Daily Telegraph.*



LONDON :

EFFINGHAM WILSON & CO., ROYAL EXCHANGE, E.C.

1891.

The Adhesive Postage Stamp.

WIMBLEDON,

January, 1891.

SIR,

Herewith I beg to hand you copy of my Petition to the Lords of Her Majesty's Treasury, asking their Lordships to call upon Mr. PEARSON HILL to restore to the possession of the Treasury the official correspondence betwixt the late JAMES CHALMERS and the late Sir ROWLAND HILL, with other official documents, all removed from the Treasury by Sir ROWLAND HILL when in the pay and service of Her Majesty's Treasury.

By what right and with what object did Sir ROWLAND HILL remove this correspondence, as also the memorial of the bankers and merchants of Dundee in support of their townsman? In my efforts to vindicate the services of my late father, I have been charged with "attacking a dead man." Here, then, I am asking that Sir ROWLAND HILL may be allowed to speak for himself, and I trust to have the support of all well-wishers to the cause of truth and justice in now ventilating this matter.

Yours respectfully,

PATRICK CHALMERS.

The Adhesive Postage Stamp.

To the Right Honourable

The Lords of Her Majesty's Treasury.

*The Petition of the undersigned PATRICK CHALMERS,
of 14, Springfield Road, Wimbledon, and of
the Oriental Club, Hanover Square, W.*

HUMBLY SHEWETH—

1st. WHEREAS for some years past a controversy has existed betwixt your Petitioner on the one part, and Mr. Pearson Hill, son of the late Sir Rowland Hill, on the other part, as to which of their respective fathers—say the late James Chalmers, bookseller, Dundee, or the late Sir Rowland Hill—was the originator of the Adhesive Postage Stamp, adopted by Treasury Minute of date 26th December, 1839, into the public service, for the purpose of carrying out in practice the uniform Penny Postage Bill sanctioned by Parliament in the preceding month of August.

2nd. WHEREAS it is proved and admitted that James Chalmers laid this plan of an Adhesive

Postage Stamp before the Select Committee of the House of Commons appointed to inquire into the proposed Penny Postage Scheme, and taking evidence with respect to same, known as the Committee of 1837-38; the date of acknowledgment of Mr. Wallace, Chairman of said Committee, to James Chalmers being the 9th December, 1837.

3rd. WHEREAS it is further proved and admitted that James Chalmers, in a letter dated Dundee, 8th February, 1838, laid his plan of an Adhesive Postage Stamp before the Mercantile Committee of the City of London engaged in obtaining legislative sanction for the proposed uniform Penny Postage Scheme—said letter with plan of an Adhesive Postage Stamp on sheet of gummed paper, on the principle ultimately adopted and now in use, having been bequeathed by the late Sir Henry Cole, ex-Secretary to the Mercantile Committee, to the South Kensington Museum Library, and where both letter and plan of James Chalmers may now be seen.

4th. WHEREAS it is further proved and admitted that James Chalmers laid said plan at same period before the then Mr. Rowland Hill himself, urging its adoption for the purpose of carrying out in practice the proposed Penny Postage Scheme, the letter of acknowledgment on the part of Mr. Hill being of date March 3rd, 1838.

5th. WHEREAS it is proved by the proceedings in Parliament, as officially recorded in *Hansard*, that on the introduction of the uniform Penny Postage Bill in the month of July, 1839, much dismay existed as to how the measure could be carried out in practice—that the Minister so introducing the Bill declared the plan of Mr. Rowland Hill to be that “an impressed stamped cover should absolutely be used in all cases, which stamped covers were to be made by one single manufacturer”—a plan to which the Government could not consent.

6th. WHEREAS, in this dilemma, Mr. Wallace, Chairman of the already named Select Committee of 1837–38, favourably suggested the adoption of an Adhesive Stamp; and Mr. Warburton, a member of same Select Committee, proposed that plans be invited from the public.

7th. WHEREAS by Treasury Minute of August 23rd, 1839, plans were invited from the public, in response to which James Chalmers respectfully addressed the Lords of the Treasury in a letter dated Dundee, September 30th, 1839. In this letter, a copy of which has lately been brought to light from the columns of an old local newspaper, James Chalmers refers to his previous proposal of December, 1837, to Mr. Wallace, which “he has now more fully matured;” and, amongst other

matters, further proposes that the Stamps be printed from dies or cuts made by able artists, and “*with ink varying in colour according to the price of the Stamp.*” “When put into the Post-office, the Postmaster or his assistants could at a glance distinguish if the proper stamp was affixed, and could at same time impress the Post Office Seal partly across the stamp, which would prevent the possibility of being used a second time.” . . . “By having exactly 120 stamps on the sheet, it would give facility to the calculation, making one sheet of penny stamps 10s., and that of twopenny stamps 20s.”

8th. WHEREAS it has come to light from the columns of the same old local newspaper that the above letter, plan, and proposals of James Chalmers were accompanied by a Certificate or Memorial to the Lords of Her Majesty’s Treasury, subscribed by about one hundred and fifty of the principal bankers, merchants, and others in Dundee, respectfully recommending their townsman’s plan to the favourable consideration of their Lordships. Said Memorial, as your Petitioner is officially informed, being “not now in the possession of the Treasury, nor is it amongst the papers preserved at the Record Office.”

9th. WHEREAS, in the correspondence which

subsequently took place betwixt James Chalmers and Mr. Rowland Hill, then an official in the pay of Her Majesty's Treasury, having charge and control of the matter in question, Mr. Chalmers' claim as the originator of the Adhesive Postage Stamp was set aside, and the merit of same assumed by Mr. Hill himself as the originator, and so given out by him to the public and posterity.

10th. WHEREAS it has been admitted by Mr. Pearson Hill that said official correspondence is now in his possession, as likewise the aforesaid letter and plan of James Chalmers, and the Memorial of the Dundee Merchants to the Lords of Her Majesty's Treasury.

Now, the Prayer of your Lordships' Petitioner, having regard to the above recitals, is that your Lordships may be pleased to call upon Mr. Pearson Hill to *restore to the possession* of Her Majesty's Treasury the above-named correspondence and other official documents removed from the Treasury by Mr. Rowland Hill when in the pay and service of your Lordships' predecessors, in order that it may be seen *upon what grounds* Mr. Rowland Hill assumed to himself the merit of this valuable proposal, due, as your Petitioner contends under the proofs he has set forth, to James Chalmers. Your Petitioner has shown from the official records

of Parliament that up to the introduction of the Penny Postage Bill, in July, 1839, Mr. Rowland Hill had *not* proposed the adoption of the Adhesive Stamp for the purpose of carrying out in practice the scheme then brought forward. On the other hand it is proved that James Chalmers had urged the adoption of this stamp to Mr. Wallace as early as December, 1837, and to Mr. Hill himself in February, 1838. Your Petitioner further contests the right of Mr. Rowland Hill to have removed to his private possession what was public property, and equally contests the right of Mr. Pearson Hill to withhold same from your Petitioner and the public. May your Lordships be pleased to take the same view, and your Petitioner shall ever pray.

PATRICK CHALMERS.

WIMBLEDON,

December 4th, 1890.

[*Copy.*]

“ WIMBLEDON,

“ *December 4th, 1890.*

“ SIR,

“ I beg to hand you herewith a Petition addressed by me to the Lords of Her Majesty's Treasury, praying that their Lordships may be pleased to call upon Mr. Pearson Hill to restore to the Treasury certain documents and official correspondence removed from the Treasury by the the late Sir Rowland Hill.

“ You have already informed me, in June of last year, 1889, that their Lordships declined to interfere in this matter; but looking at the evidence which has since transpired and the complete case I am now enabled to present, I feel it my duty to now lay this Petition before their Lordships.

“ I have the honour to remain, SIR,

“ Yours most respectfully,

“ (*Signed*) PATRICK CHALMERS.

“ Sir R. E. WELBY,

“ *Secretary H.M. Treasury,*

“ WHITEHALL.”

Not having been favoured with any reply to the foregoing, it may be concluded that their Lordships continue indisposed to afford me the justice asked for, and to which I felt myself all the more entitled, inasmuch as many members of the Press have refrained from supporting or even commenting upon my claim on the grounds that I have been “ attacking a dead man.”

Here, then, have I been begging that the deceased man may be allowed to speak for himself—the controversy has been carried up to and now narrowed to the point: “What did Sir Rowland Hill write to James Chalmers when he put aside his claim as originator of the Adhesive Postage Stamp and assumed the merit to himself.”

Surely this is a reasonable demand, not only on my part, but in justice to the memory of Sir Rowland Hill himself; as, failing proof to the contrary through the production of the correspondence, only one conclusion can be arrived at, namely, that Sir Rowland Hill availed himself of his position to usurp this merit from a defenceless man, carrying away with him the official correspondence, with its adjuncts, which would have proved the title of James Chalmers.

My Petition having of necessity been condensed to the barest statement, some more extended remarks are presented.

The plan of Sir Rowland Hill for carrying out in practice the Penny Postage Scheme has been already frequently given—namely, by prepayment in money or by an impressed stamped wrapper or cover, or by stamp impressed upon the sheet of writing paper. In explaining his plan to Lord Lichfield, Postmaster-General, in January, 1838, the then Mr. Hill writes: “That the payment should always be in advance. And to rid this mode of payment of the trouble and risk which it would otherwise entail on the sending of letters, as well as for other important considerations, I propose that the postage be collected by the sale of stamped covers.” Not a word is said of an Adhesive Stamp.

Clauses 5 and 6 of my Petition prove that up to the introduction of the Penny Postage Bill into Parliament

on the 5th of July, 1839, Mr. Hill had not proposed the use of the Adhesive Stamp for the purpose of carrying out in practice the proposed reform. The proceedings on that occasion are so important and conclusive on the question that I present a more detailed account from *Hansard*, volume 48, first giving the effect of Mr. Hill's proposals upon the Select Committee of the House of Commons of 1837-38.

That Committee took exception to Mr. Hill's plan mainly on account of its liability to forgery—a stamp of the nature proposed would be extensively forged. After evidence on the part of the Stamp Office authorities and papermakers had been taken, it was decided to recommend that the paper for all stamped covers should be manufactured at the paper-mills of a Mr. Dickenson, or of another, solely, under strict Excise supervision. This paper of Mr. Dickenson's was of a peculiar make, having threads of cotton or silk so interwoven in the paper that a Post-office clerk could readily know by the look or feel that a stamped cover was genuine. The papermakers protested, and petitioned against this, objecting to one of the body having all the work. Besides, the proposal involved permanent Excise supervision over the manufacture of paper. This proposal, however, extended only to covers or envelopes. How forgery was to be prevented in respect of the stamps upon the sheets of letter-paper the Committee do not say. The whole position, in fact, remained in a state of chaos, only relieved by the ultimate adoption of the Adhesive Stamp, which plan Mr. Chalmers had laid before this Committee through Mr. Wallace, the Chairman, and likewise through Mr. Chalmers, M.P., a member of the Committee, and which plan had been publicly discussed, not without finding adherents, including Mr. Cobden, one of the witnesses in favour of the scheme.

To the solution proposed by the Committee that all stamped covers should be made of Dickenson's peculiar paper the Government again highly objected, further adding to the dilemma; and when the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on the 5th of July, 1839, introduced and carried a resolution sanctioning a Penny Postage Bill being brought forward, he distinctly only "asked Hon. Members to commit themselves to the question of a uniform rate of postage of one penny at and under a weight hereafter to be fixed." Everything else was to be left open. "If it were to go forth to the public to-morrow morning that the Government had proposed, and the House had adopted, the plan of Mr. Rowland Hill, the necessary result would be to spread a conviction abroad that, *as a stamped cover was absolutely to be used in all cases*, which stamped covers were to be made by one single manufacturer, alarm would be felt lest a monopoly would thereby be created, to the serious detriment of other members of a most useful and important trade. The sense of injustice excited by this would necessarily be extreme. I therefore do not call upon the House either to affirm or to negative any such proposition at the present. I ask you simply to affirm the adoption of a uniform penny postage, and the taxation of that postage by weight. Neither do I ask you to pledge yourselves to the prepayment of letters, for I am of opinion that, at all events, there should be an option of putting letters into the post without a stamp.

"If the resolution be affirmed, and the Bill has to be proposed, it will hereafter require very great care and complicated arrangements to carry the plan into practical effect. It may involve considerable expense and considerable responsibility on the part of the Government; it may disturb existing trades, such as the paper trade. . . . The new postage will be distinctly and simply a penny postage by weight. . . . I also require for the Treasury

a power of taking the postage by anticipation and a power of allowing such postage to be taken by means of stamped covers, and I also require the authority of rating the postage according to weight."

In this dilemma, as to *how* to carry out the scheme in practice, Mr. Wallace favourably suggested the Adhesive Stamp, "the adoption of which plan, he had no hesitation in saying, from the evidence adduced, would secure the revenue from loss by forgery." Mr. Warburton, also a member of the 1837-38 Committee, "viewing with considerable alarm the doubt which had been expressed of adopting Mr. Hill's plan of prepayment and collection by stamped covers," recommended that plans should be applied for from the public.

Again, in the House of Lords on the 5th of August, Lord Melbourne, in introducing the Bill, is as much embarrassed as was the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Commons. The opponents of the Bill use, as one of their strongest arguments, the impossibility of carrying out the scheme in practice. The Earl of Ripon says: "Why were their Lordships thus called upon at this period of the Session to pass a Bill, when no mortal being at that moment had the remotest conception of how it was to be carried into execution?" Here Lord Ashburton, like Mr. Wallace in the Commons, favourably suggested the Adhesive Stamp, "which would answer every purpose, and remove the objection of the stationers and papermakers to the measure."

Let it, then, be clearly noted that up to the period of the Bill in July and August, 1839, not a word is said in any way connecting Mr. Hill's name with other than the impressed stamp on the sheet of letter-paper, or, more especially, on the stamped covers. That, *and that alone*, is taken on the one part as *his* plan by all the speakers, official or other-

wise—for that alone does the Chancellor of the Exchequer ask for “powers.” The Adhesive Stamp is brought in, on the other part, as a distinct proposal, in no way entering into the proposals of Mr. Hill.

Now, what does Sir Rowland Hill tell us of all this is his “History of Penny Postage?” Not a word! giving his readers, on the contrary, to understand that the adoption of the Adhesive Stamp was included in his proposals of 1837.

Though Mr. Hill’s letter to Lord Lichfield and the above official proceedings in Parliament are conclusive proof on the subject, I have given in my late pamphlet, “How James Chalmers saved the Penny Postage Scheme,” many collateral proofs, such as the following from the issue of the *Athenæum* of date April 28, 1838, which is printed on Dickenson’s paper, having the blue threads inserted in its substance, “so as to make our subscribers acquainted with the nature of the proposed method. We shall be surprised if so simple a means of protecting the revenue and preventing crime is not adopted.” Such is the record of Mr. John Francis, the friend of Sir Rowland Hill, in his work, “A Literary Chronicle of Half a Century.” Not a word of an Adhesive Stamp.

Again, the following is from the *Times* of 30th August, 1839, a fortnight *after* the passing of the Bill, “The Penny Postage will commence, we learn, on the 1st January next. It is intended that stamped envelopes shall be sold at every post-office, so that stationers and other shopkeepers may, as well as the public, supply themselves at a minute’s notice.” Not a word, it is seen, as to an Adhe-

sive Stamp having formed any part of Mr. Hill's plan or proposals.

CLAUSE 8.

LETTER OF THE DUNDEE MERCHANTS.

In my publication, "How James Chalmers saved the Penny Postage Scheme," I was enabled, through the researches of patriotic men in Arbroath to produce from the files of the old *Arbroath Herald*, of date October 11th, 1839, copy of a letter from the principal bankers, merchants, and others in Dundee, addressed to the Lords of Her Majesty's Treasury in support of the plan of their townsman, James Chalmers, at same time submitted to the Treasury for the purpose of carrying out the Penny Postage scheme. The Bill had obtained Parliamentary sanction in August, but, as has been shown, there remained the essential point—how to carry it out in practice. This letter is as follows:—

"DUNDEE, *September 30th, 1839.*

"We hereby certify that Mr. James Chalmers, bookseller here, has for many years taken an active interest in the acceleration of the mail and general improvement of the Post Office establishment, and his services in this way have been repeatedly noticed with much commendation in respectable periodical publications. Chiefly through his exertions in directing attention to the means and importance of accelerating the mail, two days were gained in correspondence betwixt this place and London, and also betwixt this and Liverpool, prior to the use of railways. Since this proposal to establish a uniform rate of postage was announced, Mr. Chalmers has devoted much attention to the subject, and has been at great pains to discover the best method of carrying the scheme into effect. We have seen a specimen along with a description of his plan of using stamped slips, which appear to us to possess several peculiar and important advantages. We beg, therefore, respectfully to recommend his

plan to the favourable consideration of the Right Honourable the Lords of Her Majesty's Treasury.

ALEXR. BALFOUR, Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce.	W. JOHNSTONE, Bailie.
EDWARD BAXTER, Deputy Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce.	JOHN BROWN, Bailie.
WILLIAM THOMS, Banker and J.P.	JOHN CALMAN, Bailie.
JOHN STURROCK, Banker and J.P.	WM. BOYACK, Bailie.
JOHN SYMERS, Banker and J.P.	JAS. THOMS, Dean of Guild.
WILLIAM HACKNEY, J.P.	CHRIS. KERR, Town Clerk.
GEO. KINLOCH, J.P.	WILL. BARRIE, Town Clerk.
JAMES BROWN, J.P.	CHAS. ADIE, D.D.
GEORGE DUNCAN, J.P.	JOHN MURDOCH, Convener of the Nine Incorporated Trades.
JAMES GUTHRIE, J.P.	GEORGE MILNE, Clerk to the Harbour Trustees.
C. W. BOASE, Banker.	ARCHD. CRICHTON, Sea Insurance Office.
W. CHRISTIE, Banker.	SHIEL & SMALL, Writers."
DAVID GUTHRIE, Banker.	
ALEXR. KAY, Provost.	

Subscribed also by above one hundred Merchants, Ship-owners, and others of Dundee for the names of which latter we must wait the appearance of the original, at length admitted by Mr. Pearson Hill, after years of controversy, to be in his possession.

Further admissions to be gathered from what Mr. Pearson Hill has published in the course of this controversy are :—That the date of Mr. Wallace's acknowledgment of the plan of the Adhesive Postage Stamp received from James Chalmers is the 9th December, 1837 ;—that the date of Mr. Rowland Hill's first acknowledgment of same from James Chalmers is the 3rd March, 1838 ;—that the date of Mr. Rowland Hill's second letter to James Chalmers in which he puts aside Chalmers' claim, and assumes the merit of the Adhesive Stamp to himself, is the 18th January, 1840—and that the date of James Chalmers' reply to same is the 18th May, 1840. And that in this last-named letter, Mr. Chalmers encloses to Mr. Hill a copy of Mr. Hill's first letter of 3rd March, 1838, in order to show Mr. Hill that at that period he, Mr. Hill, did not profess to have already proposed or been then in favour of the plan of the Adhesive Stamp which Chalmers had just laid before him.

My Petition, then, is for the restoration to the Treasury of this official correspondence. What are the contents of these letters, and what do they disclose? By what right, or with what object did Mr. Hill remove into his own private possession these official letters and the official Dundee memorial just providentially brought to light in the way I have stated, and of which, as far as Mr. Hill was concerned, nothing would ever have been heard? Why, in his "History of Penny Postage," not published until forty years after the event, does Sir Rowland Hill omit all reference to the proceedings in Parliament on this matter, while, on the contrary, he gives the reader to understand that the adoption of the Adhesive Stamp for the purpose of carrying out the scheme in practice formed part and parcel of his original proposals of 1837? Why does Mr. Hill not say so in his letter to James Chalmers on the 3rd March, 1838? On what grounds does Mr. Hill justify his change of attitude with respect to this stamp, and in his second letter to Chalmers of 18th January, 1840, put Chalmers aside and claim the merit to himself? We know that in the interval of nearly two years betwixt these two letters of Mr. Hill to Mr. Chalmers this stamp had become the favourite of all opinions concerned; it had solved the paper difficulty, and removed the alarm of the

paper trade threatened with confiscation of their business in writing paper by a Government monopoly; it had been brought forward in Parliament; *it had saved the Penny Postage Scheme*.* This change of attitude must be justified by the production of the correspondence, or the only alternative conclusion is, that Mr. Hill availed himself of his position to usurp a merit which in reality belonged to the simple-minded Dundee bookseller.

* The following shows the reception the respective stamps met with from the public as described in the pages of the "Encyclopædia Britannica" and by Sir Rowland Hill himself:—

"Mulready's well-remembered allegorical cover came into use on the 1st May, 1840, together with the first form of the stamped letter paper and the adhesive labels. They all met at first, but only for a few days, with a large sale. That of the first day yielded £2,500. Soon afterwards the public rejection of the 'Mulready envelope,' writes Rowland Hill, 'was so complete as to necessitate the destruction of nearly all the vast number prepared for issue.' Whilst, on the other hand, the presses of the Stamp Office were producing more than half a million of adhesive labels by working both night and day, they yet failed to meet the demand."

The Adhesive Stamp thus saved the Penny Postage Scheme from failure.

APPENDIX.

EXTRACT FROM THE LETTER OF JAMES CHALMERS, referred to in the foregoing pages, handing his plan of the Adhesive Postage Stamp to the Mercantile Committee of the City of London, and now in the South Kensington Museum Library, bequeathed by the late Sir Henry Cole :—

“ 4, CASTLE STREET, DUNDEE,
“ 8th February, 1838.

“ I conceive that the most simple and economical mode of carrying out such an arrangement (that of prepayment of letters) would be by slips (postage stamps), prepared somewhat similar to the specimen herewith shown.

“ With this view, and in the hope that Mr. Hill's plan may soon be carried into operation, I would suggest that sheets of stamped slips should be prepared at the Stamp Office, on a paper made expressly for the purpose, with a device on each for a die or cut resembling that on newspapers ; that the sheets so printed or stamped should then be rubbed over

with a strong solution of gum or other adhesive substance, and, when thoroughly dry, issued by the Stamp Office to town and country distributors, to stationers and others, for sale in sheets and singly. . . . Merchants and others, whose correspondence is extensive, could purchase these slips in quantities, cut them singly, and affix one to a letter, by means of wetting the back of the slip with a sponge or brush. . . . Others requiring only one or two slips at a time could purchase them along with sheets of paper at stationers' shops, the *weight* only regulating the rate of postage in all cases, so as a stamp may be affixed according to the scale determined on.

“Again, to prevent the possibility of these being used a *second* time, it should be made imperative on post-masters to put the Post Office town stamp (as represented in one of the specimens) across the slip or postage stamp.”

This statement is accompanied by several specimens of a suggested stamp about an inch square. A space divides each stamp for cutting off singly. One of the specimens is stamped across with the *quasi*-postmark “Dundee, 10th February, 1838,” to exemplify what Mr. Chalmers states should be done to prevent the stamp being used a second time.

Brought forward in the House of Commons the

5th July, 1839. After plans had been called for from the public and nothing better found, adopted by Treasury Minute of date 26th December, 1839.

This Adhesive Stamp was invented by James Chalmers in the year 1834 (see *Encyclopædia Britannica*, after special investigation, and *Dictionary of National Biography*, &c.), up to which period all authorities, including Sir Rowland Hill, agree that an Adhesive Stamp for postage purposes was undreamt of.

An original specimen of Chalmers' Adhesive Postage Stamp of the year 1834, in the possession of Herr Sigmund Friedl, the extensive stamp merchant of Vienna and Publisher of the *Welt Post*, was exhibited at the late Vienna Exhibition, and is thus referred to in the Vienna Press:—

“The *Deutsches Volksblatt* of 4th March writes:

“THE INTERNATIONAL POSTAGE STAMP EXHIBITION AT VIENNA,
1890.

“On the occasion of the Jubilee of Postage Stamps (6th May, 1840–1890), an Exhibition will be opened under the patronage of the Minister of Commerce and contain objects of great interest, not only for experts, but also for the general public, and especially for students of historical culture. In the foremost ranks will be found the first type of Adhesive Stamps projected in August, 1834, by the inventor, James Chalmers, and of which the only one in known existence is at present in the Postage Stamp Museum at Unter-Dobling. This simple and unadorned little slip of paper which was only recently unearthed, has become an object of Philatelic veneration.” . . .

From the “VIENNA WEEKLY NEWS,” April 22nd, 1890.

“The Vienna Postal Exhibition, under the protectorate of the Marquis Bacquehem, the Austrian Minister of Commerce, which was opened last Sunday, is sure to attract general interest. The Exhibition occupies two spacious halls of the Austrian Museum on the Stuben Ring. Stamp collectors will delight to

feast their eyes on the accumulations exposed to view. Half a century has now passed since the first stamp was issued, and the late James Chalmers, the Father of the Stamp, as he is deservedly called, would have reason to feel proud of the inestimable service he rendered the civilised world could he be amongst us at the present day and witness the show now on hand."

This stamp of 1834 is crossed over with the word "used" to show how same is not to be used a second time, a primitive idea. In his later essay of 1837 it is seen that Chalmers proposes to obliterate the stamp by putting the town stamp and date across same as now done.

In December, 1837, Mr. Chalmers submitted this plan to Mr. Wallace, Chairman of the Select Committee of the House of Commons appointed to inquire into the proposed Penny Postage Scheme of Mr. Rowland Hill.

Again, in February, 1838, Mr. Chalmers sent his plan to the Mercantile Committee of the City of London, as already mentioned. At same time a copy was sent to Mr. Rowland Hill, whose reply to Mr. Chalmers, of date March 3rd, 1838, was unfavourable.

The public of the present day are not generally aware that on the introduction into Parliament of the uniform Penny Postage Bill on the 5th July, 1839, all was dismay as to how the proposal could be carried out in practice. The plan of Mr. Rowland Hill, as then stated by the Minister introducing the Bill, was that "an impressed stamped cover, to be made by one single manufacturer, was absolutely to be used on all occasions." To this plan the Committee and the Government objected for various reasons, such as being liable to forgery and unfair to the stationery trade at large, who had petitioned against the proposal. In this dilemma Mr. Wallace proposed the use of the Adhesive Stamp. Mr. Warburton suggested that plans should be invited from the public. On the passing of the Bill in August, 1839, Mr. Rowland Hill was appointed to a position in the Treasury for the purpose of carrying out the reformed scheme. The first step taken was to invite plans from the public.

Mr. Chalmers again sent in his plan of an Adhesive Stamp in a letter addressed to the Lords of Her Majesty's Treasury of date 7th October, 1839, and accompanied by a memorial from over 150 of the leading bankers, merchants, and public of Dundee, urging the adoption of his plan. This fact, with the details of the plan, has lately been brought to light from the columns of the *Arbroath Herald* of 11th October, 1839.

On this occasion Mr. Chalmers begins by referring to his former plan of 1837 sent to Mr. Wallace, "which he has now more fully matured." After presenting a second or alternative plan, so as to dispense with the extra weight and cost of envelopes—a matter of much consequence in the days of the mail-coach—but which alternative plan still maintained the adhesive principle, Mr. Chalmers now adds the following additional proposals:—

"That the slips should be printed on paper of a uniform size, and *with ink varying in colour according to the price of the stamp*, under the superintendence of the Stamp Office Department, each slip having a device on it about the size or circumference of a shilling piece, specifying the weight it carries and the rate of postage; and then to be issued to town and country distributors of stamps, to be by them sold in sheets or quantities of sheets to stationers and others to retail as may be required."

Again: "I would propose that a thin paper should be prepared especially for these stamps, that in each slip there should be a watermark of a Crown and the letters 'P.O.S.', and then printed from dies or cuts made by able artists expressly for the purpose."

Again : "I propose that those stamps should be printed on paper the size of small post, and that each full sheet should contain a hundred and twenty stamps or slips." Again : "The penny stamp being all of one colour of printing ink, the twopenny or higher stamps to be of other colours of ink. And when put into the Post-office, the Postmaster or his assistants could at a glance distinguish if the proper stamp was affixed, and could at the same time impress the Post Office Seal partly across the stamp, which would prevent the possibility of being used a second time ; the letter sorter having only in a few cases the trouble of weighing any letter having on it a lower stamp which he suspected ought to have a higher. By having exactly a hundred and twenty stamps on the sheet, it would give facility in the calculation, making one sheet of penny stamps 10s., and that of twopenny stamps 20s."

Mr. Chalmers then goes on at some length to calculate the probable cost, the result showing that 1,000 stamps would cost $6\frac{1}{2}$ d. Here was a valuable guide to Mr. Hill, whose contract with Messrs. Bacon and Petch for the first stamps issued to the public on the 6th May, 1840, was just what Chalmers had named, 6d. the 1,000 stamps.

This, it will be seen, taken in conjunction with the plan of 1837-38 already given, is a marvel of

completeness, the very thing adopted by Mr. Rowland Hill, and now in use. However, neither plan, Dundee memorial, nor official correspondence with Chalmers, are now to be found in the records of Her Majesty's Treasury, having been removed by Mr. Rowland Hill, and now in the possession of Mr. Pearson Hill.

VALUE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE ADHESIVE POSTAGE STAMP.

Mr. G. A. Sala has written : "Whoever discovered the Adhesive Stamp, the discovery has socially revolutionised the world." Also, "It seems tolerably clear that Sir Rowland Hill was not the inventor, in the strict sense of the term, either of the Penny Postage or of the Adhesive Postage Stamp."

The importance of this essential feature in the great boon of Penny Postage reform has been universally recognised. Of what use is a scheme, however promising, if it cannot be carried out in practice? And that such was the position of the Penny Postage Scheme even after it had passed the ordeal of the Select Committee of 1837-38, the history of the period clearly demonstrates. The great argument of the opponents of the scheme was—"Why should we be called upon to pass this Bill when no mortal being had at that moment the remotest conception of how it was to be carried into execution." Surely the man who solved this problem and saved the scheme has done the State some service.

The *Daily Telegraph*, in its article upon the City of London Postal Jubilee Commemoration at the Guildhall, writes, the 16th May last: "In January, 1840, the uniform penny rate came into operation throughout these islands, and Parliamentary franking was abolished. Four months later, Adhesive Postage Stamps, the invention of Mr. James Chalmers, a Dundee

printer, were introduced, and found so ready a sale that supply was at first unable to meet the demand. It is an interesting fact that of these 'labels,' which were not separable by perforation until 1853, over fifty thousand millions have been printed and issued in this country alone between May 1st, 1840, and the present time." The issue now reaches two thousand millions yearly.

RECOGNITIONS.

The pamphlets I have published in vindication of the services of James Chalmers have contained a successive list of recognitions, not alone in this country, but now extending to America, France, Germany, &c. Of these recognitions my last publication, "Robert Wallace, M.P., and James Chalmers, the Scottish Postal Reformers," contained an additional fifteen pages of condensed matter chiefly from abroad, which, if given in full, would have extended to 250 pages.

It has been further explained that, having left Dundee a youth, and passed much of the interval abroad, it was through letters and articles which appeared in the Dundee Press upon the decease of Sir Rowland Hill that my attention was directed to the vindication of my father's services, the knowledge of which was not confined to his own locality, as already evidenced. In this connection the following, already published some years ago, will bear repetition :—

Sir Bartle Frere writes :

" WRESSIL LODGE, WIMBLEDON,

" 21st April, 1863.

" SIR,

" I have received your letter of the 20th, and thank you for its enclosures on the subject of the invention of the Adhesive Postage Stamp.

" I have long believed that Mr. James Chalmers was the inventor of that important part of our present postal system, but I regret that I cannot suggest to you any means of giving further

publicity to your father's claims to the merit of that most useful invention.

"I remain, Sir,

"Yours truly,

"(Signed) H. B. E. FRERE.

"P. CHALMERS, Esq."

Sir Bartle Frere introduced the Adhesive Postage Stamp into Scinde during his administration of that province, having obtained his knowledge and belief as to James Chalmers having been the originator of same from independent sources thirty years before my own investigation of the subject.

The question being occasionally asked—"Did an Adhesive Postage Stamp exist prior to the year, 1834?" the proved date of the first invention of such a stamp by James Chalmers, I ask attention to the following:—

Had any such system of prepayment of letters existed or been invented in France or the Continent prior to the English reformed postal system of 1840, Frenchmen would, of course, have been the first to lay claim to the merit. So far from having put forward any such claim, the Adhesive Stamp for postage purposes has been accepted by France, as by every other country, as having been an invention and proposal emanating from this country. In proof of this I ask reference to the official letter with which I have been honoured from the Secretary of the French Post Office, published at page 65 of my pamphlet, "How James Chalmers saved the Penny Postage Scheme," as well as to the official recognition of James Chalmers by the Société Internationale de Timbrologie, Paris. In the same pamphlet may be found an extract from the Post Office Journal of Berlin, recognising James Chalmers in place of Sir Rowland Hill—also an official letter from the Italian Post Office to similar effect. The learned "Encyclopædia Britannica," now recognises Chalmers in place of Hill, and further as the first man in history to have conceived the idea of an Adhesive Postage Stamp; also the "Dictionary of National Biography." The President of the American Philatelic Association, than whom no man has more intimately studied the history of postage stamps, has written. "Up to 1834, I have found no trace of an Adhesive Postage

Stamp." Sir Rowland Hill, in his "History of Penny Postage," referring to Mr. Knight's proposal of an impressed stamped wrapper in the year 1834, states that an Adhesive Postage Stamp had been up to that period "undreamt of." Herr Franz Himmelbauer, of Vienna, an admitted and learned student of the subject, in an exhaustive article upon the history of postage stamps, concludes: "We should always separate adhesive stamps from wrappers or envelopes; the latter are a practical embodiment of an idea which is centuries old, the former an invention of James Chalmers, citizen of Dundee."

No one can now assert, in the face of the above authorities, that an Adhesive Postage Stamp had existed or been proposed for postage purposes prior to the year 1834.

MR. PEARSON HILL.

Mr. Pearson Hill's case is that Sir Rowland Hill proposed the adoption of the Adhesive Stamp in February, 1837, while the letter of James Chalmers to Mr. Wallace is only of December in the same year. From the official and other evidence I have adduced, it is plain that Sir Rowland Hill did not propose the adoption of this stamp for the purpose of carrying out the scheme in February, 1837; and that evidence Mr. Pearson Hill wholly evades and passes over, same being indeed insurmountable. In February, 1837, subsequent to the publication of the first edition of his pamphlet, Sir Rowland Hill made a passing allusion to a supposed exceptional case in which an Adhesive Stamp might be made use of, showing he had become cognisant of

James Chalmers invention of 1834, but without seeing its value or proposing its adoption for the purpose of carrying out the scheme. When at length, in December, 1839, this stamp is adopted, the pretence and afterthought is put forward—"Oh! the very thing we proposed in February, 1837, months before Chalmers did!" This pretence and afterthought, bred of the success which had attended the invention and happy proposal of James Chalmers, will go down with no impartial person who has read the case—indeed it is by no means creditable to the discernment of Sir Rowland Hill that, having become cognisant of this idea, he did not at once seize upon it and propose this stamp for the purpose of carrying out the scheme in place of waiting until the plan was actually urged upon him by general demand in and out of Parliament.

Moreover, Mr. Pearson Hill now makes no pretension that the Adhesive Postage Stamp was actually the *invention* of Sir Rowland Hill. However, it is not Mr. Pearson Hill's case that is wanted, but that of Sir Rowland Hill himself. Let it be seen what he wrote to James Chalmers, and for this purpose let the official correspondence be restored to the Treasury, failing which the conclusion is inevitable—that Sir Rowland Hill's letters would not mend the matter, probably make it worse, else

we should have had them from Mr. Pearson Hill long ago.

One would have expected that after the decision in my favour of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, to which learned tribunal Mr. Pearson Hill himself appealed, that gentleman would have followed the usual course of retiring, with dignity if with regret, from this controversy, and so allowing James Chalmers that share in the merit of this great reform to which he is undoubtedly entitled, and which Sir Rowland Hill could so well afford. On the contrary, Mr. Pearson Hill has pursued me in his publications and in the Philatelic Press with the utmost rancour and vituperation, describing me as a mere impostor, or worse, insane, and so on.

So far does Mr. Pearson Hill forget himself as to imply that I have claimed for my father not only the Adhesive Stamp, but further, the merit of Archer's patent perforation, and the very Penny Postage scheme itself! Going on with such choice remarks as that "probably before the jubilee of Penny Postage arrives some old people in Dundee or Bedlam will be discovered who can testify that Mr. James Chalmers also designed the General Post Office, and that the Postal Telegraphs, Telephones, and the Parcels Post, were all invented by Mr. James Chalmers in 1834, and communicated

by him to his wondering friends and neighbours." Referring to my being a member of the Royal Historical Society leads to the remark—"A man may be as well called a goose because he subscribes to a goose club;" and "Surely, if the Commissioners in Lunacy are in want of a promising case, they might find one at Wimbledon admirably adapted to their hands."

I refrain from adding by any words of mine to the painful effect which such remarks will produce upon every man of intelligence or sense of propriety.

POSTSCRIPT.

February, 1891.

On the issue of the above publication some weeks ago, copies were at once sent to the friends and supporters of Mr. Pearson Hill in the Post Office and elsewhere. After sufficient lapse of time for their consideration of same, I addressed the following letter to Mr. Pearson Hill himself:—

“ WIMBLEDON,

“ *January 26th, 1891.*

“ SIR,

“ I beg to hand you copy of a pamphlet published by me, entitled ‘Petition to the Lords of H.M. Treasury for Restoration of Official Correspondence removed by Sir Rowland Hill’; and I further beg to ask if it is your intention to restore to the Treasury this official correspondence and other documents therein named, removed by Sir Rowland Hill when in the pay and service of H.M. Treasury.

“ I am, Sir,

“ Your obedient Servant,

“ PATRICK CHALMERS.

“ PEARSON HILL, Esq.,

“ 6, Pembridge Square, W.”

The above communication was returned to me through the Post Office, marked “Refused.” A

more distinct refusal than this to restore this correspondence or to allow Sir Rowland Hill to speak for himself in this matter could not be looked for—a fitting conclusion to a course of proceeding on the part of Mr. Pearson Hill, which practically amounts to his surrender in the question which has been at issue. In his own publications this correspondence in its entirety, the very thing from which to have enabled a correct judgment to be arrived at, has been conspicuous by its absence. My endeavours to obtain copy of same, or now its restoration to its proper resting place, the Treasury, have been fruitless. What greater proof can be desired that this correspondence will not bear investigation? That the grounds upon which Sir Rowland Hill put aside the claim of James Chalmers and assumed to himself the merit of the Adhesive Postage Stamp are untenable? And that thus a grievous wrong has been done to a deserving man and to a generous public.

I have proved from the official proceedings in Parliament, upon the introduction of the Penny Postage Bill in July, 1839, that up to that occasion Sir Rowland Hill had *not* proposed the adoption of the Adhesive Stamp for the purpose of carrying out this measure in practice. “Why should we be called upon to pass this Bill,” argued its opponents,

“when no mortal being at that moment had the remotest conception of how it was to be carried into execution?” On the other hand, I have proved that James Chalmers submitted and urged the adoption of the Adhesive Stamp to Mr. Wallace as early as December, 1837; again to the Mercantile Committee of the City of London, and to Mr. Hill himself in February, 1838. That in the dilemma which existed in Parliament as to how to carry out the Bill in practice, Mr. Wallace in the Commons, and Lord Ashburton in the Lords, called for the adoption of the Adhesive Stamp. In response to the appeal to the public in August, 1839, *after* the passing of the Bill, for plans, Mr. Chalmers for the second time, and after an interval of nearly two years, again urged this plan. That on this occasion, Mr. Chalmers’ address to the Lords of the Treasury was accompanied by a certificate from his townsmen in support of his plan—a fact only now come to light from Arbroath; that correspondence betwixt Mr. Hill and Mr. Chalmers took place, the result being that Chalmers was put aside and that Mr. Hill assumed to himself the merit of this invention and proposal, putting forward and handing down same to posterity as his own. On what possible grounds can this assumption be justified! And every impartial mind and every writer not dazzled and blinded by the late

inordinate glorification of Sir Rowland Hill will repeat the question with something more than surprise, and will ask at the Treasury in vain. Everything that could throw light on the matter was carried off there and then by Sir Rowland Hill, and would never have been heard of as far as he was concerned, and that is the answer of the hitherto supposed great originator of the Adhesive Postage Stamp.

To fitly characterise this ungenerous proceeding on the part of Sir Rowland Hill towards a simple-minded man and a confiding public had better be left to the critic and historian than now entered into here by the victim's son. My object will have been attained should I have succeeded in inducing the Press and public of this country now unanimously to acknowledge and emphatically to record the name and services of James Chalmers in the great work of Penny Postage reform.