

3<sup>d</sup> paper Crawford 1037(3)

THE POSITION

R

OF

SIR ROWLAND HILL

MADE PLAIN.

BY

PATRICK CHALMERS,

AUTHOR OF

"THE PENNY POSTAGE SCHEME OF 1837: WAS IT AN INVENTION  
OR A COPY?"

---

LONDON:  
EFFINGHAM WILSON, ROYAL EXCHANGE.

1882.

PRICE SIXPENCE.



(COPY.)

*To the Chairman and Members of the*

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF SEWERS

OF THE CITY OF LONDON.

THIS MEMORIAL OF THE UNDERSIGNED, PATRICK CHALMERS,  
OF NO. 35, ALEXANDRA ROAD, WIMBLEDON,

*Respectfully sheweth—*

THAT, from circumstances of personal interest hereinafter referred to, your Memorialist has been led to examine and investigate at the Library of the British Museum, in the course of last year, the papers, documents, speeches, and motions in Parliament, Reports of Parliamentary Committees, and all such evidence and information having reference to and tending to throw light upon, from the year 1832 onwards, the history and events preceding the reformed system of postage, introduced to the public in the year 1837, by the then Mr. Rowland Hill, in his pamphlet of that year entitled, "Post Office Reform—Its importance and practicability."

THAT, in or about the month of October of such year, 1880, this investigation brought under the notice of your Memorialist a certain document, dated April, 1836, termed the "Fifth Report of the Commissioners of Post Office Inquiry" being one of ten Reports of certain Commissioners appointed to enquire into Post Office affairs, and to report to the Lords of the Treasury such improvements and reforms as they might deem desirable and expedient.

THAT, in this Fifth Report of the said Commissioners they report and recommend that the rate of postage upon Prices Current and similar mercantile publications, then subject to the same high and variable rates as were letters, and charged by sheet, be reduced to and transmitted by post at a low and uniform rate of postage, irrespective of distance, to be charged by weight and pre-paid by stamp, at the rate of 1d. the  $\frac{1}{2}$ -oz.

THAT, your Honourable Board will perceive from the foregoing that the principles and figures of the Penny Postage scheme, put forward by Mr. Rowland Hill in 1837, were identical with the proposals which were, as far as respects Prices Current and such like, embodied and recommended in this Fifth Report of the Commissioners of April, 1836.

THAT, in consequence of this discovery, and of the equally striking fact that no reference whatever could be found to the provisions of this pre-existing and parallel document from the pen of Sir Rowland Hill, either in his pamphlet of 1837 or in his "Life" written by himself and lately published, your Memorialist has laid these facts by letter before the Committee of the "Sir Rowland Hill Memorial Fund"—also, by handing said Committee copy of a pamphlet upon the subject written by your Memorialist, entitled "The Penny Postage scheme of 1837—Was it an Invention or a Copy?"—and lastly, by addressing to the Committee the following letter;—

(Copy.)

" 35, ALEXANDRA ROAD,

" WIMBLEDON, 7th June, 1881.

" SIR,

" Having observed by the public press that my pamphlet  
 " lately laid before you, '*The Penny Postage Scheme of 1837—  
 " Was it an Invention or a Copy?*' had been looked upon as too  
 " long to obtain the consideration of your Committee, permit  
 " me more briefly to state, that I therein pointed out a document  
 " which had lately come under my notice at the British Museum  
 " Library, of date April, 1836, termed the '*5th Report of the  
 " Commissioners of Post Office Inquiry,*' in which was embodied  
 " and recommended as respects Prices Current and such like

“ Circulars, then subject to the same high and variable rates as  
 “ were letters, a low and uniform rate of postage, charged by  
 “ weight, and pre-paid by stamp, at the rate of 1d. the  $\frac{1}{2}$ -oz.—the  
 “ identical principles and figures proposed with respect to letters  
 “ by Sir Rowland Hill in his scheme of the following year.

“ SECOND.—That Sir Rowland Hill, in his writings, had  
 “ abstained from all reference to this document, while putting  
 “ himself in its place, though there is evidence he had read it.

“ In short, that the principles and figures of the Penny  
 “ Postage Scheme of 1837, so far from having been the *conceptions*  
 “ of the late Sir Rowland Hill as hitherto understood, were a *copy*  
 “ from a pre-existing document.

“ You will doubtless consider these facts of sufficient im-  
 “ portance, not alone for the consideration of your Committee,  
 “ but also of that of the Subscribers at large.

“ I remain respectfully,

“ Sir,

“ Your most obedient servant,

“ PATRICK CHALMERS.

“ To the Hon. Secretary,

“ ‘ THE SIR ROWLAND HILL MEMORIAL FUND,’

“ MANSION HOUSE.”

The pamphlet herein referred to and now laid before your Honourable Board, contains some remarks with reference to the “ Adhesive Stamp,” the invention as is claimed for him, of the late Mr. James Chalmers, Bookseller, Dundee,—but which question is not now in any way brought before your Honourable Board, being only referred to as accounting for the investigation mentioned in the opening paragraph of this Memorial.

THAT, to the above letter no reply has been given.

THAT, from the two facts herein brought forward by your Memorialist, and laid before the said Committee, it is conclusive that neither all nor any one of the valuable principles and figures of the Penny Postage scheme of 1837 were the *conception* of the late Sir Rowland Hill—but that such were a

*copy*, applied to letters—the original and foundation of the scheme kept out of sight.

**THAT**, your Honourable Board will admit that this was not the understanding under which you granted, upon the application of the aforesaid Committee, a site under your jurisdiction for the proposed erection of a statue of the late Sir Rowland Hill—and that your Honourable Board is consequently fairly entitled, should you so see fit, to invite that Committee to answer and to reply to the grave matters laid before them in the letter of date 7th June.

*Your Memorialist therefore prays—*

**THAT**, your Honourable Board will use its influence with the Committee of the “Sir Rowland Hill Memorial Fund,” by inviting them to give reply to such party as they may be disposed to address, to the letter addressed to them by your Memorialist of 7th June last—and in so doing, distinctly to say, do they admit or do they deny the pre-existence of any such document of the name, nature, and tenor hereinbefore described; and secondly, do they admit or do they deny that, in his writings, Sir Rowland Hill has wholly ignored and avoided reference to the said document.

12th July, 1881.

## P R E F A C E .

---

ON the death of Sir Rowland Hill, in August, 1879, a series of letters, with comments thereon, appeared in the Dundee press, recalling the name and services of a townsman who in his day had taken an active interest in Post Office improvement, and had worked in that field to some purpose. Mr. James Chalmers, Bookseller, Dundee, who died in 1853, had been an earnest Post Office reformer. Through his efforts, and after a long correspondence with the Post Office in London, he brought about such an acceleration of the mail as to lessen the time necessary for the reply to a letter from Dundee to London, or betwixt the chief commercial towns of the north and south, by two days. Subsequently, but sometime prior to the year 1837, as these letters testify, and now proved beyond question to have been in 1834 by two more, now making three, of those in his employment at the period, he conceived the idea of an adhesive stamp for Post Office purposes—and it was this invention, made known to such Post Office reformers as Mr. Hume and Mr. Wallace, with both of whom he was in communication, that formed the origin of the ultimate adoption of the adhesive stamp in the reformed Penny Postage system of 1840; the plan proposed by Mr. Rowland Hill

having been that of the *impressed* stamp, such as we have upon Bill Stamps or other Stamp Office documents, or on Bankers' Cheques of the present day.

Besides the two gentlemen named, Mr. Chalmers was further in communication in the regular way of business with the firm of Mr. Knight, himself a noted Post Office reformer, and publisher of Mr. Rowland Hill's pamphlet of 1837. About the year 1834, when it was proposed that the newspaper stamp should be abolished, and that such newspapers as had to pass by post should be charged one penny postage, Mr. Knight suggested, in June of that year, that such postage should be levied by selling stamped wrappers with an impressed stamp of one penny. In August of that year, 1834, Mr. Chalmers had this adhesive stamp got up in his premises, where he had been printer and publisher of a newspaper. This, as already stated, is fully proved by two more of those than in his employment, who have within the last few weeks, through the publicity which has been given to this subject, come forward with letters to the *Dundee Advertiser*—one from Glasgow, another from Hull. The printing, the melting of the gum, the gumming the back of the sheets, the drying, the pressing of the sheets, the cutting out of the squares, are fully described—making now a phalanx of living testimony in proof of his invention in that year. Thus, when Mr. Knight proposed the penny impressed stamped wrapper for newspapers, in June, 1834, Mr. Chalmers intervenes with his adhesive stamp. When Mr. Rowland Hill proposes, in 1837, following as he tells us Mr. Knight's idea, the penny impressed stamp for letters, Mr. Chalmers again intervenes with his adhesive stamp. In my previous pamphlet I said it was from this source, spreading



through Mr. Wallace and Mr. Hume, that the adhesive stamp came to be adopted in 1840; and it has now further transpired that Mr. Chalmers laid his plan before Mr. Wallace as Chairman of the House of Commons' Select Committee of 1837 and 1838 upon the scheme of Mr. Rowland Hill, immediately upon such Committee being appointed. Mr. Wallace's letter of acknowledgment is dated 9th December, 1837. Here is the missing link supplied completely to connect Mr. Chalmers with the ultimate adoption by Mr. Hill of the adhesive stamp, in conjunction with his own plan of the impressed stamp, as per Treasury Minute of 26th December, 1839, after having examined the plans sent in by the public upon the invitation of the Treasury in August, 1839, when Mr. Chalmers again submitted his adhesive stamp proposal, for the *second* time.

These letters in the Dundee Press already named, from old townsmen and friends of Mr. Chalmers, personally unknown to me as I was to them unknown (having left Dundee while a youth, about fifty years ago, and passed much of the interval abroad), with the consequent attention drawn to the subject, naturally called upon me to make an endeavour to vindicate my father's claim to the merit of such an important feature in the success of the Penny Postage scheme as was and is the adhesive stamp.

The history of this stamp question, however, giving all these letters and evidence in detail, will require a pamphlet to itself, and my object in now alluding to these matters is to account for the *investigation* on my part which has led to the discovery disclosed

in the following pages. What is alone dealt with here has reference to the matter of public, not of private interest, to prove what is stated in my Memorial to the Commissioners of Sewers of the City of London—a copy of which is already prefixed—that the principles and figures of the *Penny Postage scheme itself* were *not*, as hitherto supposed and so handed down to us, the invention of the late Sir Rowland Hill in any one instance, but that they were a copy from beginning to end from a pre-existing document, “The Fifth Report of the Commissioners of Post Office Inquiry,” to the provisions of which, in his writings, Sir Rowland Hill has wholly avoided reference.

It is all the more necessary to emphasize this matter of public interest as being *only* dealt with in these pages, because on both of the two occasions in which any notice of my discovery as laid by me before the public authorities has of necessity found its way to the press, such notice has represented me as having claimed the invention of the reformed Penny Postage scheme “for my late father.” Such is the version of the matter handed to the press with respect to my letter of date 9th March, 1881, first detailing my discovery to the Committee of the “Sir Rowland Hill Memorial Fund.” Similarly with respect to my Memorial to the Commissioners of City Sewers, on the 12th July, 1881, the subjoined account of the matter appeared in the *Times*, the *Daily News*, and the *Daily Chronicle* of the following day: “City Commission of Sewers. Yesterday  
 “ a meeting of the City Commissioners of Sewers was held at  
 “ Guildhall for the despatch of business, Mr. E. E. Ashby presiding.  
 “ A petition was presented from Mr. Patrick Chalmers, disputing  
 “ that the Penny Post scheme was the conception of the late Sir

Rowland Hill, and *claiming it for his father, the late Mr. James  
 Palmers*, and asking the Commission to use their influence with  
 the Sir Rowland Hill Memorial Committee to obtain a reply to a  
 letter addressed to them by him on the subject. On the motion  
 of Mr. Manners, the petition was ordered to lie on the table.”

It is a remarkable coincidence that the same perverted version  
 of the matter should have occurred in both of these cases in the  
 information furnished to the press. The effect, it will be seen, was  
 to make my representation appear ridiculous, and consequently such  
 to demand no further consideration, while my actual representa-  
 tion was, in neither case, disclosed to the public at all. The papers  
 in question courteously admitted a correction from me in a subse-  
 quent issue, whatever antidote such correction might afford—but  
 such a version of the matter, and with such a tendency, should  
 on both occasions have been furnished for publication is certainly  
 unworthy, showing that the facts of the case must, if possible, be  
 kept from the public, but at whose instance such misleading state-  
 ments were put forward, I do not pretend to know. As far as I am  
 concerned, a better tribute to the truth and unanswerable position  
 of my representations could not have been desired.

One other matter remains to be noticed in this preface. It is  
 desirable to point out that it was only in October, 1880, fourteen  
 months after the decease of Sir Rowland Hill, that the discovery  
 developed by me in these pages came under my own cognizance.  
 Further, that though the invitation of the Treasury in August, 1839,  
 to plans to carry out the Penny Postage scheme was a public  
 invitation, offering certain pecuniary rewards, no public intimation  
 of the result as respects the competitors was ever issued during the

lifetime either of Mr. Chalmers or of Sir Rowland Hill himself. It is only in the "Life" of himself lately published that we find Sir Rowland Hill considered himself the author of the adhesive stamp adopted on the occasion, and that four competitors were awarded each £100, but who they were, or why so rewarded, we are not even there told. The public have simply "grown up" under the impression that Rowland Hill was the author of the adhesive stamp as of everything else in connection with the reformed Penny Postage scheme, but no public intimation to such effect was issued in 1839 or has been since. I have before shewn that, under such circumstances, it was allowable for me to advocate my father's claim notwithstanding the decease of both. Mr. Hill having chosen to decide privately that the palm belonged to himself and to arrange matters privately with individuals in a way unknown to the general body of competitors—having failed at the proper time to make public the *grounds* upon which he assigned the merit of this invention of the adhesive stamp to himself, and the particulars of what took place with others—having only done so, and even then very partially, in a work to be published after his decease—had left himself open to, if he may not be said practically to have invited, posthumous claims.

And how much more *now*, consequently, is it my undoubted right to re-open this subject under the discovery that the Penny Postage scheme itself was only a copy? As with the *conception* of, so with the plan for *carrying out* the scheme, no second party was to be allowed to intervene betwixt Rowland Hill and the entire merit of the reform. With one who has for forty years successfully given out and allowed it to be understood that

the conceptions of the scheme itself were original, and not a copy, there would be little obstacle or difficulty in fixing upon himself the merit of the adhesive stamp which saved the scheme from premature failure. As, with respect to the main scheme, a delusion has been practised upon a generous nation, so will it be found in my next publication that with respect to the adhesive stamp, an usurpation of his rightful claims has been practised upon a simple-minded man.

But, notwithstanding all this, it has been through no choice of mine that these matters are now re-opened—and to this fact I respectfully ask attention. As far as I was concerned, they were closed, and at rest. The following, from my letter of 15th March last, addressed to the Members of the Corporation of the City of London, will explain why no choice has been left to me other than to return to the subject, and to publish the whole particulars:—

“ But having already discharged what appeared incumbent upon me in this respect, having already put forward that discovery which concerned the public, the whole matter, so far as I was concerned, was at rest, as others can testify.

“ Mr. Pearson Hill, however, having thought proper, in a paper contributed to a Scientific Society, to attack me in a violent and unfounded manner, and which attack that Society has called upon me to meet, no choice is now left me other than to resume.

“ Should the result not be such as the best friends to  
“ memory of the late Sir Rowland Hill may desire, upon his  
“ son and not upon me, will rest the responsibility.”

WIMBLEDON, *June*, 1882.

---

## PART FIRST.

---

IT will be seen from a perusal of the Memorial presented by me on the 12th July 1881, to the Commissioners of Sewers of the City of London, with a copy of which this pamphlet opens, that in performing the obligation which had devolved upon me to investigate the question of Post Office reform, its position prior to the year 1837, and the general history of the period with reference to Post Office matters, a certain Parliamentary Blue-book came under my notice, termed the "Fifth Report of the Commissioners of Post Office Inquiry," giving the result of an enquiry held by these Commissioners in the year 1835 upon the question of a reduction in the postage upon prices-current and mercantile circulars, then chargeable at the same extravagant and variable rates as were letters. The Report consequent upon this enquiry is dated April, 1836, and runs as follows:—

"We beg to recommend to your Lordships (of the Treasury), in the first place, that English prices-current and publications of a similar nature published in this country, be permitted to pass through the medium of the Post Office without the imposition of a charge so high as to impede the general circulation. . . . Lord Lowther recommends in his report that prices-current should pass free through the Post Office, but that they should be required to be

“ printed on paper bearing a stamp. His lordship proposed that  
 “ 2d. should be the maximum rate of duty charged, and contem-  
 “ plated the reduction of this duty to 1d. if it did not eventually  
 “ admit of a still further reduction. We are also of opinion that it  
 “ would be more convenient that the charge for the transmission of  
 “ these publications should be in the nature of a stamp, as this tax  
 “ would be collected with much greater facility and certainty than  
 “ a postage, and avoid the additional duty which must otherwise be  
 “ imposed on the Post Office.

“ With respect to the amount of duty to be imposed, we felt  
 “ inclined to propose to your lordships that the charge should not  
 “ exceed  $\frac{1}{2}$ d.; but when we take into consideration the reduction  
 “ which is contemplated in the stamp duty on newspapers, we fear  
 “ it may be deemed inexpedient at present to permit the trans-  
 “ mission of prices-current for a less charge than that which is  
 “ imposed on newspapers (1d.).

“ We hope, however, that after the proposed system has come  
 “ into operation, and its effect been experienced, your lordships may  
 “ find it practicable to permit the free transmission of prices-current  
 “ by post if printed on paper bearing a halfpenny stamp.

“ From the evidence of the Secretary of the Stamp Office and  
 “ the Solicitor of the Post Office, we are induced to believe that our  
 “ recommendations can be readily carried into effect by authorizing  
 “ the Commissioners of Stamps to affix a stamp bearing a certain  
 “ duty on prices-current intended for circulation by post (such pub-  
 “ lications when unstamped not to be made liable to any penalty



“and by giving a power to the Postmaster-General to allow them  
“to go free of postage if so stamped.”

Postmaster-General to define what sort of publications shall so  
circulate, and make regulations and restrictions.

“If prices-current are allowed to circulate on payment of a  
“halfpenny stamp, we think they should be restricted to half-an-  
“ounce in weight, which would be sufficient for the ordinary  
“purposes of trade; and a higher stamp duty might be required  
“for anything exceeding this. In case, however, they should be  
“subjected to the same charge as newspapers, it would be unfair  
“to impose a restriction on them which did not equally apply to  
“newspapers.”

This means, if the stamp was to be 1d. and not  $\frac{1}{2}$ d., the  
restrictions to be withdrawn.

Now here we have, as regards prices-current and publications  
of a similar nature, all the proposals of *a low and uniform rate of  
postage, chargeable by weight, and pre-paid by stamp at the rate of  
1d. the  $\frac{1}{2}$ -oz.*

This struck me as being exactly what had been proposed by  
Mr. Hill\* in 1837 with respect to letters. Insert “letters” and you  
have his whole scheme from beginning to end, down to the very

---

\* To distinguish matters connected with 1837, the designation “Mr. Hill”  
will be used. In later matters, that of “Sir Rowland Hill.”

figures of taxation. Seeing that Mr. Hill's scheme as a whole, and with the exception of Mr. Knight's suggestion of impressed stamped wrappers for newspapers, had been handed down by him as an original conception—that it had been and now was regarded as such by the press and by the public—I turned to his pamphlet of 1837 to see how he reconciled this anomaly, and there found that *any reference to the provisions of this Fifth Report was wholly omitted from his proposals*, and the reader left to infer what, as above stated, has been inferred and hitherto believed.

To this silence as respects any reference to this analogous Fifth Report there is one exception, a reference—*not* in the body of the pamphlet of 1837, but in the *appendix*—just enough to show that Mr. Hill must have read this Report, and which will be examined.

Shortly after this Fifth Report had come under my notice, the work left behind him by Sir Rowland Hill, "The Life," written by himself, was published, and I turned to its pages as I had turned to the pamphlet of 1837, to see how the aforesaid anomaly was reconciled. I there found that in this work, as in the body of the pamphlet, *any reference to this Fifth Report was wholly and exceptionally omitted*: but Mr. Wallace is there now properly credited for the suggestion of the principle of "charge by weight" in place of by sheet.

In this "Life" just published, it is stated by Sir Rowland Hill, at page 246, under date 1836, "My only sources of information, for the time, consisted in those heavy blue-books, in which invaluable

“ matter often lies hidden amidst heaps of rubbish. Into some of these, as previously implied, I had already dipped ; but Mr. Wallace having supplied me by post with an additional half-hundred weight of raw material, I now commenced that systematic study, analysis and comparison, which the difficulty of my self-imposed task rendered necessary.”

Was this Fifth Report amongst this supply ?

In order to draw attention to the significance of this discovery, so totally at variance with the accepted understanding of the *originality* of Mr. Hill's Penny Postage scheme, the following letter was drawn up and offered for publication :—

“ It having lately devolved upon me, as upon no one else, to look into the history of Penny Postage Reform, two most important facts have just disclosed themselves.

“ The first fact is : That in a document of date April, 1836, termed the ‘ Fifth Report of the Commissioners of Post Office Inquiry,’—circulars being then chargeable at the same extravagant rates as letters—the identical principles and figures of taxation, afterwards applied in 1837 by the then Mr. Rowland Hill to letters, are developed and recommended, so far as regards prices-current, namely :—‘ A low and uniform postage, charged by weight, and pre-paid by stamp, at the rate of 1d. the  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz.’

“ This ‘ Fifth Report,’ appears to have attracted little attention not having been acted upon, and lost sight of in the blaze which

“ followed upon Mr. Hill’s proposals of 1837 with respect to letters,  
 “ and which proposals reached the public.

“ The second fact is :—That neither in his pamphlet of 1837  
 “ (with one exception, in the *appendix* to same, just enough to show  
 “ that Mr. Hill must have read this ‘ Fifth Report, ’) nor in the  
 “ ‘ Life of Sir Rowland Hill, ’ lately published, written by himself, is  
 “ this ‘ Fifth Report, ’ or its proposals, in any way noticed. While  
 “ these works of his bristle with references to other documents, by  
 “ way of illustrating and strengthening his remarks, not once is  
 “ reference to the provisions of this important and parallel docu-  
 “ ment made.

“ How far then, are Mr. Hill’s hitherto supposed original  
 “ inventions and proposals, original? Are they so, or are they a  
 “ copy simply applied to letters? That the scheme has been  
 “ hitherto regarded as an original conception as a whole on his part.  
 “ is clear from the Memoirs issued by the Press on the 29th August.  
 “ 1879, and now before me, and where it and its proposer are  
 “ unanimously regarded in that light. What does a high class  
 “ paper and review say of him only the other day?—that his epitaph  
 “ may well be, ‘ Alone I did it. ’ Such, then, is the hitherto under-  
 “ standing of the Press and of the Public.

“ Read by the light of this ‘ Fifth Report, ’ the matter assumes  
 “ a different aspect. Is the scheme a *re*-invention on the part of  
 “ Sir Rowland Hill, or is it only a copy, applied to letters, while  
 “ handed down as an invention? And equally or more impor-  
 “ tant than this, has Sir Rowland Hill been dealing candidly

“with his countrymen? *Why is all reference to this document, identical in principles and figures to his own proposals, except- tionally avoided?* These are questions which may well engage “public attention.”

The pamphlet of 1837, entitled “Post Office Reform,” by Mr. Rowland Hill, consists of 68 pages, followed by an appendix of 36 pages in smaller type.\*

It has been mentioned that the appendix to his pamphlet of 1837 contained one exceptional reference to this Fifth Report, and which may now be examined. Mr. Hill there thus writes :—

“Again, there are the lists of prices-current, which especially “in commodities liable to frequent fluctuations, it is of importance “should be received at short intervals. Speaking of prices-current, “Lord Lowther, in his very able Report on the Post Office, says, “It is, I think, plainly shown by the evidence taken, that great “advantage would arise to trade from the transmission of prices- “current at a small rate of postage. It is affirmed by various “witnesses, that throughout the country there is a continually “increasing desire among persons in trade for such information of “the state of the markets in London and elsewhere as prices- “current would afford. That the furnishing of this information is “very much restricted by the high rate of postage, and that if it “were more generally afforded, it is probable that much more

---

\* I know of only two copies—one each at the British Museum and at the Library of the House of Commons.

“ ‘ business would be done. It is also stated that the increase in  
 “ ‘ the number transmitted at a low rate of postage would be such,  
 “ ‘ that the Revenue required would be much greater than it now is  
 “ ‘ under the high rate of postage—one witness, Mr. Cook, esti-  
 “ ‘ mating the increase, if allowed to be transmitted at a low rate of  
 “ ‘ postage, at three millions of prices-current annually.’ (*Foot note:*  
 “ ‘ Fifth Report of the Commissioners of Post Office Inquiry. The  
 “ ‘ date of Lord Lowther’s Report is May, 1835.)”

Here Mr. Hill has called in Lord Lowther to *confirm* what *he himself* recommends on this particular head of prices-current; but *that Lord Lowther’s advice had already been taken*, materially contributing as it had done to the *prior* recommendations of the Commissioners in this Fifth Report *from which Mr. Hill extracts it*, no mention whatever is made. What the Commissioners recommend, as already given, in consequence of the advice of Lord Lowther and other evidence, is left wholly unnoticed.

The reader, knowing nothing of this Fifth Report beyond the extract from same just given by Mr. Hill, is *not aware* that it goes on to give further evidence with respect to prices-current under date 1835, and that the Commissioners report and propose, under date April 1836, that prices-current and similar mercantile publications—then subject to the same high and variable rates as letters—be reduced to a low and uniform rate of postage, taken by weight, and pre-paid by stamp, at the rate of 1d. the  $\frac{1}{4}$  oz.

He has just read in the body of the pamphlet of 1837, Mr. Hill’s proposals to the same effect with respect to letters—no reference

whatever being there made to this pre-existing document with its parallel principles and figures—and he comes to the conclusion, as there implied, that *such are the original conceptions of Mr. Hill himself.*

In the work just published, “The Life of Sir Rowland Hill,” written by himself, Sir Rowland Hill states *the process by which his mind arrived* at certain of these conceptions, and which statements will be examined.

What we have *here* to note is—that when Mr. Hill wrote his pamphlet of 1837, all these principles and figures, by the above evidence under his own hand, *lay before him* in this Fifth Report.

---

Keeping the above in view, I now proceed to enquire into Sir Rowland Hill’s account of the process by which certain of these conceptions arose to his mind; and first, how does he account for his conception of that principle upon which his scheme is founded, the great principle of “uniformity”? This is ascribed by him as having been the *result* of calculations, showing that uniformity of charge was practically commensurate with expense of carriage, that expense being so infinitesimal. He says, in his “Life,” page 250, after having stated the cost per letter from London to Edinburgh to be no more than one thirty-sixth part of a penny. “Hence, then, I came to the important conclusion that the existing practice of regulating the amount of postage by the distance over which an inland letter was conveyed, however

“ plausible in appearance, had no foundation in principle ; and that  
 “ consequently the rates of postage should be irrespective of distance.  
 “ I need scarcely add that *this discovery*, as startling to myself as it  
 “ could be to any one else, was *the basis of the plan* which has made  
 “ so great a change in postal affairs. New prospects having thus  
 “ opened upon me, I was next led to consider two further questions,  
 “ both important to that simplicity of arrangement of which *I was*  
 “ *in quest*. First, was it possible that the existing variable charge  
 “ should be exchanged for a single uniform rate ? Second, was it  
 “ practicable to require pre-payment ? ”

The conception of uniformity, then, was thus arrived at—the  
*result* of certain calculations, terminating in an “ Estimate ”  
 showing that the average cost of conveying a letter for a long  
 distance of, say, 400 miles—to Edinburgh—was so small as to be  
 from post-town to post-town along the route practically the same.

In his pamphlet of 1837, Mr. Hill divides the cost of the trans-  
 mission of letters into two heads, which he terms respectively  
 “ Primary ” and “ Secondary ” Distribution. The former is thus  
 introduced at page 12. “ For the sake of simplicity, it will be well  
 “ to confine the attention to the apparent cost under the existing  
 “ arrangements of what may be called the ‘ Primary ’ distribution of  
 “ letters, &c. (meaning by that term, the transmission of letters, &c.,  
 “ from post-town to post-town throughout the United Kingdom,  
 “ and the delivery within the post-towns), and to leave out of con-  
 “ sideration, for the present, the cost of Secondary distribution, or  
 “ that distribution which proceeds from each post-town as a centre,  
 “ to places of inferior importance. At the same time, in estimating



“the cost of Primary distribution, it will be convenient to make any reductions which are obviously practicable, and which do not require a deviation in principle from the existing arrangements.”

After *six pages* of figures and comments, making the aforesaid reductions, the following “Estimate” is ultimately arrived at, from which the infinitesimal sum of one thirty-sixth of a penny, as the cost of conveying a letter from London to Edinburgh is derived:—

“*Estimate of the cost of conveying a letter from London to Edinburgh, a distance of 400 miles.*”

|                                                                                                                     |                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Mileage on the whole Mail ... ..                                                                                    | £2 10 6½        |
| Guards' wages, say six Guards one day each<br>at 10/6 per week ... ..                                               | 0 10 6          |
| Allow for tolls paid in Scotland, and all other<br>expenses ... ..                                                  | <u>1 18 11¾</u> |
| Total cost of conveying the Mail from<br>London to Edinburgh, including the<br>Mails of all intermediate places ... | <u>5 0 0</u>    |

The average weight of the Mail conveyed by the  
London and Edinburgh Mail Coach is about 8 Cwt.

Deducted for the weight of the bags, say ... 2 ,,

Average weight of letters, newspapers, &c. ... 6 ,,

The cost of conveyance is therefore, per cwt., 16s. 8d.

Per ounce and a-half, the average weight of a newspaper, about one sixth of a penny.

Per quarter of an ounce, the average weight of a single letter, about one thirty-sixth of a penny." \*

In this way he ascertains that the actual expense of conveying the letters from post-town to post-town forms so small a portion of the apparent cost of primary distribution as to be practically uniform.

What becomes, here, of all the other charges to which the Post Office is subject equally to that of the mere expense of the Mail Coach—the expense of the establishments, the branch and country offices, the letter carriers' wages? In the six pages of elaborate figures before named, these are put aside by Mr. Hill as forming no part of the necessary cost of conveyance; that cost is finally reduced to and given in the above "Estimate."

But the postal system was not confined to the Mail Coach route with the large postal centres on that route, consequently the conclusion so far arrived at was but a part of a larger question. Letters, say from London to such a postal centre as Edinburgh or along the route, might be of average cost of conveyance so small as to be practically uniform, calculated in the way

---

\* It may be remarked on the surface of this "Estimate"—are *all* the charges by the mail coach included here? Then why take only Edinburgh, the simplest and cheapest route with a comparative large correspondence? What would the average cost per letter have been to Inverness, or to Dublin, or to Cork, to Truro, or to Guernsey?—considerations never looked at in the prospect of a cheap postage. It will further be observed that the average weight of the letter is taken at only  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an ounce. Taking same as being more nearly the  $\frac{1}{2}$  ounce, allowed in the scheme, we have the quotient one-eighteenth at one stroke, in place of one thirty-sixth.

Mr. Hill does, while if to a small place not a great distance *from* Edinburgh, the additional *average* cost might be much more than from London to Edinburgh. If we extend this consideration to the United Kingdom, it is clear that even *his* theory would only hold good as respects letters to and from the easily reached postal centres of the Mail Coach route. The moment you diverge from the path of such, the average cost of transmitting a letter might be comparatively large indeed, especially at such a period as 1837.

Here was an awkward consideration to solve, and yet at the same time to preserve the infinitesimal sum of one thirty-sixth (or one eighteenth) of a penny as anything like the average cost of transit. Six hundred-weight of letters from London to Edinburgh at a cost of only £5 (supposing it could be done) was so infinitesimal per letter as to be practically that uniformity Mr. Hill was "in quest" of—but a small bag, or a handful of letters, five, ten, or twenty miles, not to say more remote distances, *from* the nearest main-line centre was a different affair, and might cost for transit 3d., 6d., or more per letter. This would wholly spoil the average, do away with the infinitesimal sum, and the consequent supposed discovery of "uniformity."

This difficulty Mr. Hill solved by the invention of "Secondary Distribution"—why interfere with the out-lying districts—*why not let them find their own transit*—and so eliminate the opposing element of cost altogether? So he contrives two "distributions"—a "Primary Distribution" and a "Secondary Distribution"—the latter to include the costly districts with few letters, which were to pay their own transit—the former, the cheap main-lines betwixt the chief towns at which the Mail Coach called, with a large number of

letters, thus preserving to Mr. Hill his infinitesimal sum. At page 55, the "Secondary Distribution" of letters is introduced—"or that distribution which proceeds from each post-town as a centre, to places of inferior importance." "The most equitable arrangement appears to be this: let the whole weight of taxation be thrown on the Primary distribution, which ought to include every place which can be reached without absolute loss to the revenue; and let *each department of the secondary distribution just defray its own expenses.* The following is a sketch of the plan of operations which I would suggest. Let the inhabitants of any district, acting through the Guardians of the Poor or other recognized authority, be entitled, by paying in advance a small fee to the deputy postmaster of the town to which their letters are despatched, to require that a bag shall be made up for that district, and let *them arrange for fetching and carrying the bag and for the delivery and collection of letters, charging the expense, which would be very trifling,* upon the parochial rates, or upon each letter, as may be most convenient. An extra postage, to be collected on the delivery of each letter, would in a country district, delay the delivery but little, as the time of the Letter Carrier is chiefly occupied in walking from house to house."\* (The italics are mine.)

---

\* Mr. Hill says the Primary Distribution includes only "the delivery within the post towns" (see ante page 24). From the Edinburgh post office, consequently, the postman might walk to Leith, but scarcely to Musselburgh or North Berwick—places not included in the £5 "Estimate" by the Mail-Coach route. Again, in reaching London from Edinburgh, the postman might walk to the City or West-End, but scarcely to (say) Richmond or Woolwich. And so at all post-towns betwixt London and Edinburgh. The £5 "Estimate," consequently, does not include such places as even these at either end, or along the route—so, if this

Is this the simplicity of uniformity? Or is it "complication?" Can a system requiring such "Secondary" support as this—the expense not only varying according to the remoteness of the locality, but the tax having further to be collected by a *second* authority, each unprofitable parish or district in fact forming something like a second Post Office within itself—be looked upon as calculated to lead up to the conception of the principle of uniformity? Then, how can Sir Rowland Hill write as having been "in quest" of such simplicity of arrangement, when by the conclusive evidence already given under his own hand at page 23, this principle of uniformity *lay before him* in this Fifth Report? Did he first find "uniformity" through making these calculations, or, having found the principle in this Fifth Report, did he make the calculations to try how it would answer? Was his plan of putting aside every expense but the mere charges of the Mail Coach natural and *legitimate*, or was his mode of arriving at this sum of £5 *arbitrary*, and, by dividing his plans of and cutting down the cost of distribution, so arranged as to *arrive* at some such infinitesimal sum? Looking at this system as a whole, with its "primary" and "secondary" distributions, does it lead up to the conception of "uniformity" or of "complication?"

---

"*Estimate*" is to be preserved, and not added to, such places were to make their own arrangements to fetch and carry their own bags at their own expense. If such was to be done at the expense of the Post Office, *what becomes of the "Estimate"?* All this additional expense must of course be added—while the six hundred-weight dwindles down to a bag or a handful. Could any "Estimate" prove more misleading than this one of £5? Where does "Primary Distribution" end and "Secondary" begin? Does this system form one of such simplicity of arrangement as naturally to lead up to the conception of that principle of uniformity of which Mr. Hill was "in quest"? But, in 1837, the offer of "the Penny" did away with all criticism.

Should it be said that these may be matters of opinion, still the *fact* that "uniformity" *lay before him* when he started on the calculation "in quest" of it, cannot be got over—no opinion either way can alter that.

Is it not clear that, had the Post Office been left to do the transit of the whole country, including the Packet Service, as was then the case, *at its own expense*, without the aid and intervention of the unprofitable parishes, that this infinitesimal sum would have proved a myth?

The public of 1837 would trouble themselves but little with these matters. Through all the mystification, the hazy perplexities of Mr. Hill's six pages of calculation—his separate plans of distribution and payment—there stood out in bold relief the clear and distinct offer of the "Penny." That was all they cared about, come at it how you may. No one of them was asked to carry the Mail from London to Edinburgh—then a many days' journey—for a £5 note, or proportionately to the extremities of the kingdom. Nor would they stop to enquire whether they resided in what would be a "Primary" or a "Secondary" district—whether, after having duly taken out a license through the Guardians of the Poor, they were to fetch and carry their letters at their own expense to the nearest postal centre, or whether the Post Office, as was its appointed business, was to do this for them. The "Penny" only was their object and their determination.

It is desirable, therefore, that undismayed by Mr. Hill's for-

midable array of figures and complexities of distribution—that, not taking for granted through mere hearsay or tradition the soundness of this calculation, which has been supposed to have brought Mr. Hill to “uniformity”—the whole should be examined for itself. An infinitesimal sum had to be arrived at as the cost of transit, and to arrive at this, we have the cheapest route at an especially minimum cost, with the largest weight of letters, specially picked out. What that cost of transit in other directions and to the extremities of the kingdom would have been, or the average cost per letter to such extremities (with the much smaller weight of letters carried to bear this larger cost), is left wholly out of view. (See foot-note, page 26.) Then the moment you leave the main-line route, if the £5 Estimate is to be preserved, every unprofitable district or parish, has to tax itself for a cost of transit very much greater per letter carried. It is in such a way as this that Mr. Hill’s infinitesimal sum as being the cost of transit is arrived at. Those who now for the first time find what this calculation really amounted to, and what it involved, may be of opinion that the chief feature of “uniformity” which it presents is one of uniform confusion, jobbery, and speculation—while, without even having to gauge its value, we now know that the principle of uniformity lay before him in this pre-existing document, and that such principle, consequently, was no conception at all on his part, as so handed down to us, but was a copy.

Again, as to prepayment by stamp. In Mr. Hill’s pamphlet of 1837, this principle to be applied to letters is introduced as follows:—“A few years ago, when the expediency of entirely abolishing the newspaper stamp, and allowing newspapers to

“pass through the Post Office for one penny each was under  
 “consideration, it was suggested by Mr. Charles Knight that the  
 “postage on newspapers might be collected by selling stamped  
 “wrappers at one penny each. Availing myself of this excellent  
 “suggestion, I propose the following arrangement:—‘Let stamped  
 “covers and sheets of paper be supplied to the public from  
 “the Stamp Office or the Post Office, or both, as may be  
 “most convenient, and at such a price as to include the  
 “postage.’”

Now this suggestion of Mr. Knight's as to an impressed stamp for newspaper covers, of which Mr. Hill here avails himself, was one of “a few years ago,” published in the “Companion to the Newspaper” of date 1st June, 1834. Why does not Mr. Hill rather avail himself of the recommendation in this Fifth Report, *not a year old*, and of more weighty authority, and which distinctly recommended pre-payment by stamp on *sheets of paper*? He had read this, but he leaves mention of this report out of sight. Any such reference would not only have shown where the proposed stamp on “sheets of paper” came from, but further would have disclosed the original and foundation of Mr. Hill's whole scheme.

Again, as to his mode of accounting for the fixing as the figure of postage upon letters the sum of 1d. On this point Sir Rowland Hill says in his “Life,” p. 251, “Seeing that there would be great  
 “difficulty in establishing any uniform rate higher than the  
 “*minimum then in use, viz., one penny, I was of course led to*



“consider whether the uniform rate could be fixed as low as that  
 “small sum ; or, in other words, what loss of net revenue would be  
 “involved in the adoption of a penny rate ; and next, whether such  
 “loss would be admissible for the sake of the great advantages to  
 “be thereby secured.” Now there was *no such sum* of postage on  
 letters as 1d. at the period of the 1837 pamphlet. The lowest rates  
 were the local post rates, and what these were are thus officially  
 stated in the Ninth Report of the Commissioners of Post Office  
 Inquiry, of date July, 1837, issued after an investigation into local  
 post matters :—

“ *Present rates on Letters and Newspapers passing  
 “ through the Two-penny Post Office—*

|                                                         |     |     |     |      |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|
| “ For every Letter within the limits for the time being |     |     |     |      |     |
| “ of the General Post                                   | ... | ... | ... | ...  | 2d. |
| “ Places beyond the said limits                         | ... | ... | ... | ...  | 3d. |
| “ Newspapers sent by the Two-penny post, and not        |     |     |     |      |     |
| “ passing or intended to pass by the General            |     |     |     |      |     |
| “ Post, are charged                                     | ... | ... | ... | each | 1d. |

“ But Newspapers by the General Post and delivered by the  
 “ Two-penny Post, or received by the Two-penny Post and  
 afterwards passing by the General Post, have, since August,  
 1836, been exempted from Postage.”

The only Postage rate of 1d. at that period, or since August,  
 1836, when the excise stamp on newspapers was reduced from 4d.  
 to 1d., it thus officially appears, was upon *newspapers* by the *local*

post. Upon letters, the lowest charge was 2d., and this by sheet, and not by weight. Is, then, Sir Rowland Hill's explanation here satisfactory? and this, when we know that he had these figures of taxation as proposed by him *before him* in this Fifth Report of 1d. the half-ounce, which *he had read*, but to which he makes no reference. Again we are justified in asking, were these figures of taxation an *invention* on the part of Mr. Hill, as so handed down to us, or were they a *copy*?

Was, then, the Penny Postage scheme of 1837, a deeply considered, and masterly *conception* on the part of Rowland Hill, as popularly supposed—or was it simply a matter of application from a pre-existing document? Let a person, looking into postal affairs, be supplied by a Member of Parliament with “an additional half-hundred weight” of those heavy blue books, read by few of them and not at all by the public, and there find “amidst heaps of rubbish” the “invaluable matter” contained in this Fifth Report of the Commissioners of Post Office Inquiry, proposing that prices-current and publications of a similar nature, then subject to the same high and variable charge as letters, shall pass through the Post Office *at a low and uniform rate of postage, taken by weight and pre-paid by stamp, at the rate of 1d. the half-ounce.* Let this person insert “Letters,” say *nothing about his authority*, and the thing would be done.

If he is further of opinion, as was Mr. Hill,\* that revenue is

---

\* It may be incidentally noted here that it was no part of Mr. Hill's views to obtain a revenue from the Post Office—if that came, well and good—but his theory was with those who held that public convenience, and not revenue, was the

not a matter of primary consideration, but "the greatest amount of convenience to the public without any great permanent sacrifice of revenue," then the deduction, "if newspapers and circulars, why not letters," would come very much as a matter of course.

Was, then, this scheme of 1837 an *invention* of the genius of Rowland Hill, as so handed down to us? or was it a *copy* applied to letters, from a pre-existing document, reference to which has been avoided? And, more important than this—has Sir Rowland Hill dealt openly and candidly with that nation which has dealt so generously by him, or has he not?

---

The foregoing is very much a reprint of my previous pamphlet, entitled "The Penny Postage Scheme of 1837: Was it an Invention or a Copy?" and laid before the Committee of the "Sir Rowland Hill Memorial Fund" at the Mansion House.

---

function of the Post Office. This, indeed, is the motto selected by Mr. Hill for the title-page of his pamphlet, and is further set forth in his answer No. 74, before the Select Committee on Postage, of 1843; "If, therefore, it should also happen that it (the penny) is the best rate adapted ultimately to produce the largest amount of money profit, such a coincidence would be the result of *accident, not of design*." To those who, like Mr. Hill, held that revenue was not to be taken into account, the deduction "If newspapers and circulars, why not letters?" was not far to seek.

*If it shewn hereafter, on the authority of the <sup>D<sup>r</sup></sup> Treasury, that uniform penny postage was lettered as well as circulars had been urged upon the Gov<sup>t</sup> prior to Mr. Hill's proposals. -*

Before coming to its effect upon their proceedings, some of the Notices by the Press may here be given :—

**HORNSEY JOURNAL.**—The Penny Postage Scheme of 1837: was it an invention or a copy? This question is answered to the distinct disadvantage of the late Sir Rowland Hill, by Mr. Patrick Chalmers.

**BANNER OF WALES.**—Those Commissioners recommended that “prices current” and such “circulars” should be charged “one penny”; and Sir Rowland Hill had the elements of his penny postage scheme from their report and recommendation, which he had read, for it was printed a year before he proposed his system. Sir Rowland Hill was nobly rewarded for his ability and perseverance in carrying out important *portions* of the scheme which had been suggested and recommended by others. He deserved honour as an able *copyist* of other men’s plans; but it was not fair to honour and reward him as the *inventor* of the uniform Penny Postage System. It really is no honour to his memory that he grasped to himself all the rewards and honours of the postal reforms of those days.

**BRISTOL GAZETTE.**—It generally happens that after somebody has got all the honour and glory and all the profit connected with some invention of great public importance, somebody else comes forward and claims to be entitled to the credit for prior conception of the same idea. This has just happened in connection with Sir Rowland Hill and the Penny Postage Scheme. Mr. Patrick Chalmers brings to light some very remarkable recommendations in the Fifth Report of the Commissioners of Post-office Inquiry in 1835, as to imposing a uniform penny rate of transmission of circulars. Rowland Hill admits that he had access to the Blue Books, but suppresses all reference to this suggestion, though by using the word “letter” instead of “prices current,” he hit on the road to fame and fortune. What will the partisans of Rowland Hill say to all this?

**STOCKPORT ADVERTISER.**—What if, after all, Sir Rowland Hill was not the real founder of the Penny Postal System? At the fortnightly meeting

of the Commission of Sewers held last week in London, an interesting petition from Mr. Patrick Chalmers, of 35, Alexandra Road, Wimbledon, concerning the Rowland Hill Memorial, was read. The petitioner, it appeared, from investigations he had made in the library of the British Museum, had found that in April 1836—two years before the then Mr. Rowland Hill published his pamphlet on "Post-Office Reform: its importance and Practicability"—the "Fifth Report of the Commissioners of Post office Inquiry" was issued. This report was one of ten issued by certain Commissioners appointed to inquire into Post-office affairs, and to report to the Lords of the Treasury such improvements and reforms as they might deem desirable and expedient. In the report it was recommended that the rate of postage upon prices current, and similar mercantile publications, then subject to the same high and variable rates as were letters, be reduced to and transmitted by post at a low and uniform rate of postage, irrespective of distance, to be charged by weight and prepaid by stamp, at the rate of 1d. the half ounce. The principles and figures of the Penny Postage Scheme, therefore, put forward by Mr. Rowland Hill in 1837 and 1838 were identical with the proposals which were, as far as respects prices current and such like, embodied in that report.

**SOCIETY.**—Mr. Chalmers brings a momentous fact to light, which cannot be completely ignored by the Sir Rowland Memorial Fund Committee. The document which he has unearthed at the British Museum Library is entitled "Fifth Report of the Commissioners of Post-Office Inquiry," and is dated April, 1836. In that report was embodied and recommended, as respects prices-current and such like circulars then subject to the same high and variable rates as were letters, a low and uniform rate of postage, charged by weight, and prepaid by stamp at the rate of 1d. the  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz.—the identical principles and figures proposed with respect to letters by Sir Rowland Hill in his scheme of the following year. Moreover, Sir Rowland Hill has made no acknowledgment that the idea was suggested by that report. Can it have been a coincidence?

**OLDHAM CHRONICLE.**—Mr. P. Chalmers has written a pamphlet on the Penny Postage Scheme, which will enlighten people as to the share which Sir Rowland Hill claimed in introducing penny postage. It appears that a body of

Before coming to its effect upon their proceedings, some of the Notices by the Press may here be given :—

**HORNSEY JOURNAL.**—The Penny Postage Scheme of 1837: was it an invention or a copy? This question is answered to the distinct disadvantage of the late Sir Rowland Hill. by Mr. Patrick Chalmers.

**BANNER OF WALES.**—Those Commissioners recommended that “prices current” and such “circulars” should be charged “one penny”; and Sir Rowland Hill had the elements of his penny postage scheme from their report and recommendation, which he had read, for it was printed a year before he proposed his system. Sir Rowland Hill was nobly rewarded for his ability and perseverance in carrying out important *portions* of the scheme which had been suggested and recommended by others. He deserved honour as an able *copyist* of other men's plans; but it was not fair to honour and reward him as the *inventor* of the uniform Penny Postage System. It really is no honour to his memory that he grasped to himself all the rewards and honours of the postal reforms of those days.

**BRISTOL GAZETTE.**—It generally happens that after somebody has got all the honour and glory and all the profit connected with some invention of great public importance, somebody else comes forward and claims to be entitled to the credit for prior conception of the same idea. This has just happened in connection with Sir Rowland Hill and the Penny Postage Scheme. Mr. Patrick Chalmers brings to light some very remarkable recommendations in the Fifth Report of the Commissioners of Post-office Inquiry in 1835, as to imposing a uniform penny rate of transmission of circulars. Rowland Hill admits that he had access to the Blue Books, but suppresses all reference to this suggestion, though by using the word “letter” instead of “prices current,” he hit on the road to fame and fortune. What will the partisans of Rowland Hill say to all this?

**STOCKPORT ADVERTISER.**—What if, after all, Sir Rowland Hill was not the real founder of the Penny Postal System? At the fortnightly meeting

of the Commission of Sewers held last week in London, an interesting petition from Mr. Patrick Chalmers, of 35, Alexandra Road, Wimbledon, concerning the Rowland Hill Memorial, was read. The petitioner, it appeared, from investigations he had made in the library of the British Museum, had found that in April 1836—two years before the then Mr. Rowland Hill published his pamphlet on "Post-Office Reform: its importance and Practicability"—the "Fifth Report of the Commissioners of Post-office Inquiry" was issued. This report was one of ten issued by certain Commissioners appointed to inquire into Post-office affairs, and to report to the Lords of the Treasury such improvements and reforms as they might deem desirable and expedient. In the report it was recommended that the rate of postage upon prices current, and similar mercantile publications, then subject to the same high and variable rates as were letters, be reduced to and transmitted by post at a low and uniform rate of postage, irrespective of distance, to be charged by weight and prepaid by stamp, at the rate of 1d. the half-ounce. The principles and figures of the Penny Postage Scheme, therefore, put forward by Mr. Rowland Hill in 1837 and 1838 were identical with the proposals which were, as far as respects prices current and such like, embodied in that report.

**SOCIETY.**—Mr. Chalmers brings a momentous fact to light, which cannot be completely ignored by the Sir Rowland Memorial Fund Committee. The document which he has unearthed at the British Museum Library is entitled "Fifth Report of the Commissioners of Post-Office Inquiry," and is dated April, 1836. In that report was embodied and recommended, as respects prices-current and such like circulars then subject to the same high and variable rates as were letters, a low and uniform rate of postage, charged by weight, and prepaid by stamp at the rate of 1d. the  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz.—the identical principles and figures proposed with respect to letters by Sir Rowland Hill in his scheme of the following year. Moreover, Sir Rowland Hill has made no acknowledgment that the idea was suggested by that report. Can it have been a coincidence?

**OLDHAM CHRONICLE.**—Mr. P. Chalmers has written a pamphlet on the Penny Postage Scheme, which will enlighten people as to the share which Sir Rowland Hill claimed in introducing penny postage. It appears that a body of

commissioners made in 1835—just two years before Sir Rowland Hill projected the penny postage system—an inquiry into the postal system; and in their fifth report a recommendation is made that “prices-current” should be charged  $\frac{1}{4}$  oz. This, Mr. Chalmers says, struck him as being exactly what had been proposed by Sir Rowland Hill in 1837 with respect to letters. He looked into “the Life” of Sir Rowland Hill, written by himself, and finds that no reference is made to this report, and he considers that it was intentionally omitted. The pamphlet which Mr. Chalmers has written shows that Sir Rowland Hill is not to be credited with so much as most people suppose in connection with the penny post. Mr. Chalmers gives, in combination with this pamphlet, a chapter on the question of the adhesive stamp. It appears that Mr. James Chalmers, bookseller, Dundee, was the inventor of the adhesive stamp, and this is demonstrated beyond a doubt. Mr. Chalmers’ pamphlet will be read with great interest, and people will learn to appreciate how much honour is denied to people who really deserve it, and how much is appropriated by people who are in a position to claim it without let or hindrance.

**NORWICH ARGUS.**— \* \* \* These are two pamphlets written for the purpose of showing that Sir Rowland Hill was not entitled to the high praise that has been awarded to him. The author points out that the “Fifth Report of the Commissioners of Post Office Inquiry,” held in 1835, first called attention to the desirability of instituting a low and uniform rate of postage for prices-current. All that Sir Rowland Hill did was to apply the principle, worked out in every detail to letters. It is alleged against him that, having seen the Report alluded to, he carefully abstained from acknowledging the source of inspiration, and took to himself credit for more than he accomplished. The same is asserted with regard to the adhesive stamp, which is stated to be the invention of the late Mr. James Chalmers, bookseller, Dundee. Those who feel an interest in the matter will find all the details set forth in the pamphlet. It certainly seems that honour has been withheld where it was due, while contributing causes to the fame of Sir Rowland Hill have been unfairly appropriated.”

**BRIGHTON HERALD.**—A curious controversy is just now going on



relative to the origin of the penny postage innovation. Most people have the impression that the person who conceived the idea of a penny postage, and who brought it into practical operation, was the late Sir Rowland Hill. This belief, however, is about to be disturbed. We have received a pamphlet from the pen of Mr. Patrick Chalmers, entitled "The Penny Postage Scheme of 1837: Was it an Invention or a Copy?" The author alleges that it was the latter, and he seeks to adduce evidence in support of his statement. Without following the author in all the details of his treatise on this novel inquiry, it is enough to state that the parties whom he affirms to have been the real "inventors," if that word may be suitably applied to the Penny Postage Scheme, were the Commissioners of Post Office Inquiry, in whose Fifth Report the entire principles and figures are developed, and recommended to be applied to prices-current and such-like circulars. It is from this document that Rowland Hill took the scheme of Penny Postage, by simply applying the same principles and figures to letters, and saying nothing about his authority. The pamphlet is certainly worth reading.

**BRIGHTON ARGUS.**—Sir Rowland Hill is not only popularly supposed to be the author of the Penny Postage Scheme, but he was pretty liberally rewarded by the State on that ground, and since his death a Committee (of which Mr. Wynne E. Baxter is a member) has been formed to raise a memorial to him as a public benefactor. Mr. Patrick Chalmers, of No. 35, Alexandra Road, Wimbledon, has, however, accidentally discovered a document which throws considerable doubt on Sir Rowland's claim to be the originator of the Penny Postage Scheme, whatever he may have done towards its development. Mr. Chalmers, in a letter to the Memorial Committee, calls attention to the fact that in the "Fifth Report of the Commissioners of Post Office Inquiry," dated April, 1836, the Commissioners recommend that prices-current and publications of a similar nature, then subject to the same high and variable rate of postage, as were letters, be passed through the Post Office at a low and uniform rate of postage charged by weight and prepaid by stamp, at the rate of 1d. the half-ounce. Mr. Chalmers asserts that in his writings, Sir Rowland Hill exceptionally avoids reference to this pre-existing document, while putting forward in the main its valuable principles and figures to be those of his own conception, as applied by him to letters in his

**Penny Postage Scheme of 1837.** The discovery of these two facts, in the opinion of Mr. Chalmers, alters the whole relations as hitherto existing betwixt Sir Rowland Hill and the public. The Committee, however, simply decline to entertain the subject, as being "too late in the day."

**MID-SURREY STANDARD.**—Mr. Patrick Chalmers, of Wimbledon has, for some time past, made a diligent research as to the authorship of the Penny Postal system, a scheme so long associated with the name of Sir Rowland Hill that the community at large has looked upon him as a primary worker-out of that idea which has made his name memorable. Mr. Chalmers has raked up, from the musty shelves of the British Museum, a Blue Book bearing date April, 1836. This reveals the fact that the bright idea of the Penny Post was evolved from the brains of those matter-of-fact individuals called Commissioners. If this be so—and there is the ugly book to prove it—the laurel wreath must be torn from the head of an usurper, and search must be made for one to whom the honour must be given. It is quite possible Sir Rowland committed what was, to his way of thinking, a justifiable robbery of another's brains. It is daily done now-a-days. How much easier was it to commit such a felony in the more barbaric days of 1837, when the pillory of publicity did not exist in the same degree as it does now. If, as we say, Sir Rowland contemplated such an appropriation, he felt there was a warrantable amount of safety in doing so. The Blue Book would be soon buried—in the past. A bookworm, to be sure, might swallow it, but he would never reveal its contents to the outside gaze. The thought of such a champion as Mr. Chalmers springing up never entered Sir Rowland's head. If it had, he would not have attempted to parody a popular phrase—"to rob a poor man of his brains." Though Mr. Chalmers' discovery will tend to throw a little more falsehood on history, we believe he will eventually be thanked by the public for his Blue Book scrutiny.

**BLAIRGOWRIE ADVERTISER.**—He contends that the honour of originating the Penny Postage System, which was claimed by the late Sir Rowland Hill, and in recognition of whose "invention" a National Memorial is on foot, was not due to Sir Rowland, as is generally supposed, but that on the contrary he had but a very small share in it. Mr. Chalmers shows that Sir Rowland Hill

adopted from others the idea of a cheap and uniform rate of postage for circulars and prices-current, and at most proposed the carriage of letters on that system; that Mr. James Chalmers was the originator of the principle of the adhesive stamp. \* \* \* Mr. Patrick Chalmers seems to be sparing no effort to have the honours rightly awarded, and we have confidence his efforts will meet with considerable, if not complete, success.

**AMERICAN BOOKSELLER.**—A Mr. Patrick Chalmers has discovered that Sir Rowland Hill did not invent the Penny Postage scheme, but only copied it. His evidence lies in documents in the British Museum, which he asserts have been ignored by Sir Rowland Hill. \* \* \* There is certainly some startling evidence in the pamphlet adduced to support the author's argument, and it will be interesting to learn what the committee of the Rowland Hill Memorial think of it.

**TOTNESS TIMES.**— \* \* \* The writer argues his points in a powerful manner, always with fairness, but never flinching from the duty he has taken upon himself.

**THE CHRISTIAN UNION.**— \* \* \* It is from this document that Rowland Hill took his scheme of Penny Postage, simply by applying the same principles and figures to letters, and saying nothing about his authority. If we may judge from the information set forth in his pamphlet the author has devoted much time in ransacking old and official records in order to obtain information and evidence amply confirmatory of his case. He does not say that Sir Rowland Hill did not give effect to its adoption in an official sense \* \* \* It is a question that will more or less interest every one, on account of its peculiar significance to the proposed public memorials.

**THE MAN OF ROSS.**—A pamphlet showing conclusively that the Penny Postage was not the invention of Sir Rowland Hill. \* \* \* This re-calls to our mind the Sunday School movement for which Mr. Raikes got all the thanks and honour as the originator, whereas he, like Sir Rowland Hill, was but a mere copyist.

**THE STRATFORD AND SOUTH ESSEX ADVERTISER.**—An

interesting pamphlet dealing with the whole question of the Postage Scheme. It enters fully into the question upon which it treats, and should be in the hands of every one interested in the matter of Postal reform.

---

Coming now to the effect of my discovery, laid before the Mansion House Committee upon the 9th March, 1881, the only reply with which I have been favoured was to the effect that the matter was "too late in the day" to be entertained. But, notwithstanding this, it will be noticed from their proceedings that this Committee have not only *entertained* what I laid before them, but have *acted* upon the information in a practically marked manner, though of course they could not be expected to have sent me any official acknowledgment to that effect, or to have made public all their reasons. To have done so would have been equivalent to abandoning the proposed City Statue, and this the Committee doubtless felt would have been too great a slight upon the memory of one to whose "energy and perseverance" in carrying out the Penny Postage reform the nation is so deeply indebted, notwithstanding what has transpired.

But if the statue could not be abandoned, the proposed inscription upon it could at least be changed without attracting public notice, in accordance with the new light thrown upon the history of Sir Rowland Hill—and this has been done.

It will be recollected that an announcement appeared in the papers some months ago, on the part of the Sir Rowland H.

Memorial Committee, that the inscription decided upon by them for the statue to be erected in the City was—

“ ROWLAND HILL—HE FOUNDED PENNY POSTAGE.”

The next announcement we have of the proceedings of the Committee is as follows, from the *City Press*, of date 18th March :—

“ ROWLAND HILL MEMORIAL.

“ On Thursday a meeting of the Rowland Hill Memorial  
 “ Committee was held at the Mansion House, the Lord Mayor  
 “ presiding. A discussion arose as to the inscription upon Mr.  
 “ Onslow Ford's statue to be erected at the Royal Exchange,  
 “ which had been determined at a previous meeting to run thus:—  
 “ ‘ Rowland Hill—He Founded Penny Postage.’ Mr. Whitehead  
 “ now proposed that the last sentence should run, ‘ He gave us  
 “ ‘ Penny Postage.’ Mr. Northover seconded. The Lord Mayor  
 “ thought that a mere mention of the name, birth and death on the  
 “ statue would be sufficient. Dr. Walter Lewis moved for, and  
 “ Mr. Causton, M.P., seconded, the following inscription: ‘ Sir  
 “ Rowland Hill, K.C.B., born 1795, died 1879.’ Mr. Whitehead  
 “ withdrew his motion, and the latter suggestion was unanimously  
 “ adopted. Mr. C. Barry moved, and Mr. R. Price seconded, the  
 “ following addition to the words: ‘ By whose energy and per-  
 “ ‘ severance the national Penny Postage was established.’  
 “ Eventually this was carried by nine votes to six, the Lord Mayor  
 “ voting in the minority.”—*City Press*, 18th March.

It will be seen that the above proceedings on the part of the

Committee, amounted to a complete admission of the discovery laid before them, *viz.*, that the Penny Postage Scheme of 1837 was *not* an invention, but only a *copy*, from the Fifth Report of the Commissioners of Post-office Inquiry, and such was the unquestioned conclusion arrived at by others, including members of the City Corporation. The change in the inscription was important and significant—"He founded Penny Postage" was unanimously abandoned—he "established" it was substituted—while a minority of six to nine were in favour of an inscription merely nominal.

Finding that no corresponding notice, after some days had elapsed, appeared in the daily papers for the information of the public at large, I addressed the following letter to the Lord Mayor, as Chairman of the Committee:—

" WIMBLEDON, 25th March, 1882.

" MY LORD,

" Observing your Lordship's name in the list of the minority of six to nine, in favour of a merely formal inscription at the meeting of the Sir Rowland Hill Memorial Committee upon the 16th inst., I desire to draw your Lordship's attention to the fact that no notice of any such meeting, resulting in an alteration of the highest significance, has found its way to the daily press.

" Having been instrumental in showing the Committee that Sir Rowland Hill did *not* 'found the Penny Postage,' as the Committee have, by this act, now confirmed, it is only right that I should further state to your Lordship that my statements, so far

give but an inadequate idea of the very marked deception which has been practised by Sir Rowland Hill upon the nation.

“ The proceedings of Mr. Pearson Hill, as already intimated in my printed letter of the 15th inst., laid before your Lordship, leave me no other course now than, in self-defence, to develop the whole case to the public, and sooner or later the public will be in possession of all the facts.

“ It is my duty to state this to your Lordship, in order that your Lordship may take into consideration whether the fact of the change in the inscription—what the change is to be, if not also your reasons for having so decided—should not at once be frankly stated to the public.

“ As matters stand, reflections may afterwards be made at the want of information to which the public may have considered themselves entitled in the usual course.

“ I have the honour to be, &c.,

“ PATRICK CHALMERS.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORD MAYOR,

“ MANSION HOUSE.”

To this letter, I was immediately favoured with the following reply:—

“ THE MANSION HOUSE,

“ LONDON, 27th March, 1882.

“ The Lord Mayor presents his compliments to Mr. Chalmers,

“ and begs to acknowledge the receipt of his letter of the 25th inst.,  
 “ which shall have due attention.”

And accordingly, in all or most of the daily papers of the 29th  
 March there appeared the following announcement :—

“ THE ROWLAND HILL MEMORIAL.—The Bronze Statue of  
 “ Sir Rowland Hill by Mr. E. Onslow Ford is likely to be ready  
 “ for erection in July next. The Mansion House Committee have  
 “ resolved that the pedestal shall bear the following inscription:—  
 “ Sir Rowland Hill, K.C.B., born 1795 ; died 1879. By whose  
 “ energy and perseverance the National Penny Postage was  
 “ established.”

It will be seen from the above correspondence and its results  
 that a letter written by me as the person “ instrumental in showing  
 “ the Committee that Sir Rowland Hill did *not* ‘ found the Penny  
 “ ‘ Postage,’ ” and so confirmed by them, addressed to the Chairman  
 of that Committee—telling him, moreover, that I had further state-  
 ments of interest to make, was, in the same spirit, courteously  
 acknowledged, and acted upon in accordance.

To a letter which appeared in the “ *Standard* ” newspaper of  
 30th March, I replied on the 1st of April, as follows, in the full  
 conviction, as I was entitled to feel, that it was my own statement  
 which had influenced the Committee in the significant alteration  
 they had made in the inscription, and the consequent notices of  
 same handed to the daily press, at my own instigation :—



## “THE ROWLAND HILL MEMORIAL.

“TO THE EDITOR OF THE ‘STANDARD.’

“SIR,—As the person who has been instrumental in bringing about the change of opinion upon the part of the Memorial Committee, which has at length induced them to unanimously abandon the inscription, ‘He founded Penny Postage,’ permit me to meet the challenge of your Correspondent, ‘One of the Public,’ whose letter I have just read, by saying that I adhere to the statements already laid by me before that Committee. It is now many months since I first acquainted the Committee that the Penny Postage Scheme of 1837 was not the conception of the late Sir Rowland Hill, but was a copy by him from a neglected Blue Book, the ‘Fifth Report of the Commissioners of Post Office Inquiry.’

“By unanimously abandoning the inscription, ‘He founded Penny Postage,’ the Committee at length acknowledged the truth of what I laid before them. But one thing the Committee have neglected to do, and that is to make this truth known to the public.

“It is only through my own efforts, in a letter respectfully addressed by me to the Lord Mayor on the 25th ult., that the scrap of information reported in ‘*The Standard*,’ and other papers of the 29th ult., has been allowed to reach the public. Let the Committee make known the whole truth of this matter; let them say out frankly what the public have a right to know, and by so

“ doing relieve themselves of the responsibility of keeping back a  
 “ weighty and important secret.

“ I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

“ PATRICK CHALMERS.

“ WIMBLEDON, *April 1.*”

To the above letter a reply appeared in the *Standard* of the following day from Mr. Whitehead, the honorary secretary, denying my instrumentality in the change of inscription—equally denying that any inscription whatever had been settled, *though two had already been officially announced.*

As so clear a victory on my part was not agreeable, a *third* inscription had consequently to be found, and at a Committee meeting on the 21st April, under the presidency, *not* of the Lord Mayor, but of Mr. Gilbey, this third edition was settled as follows:—  
 “ Rowland Hill. He founded uniform Penny Postage, 1840.”

The introduction of the date, the year “1840,” concedes the whole question of *conception*. But those only who are conversant with the history of Sir Rowland Hill will understand this.

By the year 1840 (the then) Mr. Rowland Hill had become located at the Treasury for the purpose of carrying out his scheme. But the *scheme itself* was brought forward by him in 1837. By thus avoiding all responsibility, consequently, for anything *prior* to 1840, the Committee may be taken to admit that they cannot answer for the originality of the 1837 scheme, just as I have been

pointing out. In this way, the *conception* of 1837 is practically admitted to form no part of the "foundation" of "Uniform Penny Postage," as far as Rowland Hill is concerned; it is from and after 1840, when the *executive* part of the work began, that his claim to having "founded uniform Penny Postage" can now alone be sustained.

A more complete admission of the truth of what I have laid before the Committee could not be desired; yet how many, without further explanation from the Committee, as well as on the part of the press, will for one moment understand the full significance of "1840" upon the statue of Sir Rowland Hill.

---

The **DAILY NEWS**, of 26th April, inserted the following letter from me upon the subject:—

"THE ROWLAND HILL MEMORIAL.—To the Editor of the *Daily News*.—Sir,—The latest edition of the inscription proposed by the Committee, and just published in your columns ('Rowland Hill—He Founded Uniform Penny Postage, 1840') will prove unintelligible to your readers without some explanation. Before the year 1840, Mr. Rowland Hill had become located at the Treasury for the purpose of carrying out his scheme, which every one admits he effectually did. But the *scheme itself* was brought forward by him in 1837. By thus avoiding all responsibility, consequently, for anything *prior* to 1840, the Committee practically admit that they cannot answer for the originality of the 1837 scheme, just as I have been pointing out. As the notice in your columns omits to explain this, for the information of the illustrious personages who are to be

invited to inaugurate the statue, as well as of your readers at large, you will doubtless not object to admit these explanatory lines.—  
Your obedient Servant, PATRICK CHALMERS, Wimbledon, 22nd  
April."

To the above, in this instance, no reply or denial has been attempted.

Some Press Opinions on the changes of inscription are subjoined :—

**NORWICH ARGUS.**—Sir Rowland Hill did sufficiently good work on his day to warrant his name being honoured, without putting forth spurious claims. It has been insisted for him that he invented the Penny Postage Scheme and devised the adhesive stamp. Mr. Patrick Chalmers, of Alexandra Road, Wimbledon, states distinctly and boldly that "the 5th Report of the Commissioners of Post Office Inquiry," bearing date April, 1836, and now in the British Museum, "recommended as respects Prices Current and such-like circulars, then subject to the same high and variable rates as were letters, a low and uniform rate of postage, charged by weight and pre-paid by stamp, at the rate of pence the half-ounce." Mr. Chalmers says that these were "the identical principles and figures proposed with respect to letters by Sir Rowland Hill, in his scheme of the following year." The fact is that the great postal reformer sucked other people's brains; and now it is proposed to erect a monument to him under false pretences. Sir Rowland Hill copied the postal scheme without acknowledgment, and adopted the principle of the adhesive stamp in the same manner, although it was the product of Mr. Chalmers' father's brain. We are putting Mr. Chalmers' case, which bears very strong evidence on the face of it; at any rate, the Rowland Hill Memorial Committee have doubts on the matter. It was originally intended to place upon the statue to be erected at the Royal Exchange, London the words, "Rowland Hill—he founded Penny Postage." They have abandoned this, and have substituted the following :—"Rowland Hill, K.C.B. Born 1795"

died 1879. By whose energy and perseverance the national Penny Postage was established." All claim to invention is thus yielded, and Mr. Chalmers has just cause of complaint against the Committee who treated his communication so disdainfully, but who are now compelled to admit that all he contended for was just and right. His revenge is complete, though public morality suffers, and with it, to some extent, a great name.

**SOCIETY.**—Only one inference can be drawn from the change which the Rowland Hill Memorial Committee have made in the wording of the motto to be put on the statue. "He founded penny postage" was the original, but this has been changed to, "By whose energy and perseverance the national penny postage was established," which is a totally different thing. A general idea and wish was expressed that Sir Rowland Hill's name only should appear, with no notice of the great work he had carried out. The addition of the motto was carried by three votes, so that the minority must have had some good grounds for their opposition.

**PERTHSHIRE CONSTITUTIONAL.**—The Secretary of the Rowland Hill Memorial Committee has officially announced that a further change is to be made in the proposed motto for the statue to be erected in the Royal Exchange. Mr. Whitehead, who makes this announcement, it is to be hoped will not be given the task of composing it, as he has written to the papers explaining that the motto he proposed, "He gave us Penny Postage," is synonymous with "He founded Penny Postage,"—a somewhat loose interpretation of the English language. It may be said that Sir Walter Raleigh "gave" tobacco to the English people, but no one will accuse him of having created the tobacco-plant.

**FIGARO.**—It seems that the Rowland Hill Memorial Committee have for a third time chosen a motto for the Royal Exchange Statue. This one is to read, "He founded uniform Penny Postage, 1840." Is not the Committee continuing to blunder? For I have always understood that, according to Sir Rowland's own writings, he founded Penny Postage in 1837. Some explanation ought to be made as to the reason for deciding on this new date.

**SOCIETY.**—Despite Mr. Whitehead's bombastic assertion that he and his

colleagues were to select a motto for the Rowland Hill Memorial which would testify "in still stronger terms than ever to the justice of Sir Rowland's claims, in spite of all his assailant's criticism, to public gratitude as the originator and founder of the system of Penny Postage"—they have descended from their high horse, and fixed as the new motto—"He founded Uniform Penny Postage, 1840." This practically leaves the 1836 discovery as victor in the field, and rather snubs the memory of Rowland Hill, for Sir Rowland himself claimed that his invention was founded in 1837. The Committee have argued their bad case very badly indeed.

**DUNDEE ADVERTISER.**—The change in the composition of the inscription is a proof, though unacknowledged, of the success of the labours of Mr. Chalmers. The energy and perseverance of Sir Rowland Hill were never questioned, but it was proved beyond dispute that there were advocates of Post Office reform and cheap postage long before Sir Rowland Hill stepped upon the scene to enter into their labours.

**DOVER CHRONICLE.**—It would appear as if the honest and fair members of the Rowland Hill Testimonial Committee have been out-voted on a second division in respect of the inscription to be placed upon the statue, and the epitaph, "He founded the uniform Penny Postage in 1840," is to be engraved on it. Well, it is not the first time the City of London has lent itself to the perpetuation of an imposition.

**VANITY FAIR.**—A correspondent writes: "I should very much like to know what Sir Rowland Hill's family think of the proposed change in the wording of the motto to be carved on the memorial to be erected to Sir Rowland's memory. At one time the Committee had unanimously agreed that 'he founded Penny Postage' was to be the motto. This, I find, has now been changed to 'By whose energy and perseverance the national Penny Postage was established.' And even this appeared to be doubtfully appropriate, seeing that it was only carried by nine to six votes. The Lord Mayor voted in the minority. Now this is a very decided insult to the memory of Sir Rowland Hill, unless there be good reason for the change. As no doubt has ever been cast on Sir Rowland Hill's energy and

perseverance, why should these features be alone dealt with? It is a comparatively small honour to credit him with having 'established' Penny Postage, if that of having 'founded' it is purposely denied him."

---

The following letter has been addressed by me to the Editors of some of the London newspapers :—

" SIR,—Having reason to believe that statements to my prejudice have been privately made to the editors of the London press, having the effect of keeping back from the notice of the public the discovery made by me that the Penny Postage Scheme of 1837 was, after all, only a copy, I desire to repudiate any such prejudicial statements, and to say I am perfectly prepared, if allowed the opportunity, publicly to refute them.

" For the truth of my statements, I point, first, to the efforts persistently made to keep them unknown to the public—or, where such could not altogether be done, to have them misrepresented, as in the instance of my Memorial to the Commission of City Sewers, of date 12th July, 1881.

" Secondly, I point to the changes made in the inscription upon the statue of Sir Rowland Hill by the Mansion House Committee. Their unanimous decision upon the 16th March last to abandon the term 'founded,' and to substitute 'established,' was a distinct admission of the truth of what I had laid before them. To have *now* introduced into the inscription the date '1840,' is an equally distinct admission to the same purpose. This I have clearly pointed out in a letter addressed

“ to the Lord Mayor and freely circulated—also, in a letter published by the *Daily News* on the 26th April last, and to which no reply or denial has been attempted.

“ I point, in the third place, to the reception accorded by the Lord Mayor to my very out-spoken letter of 25th March addressed to him. Are the answer sent to me, and the action taken by him at my instance, the acts of one who looks upon me as a traducer? Quite the opposite.

“ To the printed sheets herewith, I beg to refer you for these letters, and for other particulars.

“ I respectfully ask you then, Sir, to decide, as an impartial custodian of public matters, whether my statements are such as simply to deserve no notice on your part, or whether, as I submit that the time has now arrived for a matter of such grave public interest, so fully confirmed, to be publicly ventilated.

“ I remain, &c.,

“ PATRICK CHALMERS.”

---

The following additional pages are now respectfully submitted, in the expectation that, while doing no injustice to his great and acknowledged services, the reader will at the same time find therein conclusively shown what he has *not* done as well as what he *has* done, and consequently—

“ THE POSITION OF SIR ROWLAND HILL  
“ MADE PLAIN.”



## PART SECOND.

---

It has hitherto been believed that the idea of a low and uniform Penny Postage with the principles and figures of the Penny Postage scheme of 1837 originated with the late Sir Rowland Hill. He has taken credit for this in the main, and in his "Life" lately published, tells us how the conception of the more important of these principles and figures arose to his mind. But this pretension becomes dissipated under investigation.

It will be remembered that the old system of postage, prior to the reformed system proposed in 1837 and carried out in 1840\* by

---

\* From this date alone, the Mansion House Memorial Fund Committee now tell us, by the inscription ultimately determined upon for the City statue, are Sir Rowland Hill's services to be reckoned. In so determining I cannot but think that this Committee have done no little injustice to his memory. Though the date, "1840," concedes that question of "conception" which cannot be sustained, yet it was from 1837 to 1840 that the battle of this reform was fought, and it was very much through Rowland Hill's "energy and perseverance" that it was won. It would seem, consequently, that the *second* inscription decided upon, "By whose energy and perseverance the National Penny Postage was established," but giving no date, would have been much more to the purpose. Rather than have had his services from 1837 to 1840 thus ignored through the vacillations of the Committee, Sir Rowland Hill would probably have preferred to see the statue dispensed with altogether.

the then Mr. Rowland Hill, was a high and variable charge according to distance of, say 2d. to 1s. 6d. a letter, charged by sheet, and two sheets, however light in weight, were charged double. The same with circulars.

In his pamphlet of 1837, Mr. Rowland Hill proposed a low and uniform rate of postage, irrespective of distance, to be charged by weight and pre-paid by stamp, at the rate of 1d. the  $\frac{1}{4}$  oz. But what he does *not* tell us is this, that all these valuable principles and figures lay before him when he wrote his pamphlet—and that his share of the work was confined to proposing the *application* of them to letters. In a document of date April 1836, about the period when Mr. Hill turned his attention to postal affairs, already described, these identical principles and figures are embodied and recommended as respects prices-current and similar mercantile publications. Insert “letters,” and we have Mr. Hill's scheme from beginning to end. He had to conceive or invent *none* of its principles or figures—though by avoiding all mention of the provisions of this pre-existing document in the course of his proposals the reader is left to conclude, as there implied, that such were of his own conception—and this, as we shall find, has been the impression under which his biographies have been written, and the highest posthumous honours of the State conferred.

That Mr. Hill had read this pre-existing document is clear <sup>25</sup> in the *appendix* to his pamphlet of 1837 (see ante, page 21) he quotes from it a certain paragraph, saying in effect, “If you take  
“my advice in the scheme I have laid before you as to letters, see

“what a fine thing it will be for prices-current, what a number you will have, and how Lord Lowther confirms me in what he says in the Fifth Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry.” But of what this Report says in consequence of this and other evidence he takes no notice. He does *not* tell his reader that this Report already embodies and recommends as to prices-current, &c., the very principles and figures for which he has taken credit and applied to letters, but which, now that this document has been brought to light, we find beyond contradiction were a *copy*, and *not* an invention, either in whole or in part.

Again, in his “Life,” lately published, Sir Rowland Hill, at page 258 of the first volume, in alluding to the efforts of Mr. Wallace, says:—“And lastly, he urged the appointment of a Commission of Inquiry into the management of the Post Office, a measure carried into effect early in 1835, the Commission continuing its labours until 1838, during which period it issued no less than ten reports, its efforts fairly entitling it to the credit of much of the subsequent improvement.”

Here, then, is further evidence, under Sir Rowland Hill's own hand, that this Fifth Report had passed under his review. “Fairly entitled,” indeed! But does he tell us that in one of these ten reports was contained and recommended the very principles and figures of his scheme? No; this is left unsaid. Indeed, so far from telling us this, he tells us how the more important of these principles and figures arose to his own mind—the original kept out of sight, and his own calculations and conclusions substituted.

That his account of this process of conclusion thoroughly breaks down under examination is not surprising now that we know he had to conceive nothing.

Safely might Sir Rowland Hill thus allude to these ten Reports. Was the wearied reviewer of his elaborate 1060 pages to turn them up from their obscurity of five-and-forty years, and to find in one of them the original and foundation of his scheme? It has remained for the writer to have to examine these ten Reports, and to at length point out that one of them embodies and recommends the identical principles and figures of the Penny Postage Scheme of 1837.

If Mr. Pearson Hill contends, as I understand him to do, that the scheme of 1837 is not identical with the proposals of this Fifth Report, let this objection be examined by comparing the respective documents.

The old system, as has already been brought to mind, treated mercantile circulars and letters alike in its high and varied charges, at so much per sheet, irrespective of weight and according to distance. What, then, is the first striking feature in perusing and determining the principles of this Fifth Report? Is it not that the charge by distance is to be done away with, and one uniform charge, irrespective of distance, substituted? Here, then, is distinctly laid down and proposed the principle of "uniformity"—the great and fundamental principle of Mr. Hill's scheme as regards letters. The identity is complete.

Next, as to pre-payment. Under no head of his scheme does Mr. Hill discourse more forcibly than in pointing out the advantages of his proposal of pre-payment; but on no occasion does he tell us that the same proposal had been previously put forward in this document which lay before him. In this Fifth Report, as any one may now read (see ante, p. 16), both the proposal and its advantages are clearly set forth—and here again we have identity.

Next, as to how this pre-payment is to be effected. This Fifth Report proposes that such be done by stamp, "as this tax would be collected with much greater facility and certainty than a postage, and avoid the additional duty which would otherwise be imposed on the Post Office." They "believe that our recommendations can be readily carried out by authorizing the Commissioners of Stamps to affix a stamp bearing a certain duty on prices-current intended for circulation by post, and if so stamped, to be free of postage." (That is, an impressed stamp, such as upon a bill stamp or other Stamp Office documents.) Exactly what Mr. Hill proposes the same Commissioners of Stamps should be authorized to do with respect to letters, after having pointed out, as if for the first time, the concurrent advantages. "Let stamped covers and sheets of paper be supplied to the public from the Stamp Office or the Post Office, or both, at such a price as to include the postage." \* \* \* "Economy and the public convenience would require that sheets of letter paper of every description should be stamped on the part used for the address; that wrappers such as are used for newspapers, as well as covers made of cheap paper, should also be stamped, and that every deputy postmaster and letter-receiver all over the kingdom should be required to keep them

“ on sale. \* \* \* Stationers\* would also be induced to keep  
“ them.”

While acknowledging Mr. Knight as his authority “ of some years ago ” for the idea of “ stamped wrappers ” (see ante, page 32. Mr. Hill refrains from quoting this more recent Report of great authority as a precedent for “ stamped sheets of paper,” or for prepayment by stamp at all. To have done so would have disclosed the precedent for his whole Penny Postage scheme. But here again, the identity betwixt the report and his scheme as to how the prepayment was to be effected, namely, by an impressed stamp upon the paper to be issued by the authorities, is complete.

Lastly, with respect to the measure of taxation, one penny the half-ounce ; here again the identity is complete. It is the fashion of the present day amongst the more enthusiastic admirers of Sir Rowland Hill, to point to the remarkable revenue now derived from the Post Office as an evidence of the genius which led him to fix upon the sum of one penny—of the prescience which led him to foresee the successful result attained in a revenue point of view. Indeed, an impression prevails that such was the very reason which led him to fix upon the penny. No impression could be more mistaken—this admiration is bestowed upon the wrong side of the matter. What we have to thank Rowland Hill for is, that he boldly threw aside that question of revenue which formed the bugbear of other would

---

\* The adhesive stamp, invented by Mr. Chalmers in 1834, through which the stationer was relieved of the proposed competition in the sale, at cost price, of letter paper on the part of the Stamp Office, and by which invention the stationer was enabled to sell the paper, the Stamp or Post Office the stamp, and without which the Penny Postage Scheme could not have been carried out, was adopted by Mr. Hill towards the end of the year 1839.

be reformers, and until which had been done by him or some one else, no effective scheme could have been produced. He neither anticipated such monetary success, nor did he even consider that the function of the Post Office, in any primary sense, was to bring revenue to the State. He held that its function was, not revenue, but "public convenience"—and it is well for us he did so. This, indeed, is one of the mottoes upon the title-page of his pamphlet of 1837—and is so distinctly set forth in his evidence before the Select Committee of the House of Commons on "Postage," of the year 1843—some years after the reformed scheme had been in operation—that I give in full his pointed declaration on the subject. Mr. Hawes asks him, under date 3rd July, 1843—

Question No. 74—"Did you adopt the penny rate with the object of ultimately producing a larger amount of net revenue than could be, in your opinion, expected from a higher rate?"

Answer—"No; my object was not to obtain the greatest possible amount of money profit from the Post Office, but to give the greatest amount of convenience to the public which could be obtained without any great permanent sacrifice of revenue as it then stood. It has been thought by Lord Ashburton, Lord Sandon, and Mr. J. S. Lloyd, whose authority on such subjects is entitled to great respect, that the Post Office cannot be legitimately made a source of revenue at all, and I have Lord Lowther's authority for saying, that in the original institution of the Post Office, revenue scarcely formed any part of the object in view. In framing my plan I did not venture to act on such a principle, whatever may have been my opinion of its soundness in

" a very large consideration of the subject ; but my object being the  
 " maximum of convenience to the public, other things remaining  
 " nearly as before, the penny rate was fixed upon as the best suited  
 " for the attainment of this object. If, therefore, it should also  
 " happen that it is the rate best adapted ultimately to produce  
 " the largest amount of money profit, such a coincidence would be  
 " the result of accident, and not of design. My experience, how-  
 " ever, in Post Office affairs since the year 1839 has led me very  
 " much to doubt whether the penny rate, under judicious manage-  
 " ment, may not be the best, even with exclusive reference to  
 " money profit, in a long course of years."

It was not, then, that he either intended or foresaw any particular benefit to the revenue that Mr. Hill fixed upon the penny—no great ultimate loss was anticipated, but public convenience was the main object—the revenue must take care of itself. It was only after some years of experience that he began to think the penny might turn out, under judicious management, the best sum for revenue as well as for convenience—but in such case the result would be one " of accident, and not of design." Here, then, is Mr. Hill's own answer to his indiscriminating admirers.

But it is to the work he has left behind him, his " Life," written by himself, that attention is naturally drawn in order to ascertain the operation which led Mr. Hill to fix upon this sum of the " penny." Surely, it will be said, such must form a prominent feature in this work ; there must be pages in it telling us what brought his mind, from a high and variable rate, to think of and to decide upon this remarkable and magic penny—the solace and admiration of the age. If not with this, with what else of anything



like equal interest can these volumes possibly be filled with? But as Sir Rowland Hill was not prepared to tell us where he actually found the penny, so the few lines of explanation now vouchsafed as to what led him to the penny may possibly be overlooked or left un-examined in voluminous pages, just as the hitherto supposed conception of "uniformity" was introduced by six perplexing pages of figures, and so taken for granted. However, he must say something about the penny and he tells us he fixed upon it because it was "the minimum then in use." Unfortunately for this explanation, when examined, it turns out there was no such minimum then in use, upon letters. There was a penny postage upon newspapers by the local post (see ante, page 33); but if this is the explanation intended, there appears no intelligible reason why, because local post newspapers were charged each one penny postage, the rate for letters should have been proposed at a penny the half-ounce, irrespective of distance. If we had been told that this measure of taxation had been fixed upon because a body of experienced Commissioners, being of opinion that "prices-current" and publications of a similar nature published in this country be "permitted to pass through the Post Office without the imposition of a charge so high as to impede the general circulation," had, after weighing the merits of the various sums, decided upon the half-ounce as being the most advisable—if Sir Rowland Hill had told us this, knowing as he did all about it—and further that, having already adopted the *principles* laid down by these experienced Commissioners, he thought he could not do better than *equally adopt* their proposed measure of taxation—such would have been an intelligible and most excellent reason. This, at all events, is what he did—and here again we have the identity complete.

The identity, then, betwixt the Penny Postage scheme of 1837 and this pre-existing document has been shown to be complete—distinctly traced through all the principles and figures of both proposals, and this without reference by Sir Rowland Hill, in either of his writings, to the provisions of this pre-existing document in any one instance, though it lay before him when he wrote his pamphlet of 1837.\*

No action taken upon it—one of a succession of Blue-books in which the period was so prolific that Mr. Hill could receive from Mr. Wallace “an additional half-hundred weight” (see ante, page 19) over and above those into which he had “previously dipped”—one of a class of literature read by few and not at all by the public—eclipsed by the publication of the pamphlet of 1837 which reached the public, and which, with letters, equally embraced mercantile circulars—this Fifth Report, what it embodied, what it proposed, has remained in obscurity. These Ten Reports, moreover, of the Commissioners of Post Office Inquiry were but a portion of this class of literature with which the years prior to 1835 had abounded, in addition to Parliamentary Returns. A Commission, termed the “Commission of Revenue Inquiry” had sat for many years prior to the Commission of merely Post Office Inquiry, and had issued twenty-three Reports, in more than one of which Post Office affairs were dealt with.

---

\* It is true that this Fifth Report looks forward to the proposed sum of one penny being reduced ultimately to one half-penny as respects the mercantile circulars it deals with, and that no such corresponding proposal is made by Mr. Hill as respects letters—but how far this want of identity is worth anything, so as to say the schemes are “not identical,” may safely be left to the reader to determine.

And here we come to what affords most important insight into what may have drawn or tempted Mr. Hill to put forward his pamphlet of 1837 as of his own conception, without reference to the provisions of this pre-existing Fifth Report, the identity of which has been shown. What says Sir Rowland Hill in his "Life," page 258, Vol. I, with reference to these Reports of the "Commissioners of Revenue Inquiry?" "Though the "Commissioners of Revenue Inquiry, already referred to, had a "short time before with great ability exposed much mismanagement in the Post Office, and recommended various improvements " (some of which were afterwards taken up by Mr. Wallace, and "some still later by myself), yet these exposures and recommendations, buried as they were in voluminous reports, attracted little "attention from the public."

Buried and unknown! Why not with this Fifth Report as with these others? Why, indeed, not more completely so? The greater would include the less—letters would include mercantile circulars, and there would be all the *less* chance of this Fifth Report, already passed over, being recalled to notice. Others were talking of a reduced and less complicated postage system—here was the very thing! While they only *talked*, he *published* it—the plan was hailed with acclamation—the public mind was ripe, only too anxious, for something such—the public and his own perseverance carried him through. Where he got it from was not told. This "invaluable matter" which he had found amongst the "heaps of rubbish" in the Blue Books which lay piled around him, formed the foundation of his scheme.

The next point to notice in this investigation is the clear understanding on the part of the public that the Penny Postage scheme was original. The speeches at the Mansion House, the experience of every subscriber to the Memorial, the declarations of the press, the manner in which I have been assailed by the son for having questioned the originality of the father—all attest the universal belief in the originality of his scheme. One or two extracts from the press may be given. The *Times* in one of those articles claiming for the memory of Sir Rowland Hill the highest posthumous honours of the State, thus writes—the 28th August 1879 :—“ It is true that Sir Rowland Hill was aided in the development of his *system* by the growth of railways and other means of cheap and rapid communication. It is true, perhaps, that *his reforms* were adopted at a moment when the natural march of events must have wrought great changes in the postal system ; and it is even possible that sooner or later the Post Office would have acknowledged for itself the truth and force of the principles on which *his system* was based. But the fact remains that *he devised the Penny Postage unaided* before he had ever been inside a Post office ; that he carried it against vehement opposition, both official and Parliamentary ; that he triumphantly proved its success in spite of determined and vexatious obstructions to his plans ; and that every civilized country has now more or less adopted *the principles which he first laid down.*”

The *Athenæum*, in its biographical notice on 6th September, 1879, is equally emphatic :—“ Now cheap newspapers and effective telegraphs are not the special glory of any one or two men, while *the present postage system is the sole and undis-*

“puted invention of Sir Rowland Hill.” After showing how the principle of “uniformity” had been arrived at in the usually accepted way, by a calculation, the writer goes on—“Prepayment and the use of stamps naturally followed *from the workshop of an inventive mind*. Sir Rowland was a man of inventive mind, as was proved by his early scheme of education and by his late elaboration of Penny Postage. That he sometimes failed in his projects, that he was unsuccessful as Chairman of the Brighton Railway, that his printing press did not work, that his recent proposal of a heavy tax on coal was a mistake, cannot be denied. But in our view these failures do not deprive him of his claim to *inventiveness*, do not even reduce his claim, for as was said to us by one of the most distinguished *Savants* of the day, if a man has ten schemes and succeeds in one, he is fortunate. Failures are inevitable incidents.”\*

These extracts from journals of the first rank, and which might be multiplied indefinitely from the press throughout the length and breadth of the land—responded to in spirit and from purse by the public—amply prove beyond the shadow of a doubt the understanding which decreed to Sir Rowland Hill the highest honours the nation could bestow. After all, it was no invention—it was a copy from beginning to end.

When a man of note dies, the journalist of the day can only reproduce the accepted position of his life and works—it is no part of his duty to examine so as fully to certify all the statements at

---

\* This obituary notice, pointed to and introduced by previous confirmatory remarks of the Editor, is signed “William Lucas Sargant.”

hand, or to ransack old volumes dealing with the times when such reputation was established. That is the duty and the task of the later historian, or of some one specially interested. Such has been my duty, my task—with the result arrived at in these pages, and just stated.

The *Athenæum*, in referring to a letter which appeared in its columns from Mr. Pearson Hill reflecting upon me after the issue of my former pamphlet, dismisses the subject with the remark, that Sir Rowland Hill, having identified himself with the originality questioned by me, every one who knew him must be satisfied—there was no more to be said.

With reference to this episode, I would now remark that, having established the identity betwixt Mr. Hill's scheme and this pre-existing Report—knowing as we do from evidence under his own hand that Mr. Hill had this Report before him when he drew up his scheme—what would have been the effect had he told us what this Report embodied and recommended? Clearly, at once to dispel the notion—to prevent even for a moment the assumption that all or any one of these principles or figures of taxation were of his own conception. If, then, Sir Rowland Hill has obtained credit from the *Athenæum* and from the public in regard to the present Postage system having been his "sole and undisputed invention"—if such has formed the *one bright exception* to that list of inventive failures which the *Athenæum* records—by what means, let me ask, has such credit been obtained? Is it not by having kept back, by having suppressed, what in all candour Sir Rowland Hill was bound to have disclosed? Would the *Athenæum* equally care in

this way to obtain credit for its pages? No. Then let it and others admit that they have been mistaken in Sir Rowland Hill; that what was only a copy they have ascribed to his invention; and let discretion be used in recording what he has and has *not* done—whether, moreover, he has or has not dealt candidly by that nation which has dealt so generously by him.

The reformed system of postage was not the work of one year nor of one man. From 1832, when Mr. Lytton Bulwer opened the campaign against the “taxes on knowledge,” the abuses and mismanagement of the Post Office of those days were the constant theme of complaint—abuses exposed and denounced not for the first time in the writings of Sir Rowland Hill. About 1835—36 Mr. Hill turned his attention to postal matters, and received from Mr. Wallace the “additional half-hundred weight of heavy Blue-books into some of which he had previously dipped.” Seizing the opportunity prepared for him by the labours of previous Post Office reformers and picking up every item of information in Post Office reforming circles,\* he came in at the happy moment through studying well the materials that lay to his hand to give these materials effect. For having so done his name will be gratefully remembered; but unfortunately, not content with this high position, he must further pose as the genius of inventions to which he was not entitled—he must grasp at honours to which he had no claim, and place upon his own brow laurels only stripped from others. Having shown this—having established the fact that the Penny Postage scheme of 1837 was not

---

\* Such as Mr. Chalmers' idea of an adhesive stamp, which was no more the “invention” of Mr. Hill than was any one of the principles of the scheme itself.

an invention, but only a copy applied to letters—having shown that Mr. Hill, as respects postal matters, was capable of being disingenuous, of appropriating to himself what was not his due, the question of public interest to which I have addressed myself is closed, while a starting point—something to be kept in view—remains to me, on another occasion, for the consideration of that question of more personal interest—“To whom belongs the merit of the adhesive stamp?”

But if it has been my lot to have to show what Sir Rowland Hill has *not* done, a word may still be permitted me with respect to what he *has* done—already well known. He studied these materials, in itself no light task. While others merely sent proposals and suggestions to the authorities, only in those days to encumber official pigeon-holes, he formulated *from these materials*, and published in a shape to reach the public a concise and invaluable scheme. He worked hard and successfully to carry out this scheme against obstacles that would have daunted most men—a service which entitles him to high rank amongst public benefactors. If other men first showed what *might* be done, it was still Rowland Hill who *did it*, and *that*, after all, is what the public want. If another man first suggested how best in practice to carry it on, here, too, Rowland Hill was equal to the occasion by adopting such for the public benefit. It is, of course, with his name, notwithstanding what has transpired, that this great and beneficent reform will remain primarily associated.

But if all this is the case, there is also something more that the public—and above all a British public—has ever been understood to



insist upon, and that is, that there shall be what is known as "fair play," straight-forwardness, and being "above-board"—that no man, more especially no public man, shall avail himself of the opportunities his position may afford to draw upon himself the merit of what he is not fully entitled to, or lay aside the injunction of "honour to whom honour is due." It is the neglect of these observances on his part which will interfere with that full measure of respect and gratitude which his countrymen would otherwise have desired to pay to the memory of Sir Rowland Hill.

In conclusion. Mr. Pearson Hill, with whom every sympathy will be felt so long as, laying aside the vituperation in which he has indulged he confines himself to argument—Mr. Pearson Hill argues, if this was a concealed copy, if this was plagiarism, how was it that no notice was taken of such, or Mr. Hill not questioned on the subject when he appeared under examination, not long after, before the very same Commissioners upon matters connected with their Ninth Report? That these Commissioners did not feel called upon to draw Mr. Hill's attention to this identity does not for one moment alter the facts—*there* is the pre-existing document identical in its provisions, now exposed to view, and there is no getting rid of it. But these Commissioners would not feel called upon to initiate an explanation on the subject—they would leave such to be made by Mr. Hill himself at such time and upon such opportunity as he himself would select, and which they would not doubt Mr. Hill would take care should arrive. Moreover, were they to raise a scandal with respect to the new scheme detrimental to its success, and to the advancement of the very principles they themselves had advocated and desired to see in operation? They and such as they were the very

last men to breathe a word on the subject. Nor was it their business any more than their interest, to do so. Mr. Hill's pamphlet of 1837 was not addressed to them, it was addressed to the nation. Did his countrymen know of this identity—this copy? No, not till this day. Did Mr. Hill tell them? No—let his proposals be accepted, we are told in the middle of a long appendix (see ante, page 21), and see how beneficially they will act upon Prices Current—but that the very same proposals were embodied in that Report from which he gives the extract is left unsaid, is kept out of sight, and they are taken to this day as his “sole and undisputed invention”—“from the workshop of an inventive mind.” Has Sir Rowland Hill, in that work left to be published after him, yet told us? Again—No! “The Commission continuing its labours until 1838, during which period it issued no less than ten Reports, its efforts fairly entitling it to the credit of much of the subsequent improvement.” (See ante, page 57.) That is all—what the fifth number of these ten Reports embodies and recommends remains untold—the secret it contains was to be buried with him in the grave!

But it has been otherwise ordained. The discovery here disclosed has brought to light the origin and foundation of the Penny Postage scheme of 1837. The biographer will now alter the tenor of his record, and will tell how the delusion of forty years has been here dispelled, and how this investigation has at length effectually exposed one of the most remarkable and successful plagiarisms in history.