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SIR ROWLAND HILL

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JAMES CHALMERS,

THE INVENTOR OF THE ADHESIVE STAMP.

A REPLY TO MR. PEARSON HILL.

BY

PATRICK CHALMERS,

AUTHOR OF

"THE POSITION OF SIR ROWLAND HILL MADE PLAIN."

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SIR ROWLAND HILL.

Is a pamphlet lately published by me, entitled "The Position of Sir Rowland Hill Made Plain," I showed that hitherto there has been a misapprehension with respect to the position of Sir Rowland Hill, so far as "invention" enters into his proposals—that the principles and figures of the Penny Postage scheme of 1837, hitherto understood to have been, in the main, of his own conception, and so handed down by him to us, were, from beginning to end, merely a copy from a pre-existing document, to the provisions of which in his writings he avoided reference, and by this means obtained the credit of having invented principles of the highest value—of having *improvised* a system which he only copied and applied, but to which credit he had no rightful claim.

My present publication is now with the object of showing that the "Adhesive Stamp," the adoption of which, at a critical moment, saved the Penny Postage scheme, by which the scheme has been carried out, and the value and indispensable nature of which are universally acknowledged, is equally an "adoption" from second-hand of the invention of another man, and to the merit of which Sir Rowland Hill is no more entitled than he is to the merit of having invented the principles of the Penny Postage scheme itself.

It will be conclusively shown that the late Mr. James Chalmers, Bookseller, Dundee, invented the adhesive stamp by way of prepayment for Post Office purposes, in the year 1834, long before Sir

Rowland Hill took up the subject of Post Office Reform; that Mr. Chalmers laid this plan before Mr. Wallace (the Chairman of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, 1837-38, upon the proposed scheme), in December, 1837, recommending it for the purpose of carrying out the proposed scheme, and, by so doing, led to the ultimate adoption of that plan in December, 1839, by Mr. Rowland Hill, in conjunction with his own plan of the impressed stamp.

Thus, not only was Mr. Chalmers the inventor of the adhesive stamp, but it was through his initiation that Mr. Wallace and others took up the plan, pressed it on the Government in July, 1839, when in a dilemma what to do, and so ultimately brought about its adoption. The steps will be distinctly traced from official sources.

But before coming to this main portion of my present pamphlet, some condensed notice of the contents of "The Position of Sir Rowland Hill Made Plain" is desirable.

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

The pre-existing document from which Mr. Hill acquired the principles and figures, the whole system of his Penny Postage scheme, was a neglected Blue-book of date April, 1836, termed the "Fifth Report of the Commissioners of Post Office Inquiry." 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

* To distinguish matters connected with 1837, the designation "Mr. Hill" will be used; in later matters, that of "Sir Rowland Hill."

against the "taxes on knowledge," the abuses and mismanagement of the Post Office of those days were the constant theme of complaint: and early in 1835 Mr. Wallace, M.P. for Greenock, a prominent reformer, obtained a Commission of Inquiry on the subject. The Fifth Report of these Commissioners deals with the subject of prices-current, and their Report, which is given at length in my pamphlet, is, when examined, found to 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 $\frac{1}{2}$ id. the $\frac{1}{2}$ -oz.

Here is exactly Mr. Hill's scheme of 1837; insert "letters," and you have his scheme from beginning to end. Neither all nor any one of the valuable principles and figures were of his *conception*—they were a *copy*, applied to letters, the original and foundation of the scheme left out of sight.

In his "Life" lately 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-hundredweight of "raw material, I now commenced that systematic study, analysis and comparison, "which the difficulty of my self-imposed task rendered necessary."

That Mr. Hill had read this pre-existing document is clear, as in the *appendix* to his pamphlet of 1837 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 Commis- "sioners 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 the 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.

My pamphlet goes on to examine and compare each proposal of Mr. Hill with respect to letters, in his pamphlet of 1837, with the proposals in this Fifth Report, showing the identity of each proposal separately, and of the two schemes as a whole.

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.

We get some insight into the facility of plagiarism at the period, as follows:—

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-hundredweight" 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.

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. 1, 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 noticed is the clear understanding on the part of the public that the Penny Postage Scheme was original:—

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 civilised 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*
 “ *undisputed 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 un-
 “ successful 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 succeed-
 “ 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—this “one bright exception” to the list of inventive failures pointed out by the *Athenæum* was only a copy from beginning to end.

Coming now to the effect of my discovery laid before the “ Sir Rowland Hill Memorial Committee,” at the Mansion House, upon the 9th March, 1881 :—

The only reply to so unwelcome a piece of information 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 Hill 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 a follows, from the *City Press*, of date 18th March, 1882 :—

"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 perseverance 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 I 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, appear 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:—

“MY LORD,

“WIMBLEDON, 25th March, 1882.

“Observing your Lordship's name in the list of the minority of six to nine, in favour of a merely formal inscriptiou 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 result, 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 statements of interest to make, was, in the same spirit, courteously acknowledged, and acted upon in accordance.

Subsequently, a *third* inscription was determined upon, at a meeting at which the name of the Lord Mayor does not appear*—“He founded uniform Penny Postage, 1840.”

In a letter inserted in the *Daily News* I pointed out that the introduction of the date “1840” equally conceded the question of “conception,” as follows:—

“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 everyone 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, 1882.”

* On this the *Dover Chronicle* remarks:—“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.” Other journals comment to the same effect.

Yet how few understand the significance of the date "1840" upon the statue of Sir Rowland Hill.

In the preface to the pamphlet satisfactory reasons are given why this matter was not brought forward during the life-time of Sir Rowland Hill, one very sufficient reason being 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 cognisance." It is there also shown that a return to the subject had been forced upon me, in consequence of a violent attack made upon me by Mr. Pearson Hill, in a paper contributed by him to the Philatelic Society, and to which I was called upon to reply.

The favourable notices from the Press upon my two pamphlets on this subject which have reached me now amount to over forty, some of them of considerable length, and all of which are reserved for separate publication. On the other hand, four of an opposite nature have reached me, though the *Citizen* at the same time admits that "my case is argued with a good deal of force." Pointing to Mr. Ford's fine statue of Sir Rowland Hill, it is of opinion that "many people, having subscribed to the Memorial, will not trouble to enquire further into the matter." Why the Mansion House Committee did not call a final meeting of these subscribers, or even issue a report, the *Citizen* does not say. Perhaps, at a meeting, the Committee might have been "troubled" by inconvenient questions, which might have got into the papers; while a report must of necessity have said something equally troublesome with respect to the various changes in the inscription. However anxious the *Citizen* and the Committee may be that my statements should give no further "trouble," it will be seen that others are of a different opinion, wanting a full ventilation of the whole matter. My objection to the proceedings of the Committee is, that they did not candidly inform the subscribers and the public what had transpired in the interval betwixt the subscriptions and the erection of the statue, as, in such case, the task now before me would have

been more than half accomplished. I, however, still invite from the *Citizen* an impartial consideration of my present statement, indulging the hope that its readers, the citizens of London, may yet be informed, through its columns, to whom they owe their daily, hourly friend and companion, the Adhesive Stamp.

Another of the four, the *Middlesboro' News*, remarks:—

Though there appears to be no doubt about the facts stated, yet we cannot see what good can result from the publication of these statements at the present time, because neither Mr. Chalmers nor any one else can deny that it was through Sir Rowland Hill that the working out of the details of the Penny Postage were accomplished, and that had it not been for him the only idea of this great boon might still be hid away in those Parliamentary Blue-books which Mr. Chalmers has with such care and diligence unearthed.

I transcribe the above because it may be taken to embody the views not alone of the writer, but of that large body of the Press writers who, if they have read my statements at all, more or less satisfied therewith, have simply passed them over unnoticed, saying with this writer, "what is the use of all this?" Before answering that question, let me say that, so far from "denying" what this writer points out, no one has more cordially admitted the great services of Sir Rowland Hill in having "introduced" and "carried out" this "great and beneficent reform," and for this I refer to page 70 of that pamphlet. As to the *use* of my statements, as to "what good can result," let me invite this writer, or these writers, to put themselves for a moment in my position, and the answer will come home to them. These statements of mine have been put forward through no mere gratuitous or unnecessary motive—not even to ventilate what is, after all, an important national discovery, with respect to one upon whom the highest honours of the State have been bestowed as having been "the sole and undisputed inventor" of that system. No. A duty has devolved upon me, the legitimate nature of which each and all of these writers, had the case been their own, would at once have felt, and set about discharging to the best of their ability, and the nature of which will be fully apparent

to all who may now read the following pages. For what do they disclose? They show that my father was the inventor of the principle of the adhesive stamp for postage purposes, and initiated its adoption, as already indicated. They further disclose that when my father laid his claim to the merit of this stamp before Mr. Rowland Hill, then acting with despotic power at the Treasury, he was induced to withdraw it, or somehow to give it up. And why? Because "he was told, or induced or allowed to believe" by Mr. Hill that he, Mr. Hill, had invented it—that it was his "invention," and not an acquired idea—just as the nation has been "told, or induced or allowed to believe" that the Penny Postage system or scheme itself was his "sole and undisputed invention." Now, my case is, that the stamp was no more his invention than was any one of the principles of the scheme itself; that as the latter were, each and all of them, acquired ideas, so was the former; as the nation has been misled, so has the individual. And am I then to be asked of what *use* is it that my hitherto statements have been put forward—what "good can result" from their publication? These statements have been a means to an end, that end one which justifies itself, and equally justifies and explains the object of the preliminary statement.

That object is not left unnoticed in my last pamphlet, p. 69:—

Having established the fact that the Penny Postage scheme of 1837 was not an invention—having shown that Mr. Hill, as respects postal matters, was capable of being disingenuous, of appropriating to himself what was not his due . . . a starting point—something to be kept in view—remains to me on another occasion for the consideration of the question—"To whom belongs the merit of the "Adhesive Stamp."

While there can be no two opinions, then, with respect to the services of Sir Rowland Hill in having introduced and carried out the reformed Penny Postage, the sad failing presents itself that, "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. . . . No second party was to be allowed to intervene betwixt Rowland Hill and the entire merit of this reform.” And in this way, and through this weakness, the Adhesive Stamp, equally with the system of the reform itself, has come to be considered, erroneously, the invention of Sir Rowland Hill.

THE IMPRESSED STAMP.

AFTER the lapse of forty years, it is not to be wondered at that many of the present day forget, if they ever quite knew, what the original proposals of Mr. Rowland Hill were in the way of carrying out in practice his Penny Postage scheme, and that the "stamp" to which we have been accustomed is by no means the "stamp" proposed by him, and which was the "Impressed Stamp," such as we have upon bill-stamps and other Stamp Office documents.

The original proposals in the pamphlet of 1837 were as follows :—

Having shown the practicability and even fairness of a uniform, and even low, rate of postage, our next step is to show the means by which postage may be conveniently collected in advance, and accounted for by the collector.

The following is a sketch of two modes of collection, both of which I would submit for consideration. It is drawn out with reference to the metropolis, but a few very slight and obvious modifications would adapt either mode to any other town.

First Mode of Collection.—This may be shortly stated as simply paying the penny or money with the letter or letters—when he goes on :—

The objections to this mode of procedure appear to be as follows :—

- 1st. It might, in rare instances and in small towns, lead to an objectionable exposure of the parties engaged in mercantile correspondence, as their messengers, in delivering the letters at the post office, would be known.

2nd. Frands, by the messengers pocketing the postage, would perhaps be numerous, unless the plan of taking receipts were generally adopted, which would be attended with some trouble and expense.

3rd. The trouble and confusion arising from the great number of payments to be made at certain hours of the day would be considerable.

4th. In accounting for the postage of letters, even though both number and weight should enter into the calculation, considerable fluctuations would occur in the receiver's profit, which it is desirable to avoid. These objections are obviated by the

Second Mode of Collection.—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. Letters so stamped would be treated in all respects as franks, and might, as well as franks, be put into the letter-box as at present, instead of being delivered to the receiver. Covers of various prices would be required for packets of various weights, and each should have the weight it is entitled to carry legibly printed with the stamp. The receiver should take packets from time to time from the box, examine them to see the allowance of weight was not exceeded, and assort them as already described. If any packet exceeded the proper weight, it should be sent to the Dead Letter Office, opened, and returned to the writer; the delay thus occasioned and the loss of the frank stamp being the penalty for carelessness. As a check on the receiver, a few packets, taken at random, should be examined at a central office, and a fine levied for negligence.

Economy and the public convenience would require that sheets of letter paper of every description should be stamped in 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; a discount, such as is now given on stamps, would render it their interest to do so. Stationers would also be induced to keep them. For the forgery of these stamps their low price would leave but little temptation, and the account of their issue compared with the number of letters passed through the post office (kept as already described by the *tell-tale* stamp) would lead to the detection of any extensive fraud. Should experience warrant the Government in making the use of stamped covers universal,

most important advantages would be secured ; advantages, indeed, of such magnitude that, before any exception whatever is admitted, the policy of such exception should be very fully considered.

- 1st. The post office would be relieved altogether from the collection of the revenue, and from all accounts relating to that collection. Distribution would be its only function.
- 2nd. The receipt of letters would be more simple even than it now is, as the present trouble from receiving money for the post-paid letters would be avoided.
- 3rd. Any necessary exception to the uniform rate of postage (1d. per $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.) would under this arrangement be productive of comparatively little inconvenience. For instance, the greater weights to be allowed in the local posts would be readily managed. Penny covers and sheets for local posts might be marked thus, when stamped :

“ For General Distribution :—The weight allowed is half-an-ounce.”

“ For Local Distribution.—The weight allowed is two ounces.”

It may perhaps be said that this plan only transfers the receipt of postage from the Post Office to the Stamp Office ; but it will be recollected that at the latter the postage would be collected in large sums, the number of payments being reduced, probably, in the ratio of at least a thousand to one.

The cost of stamping such an enormous number of papers may appear to be a formidable objection to this arrangement. With the aid of machinery, however, this cost may be reduced to a mere trifle.

Now the first thing that will strike the modern reader of the above mode of collection is, that the system of prepayment to which he has been accustomed, and which, in his mind, has been associated with the name of Rowland Hill, is something entirely different. Of the (impressed) “ stamped wrappers or covers, the stamped sheets of letter paper of every description, stamped on the part used for the address,” he knows nothing. If the system of prepayment proposed by Mr. Hill is not the system he knows of, the presumption is it has been put aside for a better one, and his experience at once tells him such is the case.

What Mr. Hill overlooked in this proposal was the broad fact

that he sets up the Stamp Office or Post Office to do the business of the stationers of the kingdom—some huge Government establishment, against which competition would be hopeless, as the Stamp Office was to do the business at cost price,* while the stationer requires a profit to pay his rent and expenses, and to live upon. By in this way setting up the Stamp Office as a seller at cost price, you cut the ground from under the retailer, and dislocate the whole connection, leaving the paper-maker at the mercy of the sole buyer, the Stamp Office. For the retail dealer to hold a stock of stamped writing paper would, in the first instance, require the outlay of a five-fold capital, as, in place of buying the article unstamped on credit, he must lay it in duty paid for cash, though he may not always get cash from his customer. Then his only remuneration for this is a discount on the stamp, as he cannot charge a profit on the paper, because the Stamp Office or Post Office near him offers to supply his customers at cost price—the price he paid. Nor can he sell his own paper at any profit, and let his customers buy covers, should they even be disposed, because the Stamp Office offers the stamped sheets of paper, which it can buy as cheap or cheaper than the stationer, at cost price. The effect upon the stationers is, consequently, confiscation; and when Mr. Hill wrote of an “inducement” to be given to stationers to sell either the paper or the covers, he overlooked having previously as good as extinguished the letter-paper branch of the stationer’s business.

On the head of “forgery” Mr. Hill has no fears; the low price of the stamp would leave but little temptation. Why so, if you do it upon a sufficient scale? A hundred of his covers, costing say 8½d., would be worth 9s. stamped; or a quire, twenty-four sheets of letter-paper, costing wholesale say 5d., would be 2s. 5d. stamped—a percentage tending to forgery as a business (which we shall after-

* Mr. Wood, the Chairman of Inland Revenue, states in his evidence before the Select Committee of 1837-38, that it is not the duty of the Stamp Office to have a profit on the paper sold—that his department could stamp paper in any form—and “would have no difficulty in supplying the public with stamped sheets of paper for letters, for the use of the whole kingdom.”

wards find was the case), with customers at every door. Nor is an impressed stamp difficult to forge, or beyond Birmingham skill. Most houses of business and clubs have such; that upon the House of Commons writing-paper is a *fac simile* of what Mr. Hill proposed, the Royal Arms. (Evidence before Select Committee, 1837-38.)

Mr. Hill thinks the tally of the issue of stamps, compared with the number of letters, would lead to the detection of any extensive fraud. It would lead to the "knowledge" of such—not even this readily, unless you knew the stock of stamps held by the public—but not necessarily to its "detection." The Committee questioned him on this point, being very dubious as to the soundness of his safeguards, and in this doubt most will be inclined to join. Not being much afraid of forgery, Mr. Hill was not bound to point out how the same, if suspected, was to be detected and stopped; but to most minds the certainty of extensive, persistent, and irrepressible forgery will be apparent. Such, if it stood alone, would be a fatal objection to Mr. Hill's mode of assessing the revenue.

And such was the opinion of the Select Committee of the House of Commons of 1837-38, even after Mr. Wood had pointed out what, curiously enough, had not occurred to Mr. Hill, that, as every letter must have both a signature and an address, there would be great facilities in tracing a forgery. On the combined evidence of Mr. Wood, the Chairman, of Mr. Pressly, the Secretary of Inland Revenue, and of Mr. Dickinson, a paper manufacturer, their recommendation was this—that the paper for all stamped wrappers or "envelopes," an improved "cover," mentioned by Mr. Wood, was to be manufactured at the mills of Mr. Dickinson, or of a Mr. Stevenson, solely, under strict Excise supervision, and sold either by the Stamp Office, Post Office agents, or licensed stationers. This paper of Mr. Dickinson's was of a peculiar manufacture, having threads of cotton or silk so interwoven in the article that a Post Office clerk could readily know by the look or feel, that a stamped cover was genuine, though he might not know by the *stamp*, even if he had the time to look. The paper-

makers protested and petitioned against this, objecting to one maker having all the work; while it was further said not all the Excise officers in the kingdom would prevent the manufacture of the "peculiar paper" at other mills, and which, moreover, might be brought over from the Continent ready stamped, as we shall find it was. Besides, the plan involved permanent Excise supervision over the manufacture of paper.

[And here I pause for a moment to ask—Did not the man who, by his simple yet magical invention of the adhesive stamp, rescued the country from such a complication as this, and by laying *his* plan before Mr. Wallace, the Chairman of the 1837-38 Committee, led to its adoption, and so saved the Penny Postage Scheme—a plan which, after forty years' experience, has not been superseded, and without which the pre-paid Penny Postage System could not be carried on for a single day—did not this man do the State some service, and is his very name to remain unknown and unrecognised?]

The Government again highly objected to this solution of the matter; and when the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on the part of the Government, on the 5th July, 1839,* introduced and carried a Penny Postage scheme, he distinctly only "asked hon. members to commit themselves to the question of a uniform rate of postage of one penny at and under a weight hereafter to be fixed." Everything else was to be left open. "If it were to go forth to the public to-morrow morning that the Government had proposed, and the Committee" (of the *House* which he addressed) "had adopted the plan of Mr. Rowland Hill, the necessary result would be to spread a conviction abroad that, as a stamped cover was absolutely to be used in all cases, which stamped covers were to be made by one single manufacturer, alarm would be felt lest a monopoly would thereby be created, to the serious detriment of other members of a most useful and important trade. The sense of injustice excited by this would necessarily be extreme. I therefore do not call upon

* See "Hansard," Vol. 48.

" the Committee either to affirm or to negative any such proposition
 " at the present. I ask them simply to affirm the adoption of a
 " uniform Penny Postage, and the taxation of that postage by weight.
 " Neither do I ask you to pledge yourselves to the prepayment of
 " letters, for I am of opinion that, at all events, there should be an
 " option of putting letters into the post without a stamp." " If the
 " Resolution be affirmed, and the Bill has to be proposed, it will
 " hereafter require very great care and complicated arrangements to
 " carry the plan into practical effect. It may involve considerable
 " expense and considerable responsibility on the part of the Govern-
 " ment; it may disturb existing trades, such as the paper trade."
 " The new postage will be distinctly and simply a penny postage by
 " weight." " I also require for the Treasury a power of taking the
 " postage by anticipation, and a power of allowing such postage to
 " be taken by means of stamped covers, and I also require the
 " authority of rating the postage according to weight."

But, in this dilemma *how* to carry out the scheme in practice,
 there was help at hand. Mr. Wallace, the Chairman of the Select
 Committee, which had taken evidence upon Mr. Rowland Hill's
 scheme, after pointing out to the Chancellor of the Exchequer that
 he had omitted to notice that Mr. Hill also proposed his Impressed
 Stamp to be struck upon the *sheets* of the letter paper as well as
 upon merely stamped covers, and which might be permitted without
 granting a monopoly to any party, goes on to say:—" He believed
 " the adoption of stamps, *something like French wafers*, might be
 " brought into very general and convenient use. Several of these
 " specimens had been presented to the Treasury and the public
 " offices, *and to himself*, and as far as he could judge from the
 " evidence adduced by Mr. Wood, the Chairman of the Stamp
 " Office, and the Commissioners, he had no hesitation in saying
 " that the adoption of this plan would secure the revenue against
 " loss from forgery."

This interposition of Mr. Wallace is followed up by Mr. War-
 burton, also a member of the 1837-38 Committee, by a practical
 proposal:—" He must say that he viewed with considerable alarm

“the doubt which had been expressed of adopting Mr. Hill's plan of prepayment and collection by stamped covers. He trusted that the principle of prepayment was not to be excluded, if experience should show that principle to be expedient.” “He should here observe that a premature alarm had been alluded to as existing on the part of the paper makers, who were apprehensive that a monopoly would be given for the supply of the paper necessary for the stamped envelopes. He considered it quite premature to enter at present into details, but he thought the Government ought to let it be generally known that they wished to obtain the best plan to prevent forgery. Let them make that known on a principle of free competition, and delegate the decision to proper judges; and let them give a pecuniary reward to the person who brought forward the best practicable plan, and no ground of complaint could remain.”

(Here is the origin of the application to the public for “plans” subsequently noticed.)

Again, in the House of Lords on the 5th August, Lord Melbourne, in introducing the bill, is equally embarrassed with the difficulty raised by the paper makers with respect to the monopoly of making the paper for the stamped covers as was the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The opponents of the Bill use as one of their strongest arguments the impossibility of carrying out the scheme in practice. The Earl of Ripon says:—“Why were their Lordships thus called upon at this period of the session to pass a bill when no mortal being had at that moment the remotest conception of how it was to be carried into execution?” Here Lord Ashburton, like Mr. Wallace in the Commons, comes to the rescue. “Something had fallen from the noble Viscount (Melbourne) opposite, which had led him to suppose that he was adverse to a system of prepayment. Now it had always struck him that the system of prepayment formed the essential part of the plan; he did not see how the scheme could be executed with effect and economy without it. There had been presented to this and the other House of

" Parliament petitions from stationers and paper makers in the
 " country, showing that they laboured under an apprehension that
 " the plan would give a monopoly of paper making to the extent of
 " the covers that would be required. He, however, apprehended
 " that in these fears they were much mistaken ; but it occurred to
 " him that by *a stamp to be affixed or stuck upon the letter* would
 " answer every purpose, and remove the objections of those parties
 " to the measure."

It should be noted here that Lord Ashburton had been a witness in favour of the measure before the Select Committee, and consequently cognizant of what took place there.

" The adoption of stamps, something like French wafers"—
 " a stamp to be affixed or stuck upon the letter"—where did these speakers, interposing at a critical moment, get that idea from, and that proposal? The next chapter will show—but here let it be clearly noted, that up to the period of the Bill in July and August, 1839, not a word is said in any way connecting Mr. Hill's name with other than the impressed stamp, on the sheet of letter paper or more particularly on the stamped covers. That, *and that alone*, is taken on the one part as *his* plan by all the speakers, official or otherwise—for that alone does the Chancellor of the Exchequer ask for "powers." The "French wafer," "the stamp to be affixed or stuck upon the letter," is brought in on the other part as a distinct proposal, in no way entering into the proposals of Mr. Hill.

THE ADHESIVE STAMP.

UPON 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—a day each way*. Subsequently, but some time 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 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, as described in the last chapter.

These letters in the Dundee Press 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.

Here incidentally must be noticed that, in his paper to the Philatelic Society, Mr. Pearson Hill is severe upon me, inasmuch as my pamphlet, published two years ago, termed "The Adhesive Stamp," is framed upon the conclusion that no correspondence had taken place betwixt Mr. Chalmers and Mr. Rowland Hill on the subject—that the former had never made any formal claim to the merit of the invention adopted by the latter. Now, what was my *first* step, before drawing up that pamphlet? Was it not to apply to Mr. Pearson Hill for such information as he could afford—for the *grounds* upon which it appeared the whole merit attaching to this stamp was now being attributed to Sir Rowland Hill, and which had never been published? Why, then, did not Mr. Pearson Hill, among other matters, inform me with respect to this correspondence? He would no doubt reply, "Because he did not then know of any such correspondence." *And that, too, is my answer.* And if, with every facility in his power, Mr. Pearson Hill did not know of any such, how much less was I to know, "Mr. Chalmers long since dead, his establishment long since broken up," and so to frame my pamphlet accordingly. Again, with respect to Mr. Pearson Hill's objection that my statements come forty years too late, it will be seen that it is only since the publication of his "Life," written by himself, that the system pursued by Sir Rowland Hill has been developed—the failing, the weakness, of concentrating everything, invention as well as execution, upon his own person: and so, *only since that publication*, capable of being exposed. My father brought forward his claim forty years ago, and with what result? Only to be made subservient to that same weakness—that system—of allowing what was only an acquired idea to be taken and understood as an invention.

To resume—The obituary notices of Sir Rowland Hill having either credited him with the merit of this Adhesive Stamp, or failed

to supply information on this important feature in the success of his Penny Postage Scheme, immediate notice was forthcoming in quarters where the history of this stamp is best known, asserting the claim of Mr. Chalmers to this invention, ultimately *adopted* by Mr. Hill when in office.

The first letter on this subject is as follows, written by Mr. Prain, well known and respected in Forfarshire as a man of great attainments, one of the oldest and ablest of teachers, first in Broughty Ferry, near Dundee, and subsequently in Brechin, where he now resides :—

To the Editor of the "Dundee Advertiser."—SIR,—I have read with much interest your article in this morning's *Advertiser*, on the late Sir Rowland Hill, and while, with others, willing gratefully to accord to him the honour of having introduced and perfected that postal reform, the benefits of which we are now enjoying, yet I cannot ascribe to him the merit of being the first to suggest the plan of uniform rates and adhesive stamps, as, to my certain knowledge, the late Mr. James Chalmers, bookseller, Castle Street, before the year 1837, propounded a plan almost identical with that which Mr. Hill in that year had the honour of getting introduced with so much advantage to the correspondence and the finances of the Country.

I cannot help thinking that there must still be living in Dundee some who are able to corroborate this statement; and, if so, I trust they will do so for the honour of their town and their late townsman.

I am, &c.,

A DUNDONIAN OF FIFTY YEARS AGO.

29th August, 1879.

This was immediately followed by one from Mr. Thoms, lately deceased, too well known as an able public man, and this beyond his own locality, to require any mention other than his name :

THE PENNY POSTAGE.

To the Editor of the Dundee Advertiser.

SIR,—Your correspondent, "A Dundonian of Fifty Years Ago," is quite right in his recollection of the great services rendered to the cause of postal reform by the late Mr. James Chalmers, bookseller, Dundee.

When Dean of Guild I had the honour of presiding at a public meeting held in the Town Hall, on the 1st of January, 1846, when a silver claret jug and salver, along with a purse of fifty sovereigns, were presented to Mr. Chalmers as a small acknowledgment of his valuable services. In making that presentation, I stated that it was twenty-four years since Mr. Chalmers entered upon his work of Post Office improvement. At first he applied himself to effecting a saving of two days in the transmission of letters between Dundee and the great commercial towns of England; and after a protracted correspondence he succeeded in convincing the Government that this boon to a mercantile community could be procured without any additional expense; and at length he had the satisfaction of seeing his object accomplished. More recently, when the measure of a uniform postage was brought before the country by Mr. Rowland Hill, Mr. Chalmers was again busy in his endeavours to help forward a great national improvement, and had recommended the adoption of the Adhesive Stamp as a means of franking letters, which has since come into general use. I added that I had seen the correspondence, and was strongly impressed with the conviction that Mr. Chalmers ought to have received a share of the premium that was offered by the Government.

I am, &c.,

(Signed) WILLIAM THOMS.

DUNDEE, 29th August, 1879.

This opinion was shared by no less a judge of the circumstances than Mr. Joseph Hume, than whom no man was more competent to give one. He had been personally mixed up in postal improvement for years, and knew all about Mr. Chalmers' efforts in the same field. Mr. Hume's place of residence, Montrose (to a good family in which town Mr. Chalmer's wife belonged*) brought them locally in contact; while Mr. Hume was moreover behind the scenes in all that occurred in the Committee Room of the House of Commons.

The next letter is as follows:—

SIR,—Responding to the call of your correspondent, "A Dundonian of Fifty Years Ago," I have much pleasure in saying that my very good and respected

* Mrs. Chalmers was a Miss Dickson—a name lately more than well known through that of her nephew, Mr. Oscar Dickson, of Gothenburg, to whose enterprise and liberality the successful voyage of the steamer "Vega" with Professor Nordensjöld, of Arctic renown, is to be attributed.

friend, Mr. Chalmers, showed me his views in regard to postal reform, and also his idea of an Adhesive Stamp, a number of years before Mr. Hill's was adopted. So far as I remember, Mr. Chalmers sent his ideas to the press, which perhaps would be found out by reference to your old files. I do not in the least wish to detract from the honour due to Sir Rowland Hill, but think this much is due by me to the memory of a very dear old friend.

I am, &c.,

A DUNDONIAN OF MORE THAN FIFTY YEARS AGO.

30th August.

This, from Mr. Ritchie, of Hawkhill Place and the Cowgate—equally desirous with others to see the name of Mr. Chalmers more widely recognised as the author of the Adhesive Stamp.

These letters elicited the following kindly paragraph from the Editor, of date 3rd September, 1879 :—

THE LATE MR. JAMES CHALMERS AND POSTAL REFORM.

The death of Sir Rowland Hill has naturally directed men's minds to the very great and beneficial changes which he and others laboured to introduce into the postal system of Great Britain. Recent letters in our columns have adverted to the very considerable share our townsman, the late highly-esteemed Mr. James Chalmers, bookseller, had in bringing about these advantageous changes. As early as 1822, Mr. Chalmers had begun to agitate for the acceleration of the mails, and for many years he may have been said to have laboured day and night to obtain this much-needed reform. His gift of rapid and correct calculation was constantly employed to make evident the possibility of acceleration without additional expense. Only after a voluminous and protracted correspondence with Government did he succeed in convincing those in power that such changes were worthy of trial; and he lived to see results far beyond his, or, indeed, any one's most sanguine expectations. Mr. Chalmers laboured not only for his day and generation, but for the commercial benefit of his country in all time coming. He wished no return for his labours—he expected none. However, when Government bestowed such a liberal grant upon Mr. Hill, many of our influential townsmen felt that, in simple justice, Mr. Chalmers should have participated to some extent in the grant. To show that the town of Dundee recognised and appreciated the advantages it had derived from Mr. Chalmers' untiring zeal in postal matters, the presentation referred to in ex-Dean of Guild Thoms' letter of Saturday was made to Mr. Chalmers on the 1st of January, 1846. Mr. Chalmers has long since passed away, but there are

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surviving members of his family and old friends who well remember with what satisfaction he saw the successful issue of labours in which he had borne an important part, and with what pride and pleasure he received the handsome acknowledgment of his fellow-townsmen.

The following has been kindly communicated to me by Messrs. Winter, Duncan & Co., Stationers and Printers, Dundee :—

DUNDEE, 8th January, 1881.

DEAR SIR,

We received the twelve copies of your pamphlet on Post Office Reform, and have distributed same amongst old friends. One we gave to a Mr. James Craig, who on receiving it mentioned that he remembered well of putting the forme in type for the Adhesive Stamp. This Mr. Craig was a printer in the employment of your late father.

We are, &c.,

WINTER, DUNCAN & CO.

P. CHALMERS, Esq.

My relative, Mr. James Dickson, of Gothenburg, in a letter to me, confirms from an unlooked for quarter, the claim set forth in my pamphlet "The Adhesive Stamp," and adds further to what is said with reference to Mr. Hume :—

GOTHENBURG, 6th January, 1881.

Not only have I a lively recollection of "the fact" of your worthy father having, among other Post Office reforms, occupied himself with the Penny Postage movement, while I further not only heard of his name being mentioned in connection with the Adhesive Stamp—but I frequently, and particularly to Mr. Willerding (late Consul General for Sweden and Norway in London), have spoken of him as the originator of the "stamp."

If you bear in mind that I arrived in London in May, 1837, and lived there till September 1847, that would be just the period when this great question occupied public attention—and I feel convinced that I heard the matter alluded to, and your father's share in it stated and commented on at the dinner table of our uncle Mr. Peter Dickson, where, as you recollect, Mr. McCulloch, Mr. Joseph Hume, Mr. Hastie, Member for Paisley, and others, all likely to discuss this question were not unfrequent guests.

TESTIMONIAL TO MR. CHALMERS.

From the *Dundee Advertiser* of the 2nd of January, 1846.)

A numerous and most respectable meeting of the subscribers to this Testimonial, including most of the principal Merchants, Bankers and Manufacturers in the town, was held in the Town Hall yesterday, at one o'clock, afternoon. On the motion of Provost Brown, Dean-of-Guild Thoms, who had acted as Convener of the Committee, was called to the chair.

The Chairman reported shortly the proceedings of the Committee, mentioning that the subscriptions, so far as ascertained, amounted to near £100, and of this sum about £31 had been expended in silver plate; while it was proposed that the balance should be handed over to Mr. Chalmers for his own disposal. The plate was then placed upon the table before the Chairman, and consisted of a richly chased silver jug and a handsome silver salver, both bearing the following inscription:—

“ Presented to JAMES CHALMERS, Esq., Dundee, as a Testimonial for his exertions in procuring an acceleration of the Mail and promoting other improvements in connection with the Post Office. 1st January, 1846.”

The Chairman again rose, and, addressing Mr. Chalmers, said that he had great pleasure in presenting the present Testimonial, as an expression of public approbation for the services rendered by Mr. Chalmers in reference to one of our most important public establishments—the Post Office. It was now, he believed, about 24 years since Mr. Chalmers had first entered upon his work of Post Office improvement. He first applied himself to showing that a saving of two days could be effected in the communication betwixt Dundee and the great commercial towns of England; and, after a protracted correspondence, he succeeded in convincing the Government that this boon to a mercantile community could be procured without any additional expense, and at length had the satisfaction of seeing his object accomplished. When it is considered how important was a saving of time to this extent to those engaged in extensive business, it is not to be wondered that public opinion should at length have found expression in some lasting testimonial. But more recently, when the measure of a uniform penny postage was brought before the country by Mr. Rowland Hill, Mr. Chalmers was again busy in his endeavours to help forward this great national improvement by his practical suggestions, and had recommended the adoption of the adhesive slip as a means of franking letters, which has since come into so general use. He (the Dean) had had an opportunity of seeing the correspondence which had taken place at that time, and he was strongly impressed with the feeling that Mr. Chalmers ought to have received a share of the premium which was offered by the Government. Be that as it may, Mr. Chalmers might congratulate himself that he had been instru-

mental in promoting a measure of so vast importance to the community, It was a common remark, that those who work for the public worked for an ungrateful master. It might be so; but there is an inward satisfaction experienced by those who do what they can to benefit their fellow-men, which is itself a reward, and he believed that Mr. Chalmers had enjoyed this reward without looking to any other. He conceived that the present was only an act of justice—tardy, no doubt, but he trusted it would still be acceptable—the more so when he saw around him such an assemblage of the most respectable and influential of his fellow-citizens, who had this day come forward to do him honour. It was gratifying when a testimonial of this kind fell to be bestowed upon one who had long borne an unblemished character as a private member of society, who had followed an honest and honourable calling, and who had filled many important public offices in the community. He hoped Mr. Chalmers would not estimate the present Testimonial merely according to its intrinsic value, but that he would preserve it as an heir-loom in his family, and hand it down to those who should come after him, as a memorial that he had not lived altogether in vain—that he had done the public some service, and that the public had acknowledged it. In conclusion the Chairman hoped that Mr. Chalmers might be long spared to enjoy every personal and domestic comfort, and that after a "life of labour" he might enjoy an "age of ease." The Chairman then presented Mr. Chalmers with the silver jug and salver, along with a purse of fifty sovereigns—the sum already collected.

Mr. Chalmers replied in suitable terms, thanking his various friends. The correspondence which led to acceleration of the mail occupied five to six years. It was not alone for Dundee he laboured, but for his countrymen in general. With respect to his postage stamp invention, he understood there had been 2,000 candidates for the premium of £200, and, as far as he had ever learned, no one got the premium. There might have been others who had recommended something similar to his own plan, while the fact that the plan of adhesive slips was adopted was alone to him a source of peculiar satisfaction. He accepted the Testimonial with the greatest pleasure, and in handing it down to his posterity "it will preserve in their minds the evidence that I have done something to benefit the community, and that I had taken part in the accomplishment of what was felt to be a public good."

Provost Brown begged leave to express the delight he had experienced in witnessing this day's proceedings. He had known Mr. Chalmers for nearly forty years, and had always regarded him as a most useful and respectable member of society. He thought Mr. Chalmers was well entitled to this Testimonial, and he wished him every happiness and comfort.

Mr. Milne (banker) begged also to add his testimony to all which had been so well said by the Chairman. He had known Mr. Chalmers long, and had respecte

him highly. Mr. Chalmers must no doubt enjoy much satisfaction at seeing his public services at length acknowledged by so respectable a meeting.

The silver mug having been copiously filled, the Dean proposed that they should dedicate the first toast to the health of Her Majesty the Queen, and many happy years to her, which was drunk with all honours. He then called for a bumper to the health of Mr. Chalmers, wishing him long life, health and happiness. Mr. Chalmers returned thanks, and various other toasts, including the health of the Dean, Mrs. Chalmers and family, followed.

The same newspaper of the 4th of January devotes an article to a notice of this meeting. "It certainly was one to which Mr. Chalmers was well entitled."

It is thus clearly recorded that the important town of Dundee declared James Chalmers to have been the originator of the Adhesive Stamp, and acknowledged his services in thus promoting a measure of vast national importance.

The evidence already given shows that Mr. Chalmers was fully recognised in Dundee as having conceived and advocated the principle of the Adhesive Stamp for postage purposes, and this *before* the year 1837, when Mr. Rowland Hill introduced his reformed system. With Mr. Chalmers' suggestions and speculations upon the general subject of postal reform we have here nothing to do, beyond noting that any suggestion such as that of an Adhesive Stamp would the more readily find its way into Post Office reforming circles from such a well known advocate—one whose practical success had left its mark south as well as north of the Tweed.

But I now come to evidence of a more specific and perfectly conclusive nature, which the publicity already given to this matter has been the means of bringing forward, and this just lately. The following letters from two more of those in the employment of Mr. Chalmers, particularize the whole matter, and afford the most undoubted evidence both with respect to the invention of the Adhesive Stamp, and the date when such was got up on his premises

exactly upon the principles ultimately adopted and in use to this day.

It should be mentioned that the *People's Journal* is the weekly issue of the *Dundee Advertiser*, extensively circulated and read throughout the adjacent counties of Scotland. The *Advertiser* of 24th April courteously re-published the letter.

“ THE INVENTOR OF THE ADHESIVE STAMP.

“ To the Editor of the *People's Journal*.

“ SIR,

“ I am an occasional reader of your esteemed *People's Journal*. In that paper I saw that there was a monument to be erected to Sir Rowland Hill for his great services to the nation in getting the reform of the Post Office carried out. Perhaps he was to a considerable extent only in the management of the working of that reform—not in the invention of the improvements, but in seeing only to their being carried out. Mr. James Chalmers, bookseller, Castle Street, Dundee, was the sole inventor of Adhesive Stamps. Without doubt, Mr. Chalmers was an advocate of Post Office reform before Sir Rowland Hill came on the carpet at all. When it was settled that the Penny Postage system was to be adopted, Mr. Chalmers set to work to draw out a plan of Adhesive Stamps, which he did, and showed it to a number of his neighbour merchants about the High Street of Dundee for their approval, after which he sent Peter Crichton, the foreman of his printing office, to set it up in type and print a few copies of it. After so doing he brought them up to the binding shop to get them gummed. Previous to that I had been ordered to go to the inkwork and bring some gum up and get it dissolved. James Paton then held the paper flat till I brought the gum brush over it, after which I put them down in front of the fire to dry. After they were dry, Thomas Fyfe the pressman, put the papers into the press, among the smooth boards to smooth them. Since then I have never heard any word about them, till I accidentally

" came across the subject in your excellent *Journal* a few months
 " ago. The gentlemen to whom Mr. Chalmers showed his design
 " have now all gone to their rest. Their names were as follows :
 " Mr. Bisset, druggist, High Street ; Mr. Russell, Druggist, High
 " Street ; Mr. James Watson, haberdasher, High Street ; Mr. Bell,
 " tobacconist, High Street ; Mr. Keiller, confectioner, head of
 " Seagate ; Mr. John Sturrock, banker, Bank of Scotland ; Mr. John
 " Todd, linen merchant, Castle Street. I thought some time ago
 " to have said something about it, but it had gone so long by that I
 " let it pass. Since I see it has come up again I have taken
 " notice of it now. All who were in the binding shop at the time
 " were myself and James Paton, who died lately. I say upon soul
 " and conscience that Mr. James Chalmers was the sole inventor
 " of the Adhesive Stamps, and not Sir Rowland Hill. Patrick
 " Chalmers is perfectly correct to uphold his father's honour. He
 " is the youngest son of his father. The writer of these lines is
 " William Whitelaw, bookbinder, who entered Mr. Chalmer's
 " service on 22nd November, 1825, as an apprentice boy, and con-
 " tinued with him till 17th July, 1839. I am now in the 71st year
 " of my age, with a hale body and a sound memory. If required,
 " my address is

" WILLIAM WHITELAW, Bookbinder,

" JAMES MACKAY, 66, Mitchell Street,

" GLASGOW.

" GLASGOW, 6th April, 1882."

" THE INVENTOR OF THE ADHESIVE STAMP.

" To the Editor of the *Dundee Advertiser*.

" SIR,

" With respect to the letter you inserted from me dated
 " the 6th April on the above subject, I desire to add that I can
 " positively fix the date of the occurrence as stated by me to have
 " been in August, 1834.

" I am, &c.,

" WILLIAM WHITELAW.

" GLASGOW, 16th May, 1882."

It will be seen that the writer of the above letters was fourteen years in the employment of Mr. Chalmers; subsequently, he has been thirty years in one service in Glasgow, where he now earns his living as a bookbinder. The statements of such a man—if no great scholar—carry conviction.

The next letter confirms the statement of William Whitelaw; and that which follows further fixes the date by evidence of the clearest nature, beyond dispute or doubt:—

“THE INVENTION OF ADHESIVE POSTAGE STAMPS.

“ To the Editor of the *Dundee Advertiser*.

“ SIR,

“ My attention has been called to a letter in the *Advertiser* on the above subject from Mr. Wm. Whitelaw, bookbinder, Glasgow, and I can fully corroborate him on the main facts he states as to the printing in Mr. James Chalmer's office of a sample of Adhesive Postage Stamps. I was then, prior to serving apprenticeship as an engineer, a boy in Mr. Chalmer's office—in fact “ P.D.” of the establishment—and I have a distinct recollection of clipping the sample stamps apart after they had been printed on slips containing about a dozen stamps, and the backs gummed over.

“ I am, &c.,

“ D. MAXWELL.

“ The WATERWORKS, HULL, 4th May, 1882.”

“THE INVENTION OF ADHESIVE POSTAGE STAMPS.

“ To the Editor of the *Dundee Advertiser*.

“ SIR,

“ With reference to the letter from me which appeared in your columns on the 8th current on the subject of Mr. James Chalmers' invention of the Adhesive Stamp, I beg to state further

“that the samples of same which I saw produced on his premises
 “was previous to the 1st November, 1834, as this is the date of my
 “indenture of apprenticeship with Messrs. Umpheston & Kerr,
 “millwrights, &c. I cannot say with any certainty how long before
 “the said date the samples were printed, but I have an impression
 “that it was in the summer of the same year.—namely, 1834.

“I am, &c.,

“D. MAXWELL,

“Engineer, Hull Corporation Waterworks.

“HULL, 15th May, 1882.”

Mr. Maxwell is now Superintendent Engineer of the Hull Waterworks ; his two brothers in Dundee are or have been members of the Town Council and magistrates of the borough.

The circumstances under which this Adhesive Stamp was invented, to be used for postage purposes, must now be explained. From the year 1832, and again more forcibly in 1834, the expediency of entirely abolishing the newspaper stamp (then 4d. on every paper!), and allowing newspapers to pass through the Post Office for one penny each, was advocated by the reformers of the period with some effect, but without practical result. Mr. Charles Knight, the eminent publisher, in a publication which he edited, termed *The Companion to the Newspaper*, proposed in the number for 1st June, 1834, that such postage should be collected by selling stamped wrappers of 1d., whereby to pre-pay the postage (see ante-page 17.) Here it was that Mr. Chalmers interposed with his invention—proposing an Adhesive Stamp for this purpose in place of a stamp impressed in the wrapper. I pointed to this proposal in my pamphlet of two years ago as the first and a distinct occasion which had admitted of the application of the Adhesive Stamp for postage purposes, viz.: “a uniform charge of 1d. on newspapers, prepaid by stamp.” further pointing out “a very important source of inspiration,” inasmuch that “Mr. Chalmers

“ had acted as printer and publisher of a local weekly newspaper,
 “ the *Dundee Chronicle*, for a short period during that interval, in
 “ which capacity the loss and trouble occasioned by spoilt stamped
 “ fourpenny sheets in the course of printing and issue would have
 “ pressed powerfully upon his invention for a remedy, and that this
 “ culminated in the proposal named is undoubted.” The evidence
 of Messrs. Whitelaw and Maxwell now show that I had rightly hit
 upon the occasion.

Thus, we have now abundant living evidence that Mr. Chalmers
 had conceived and advocated this plan “ before the year 1837 ”—
 “ years before it was adopted,” and lastly, evidence specifically to fix
 the date as having been in August, 1834.

Further confirmatory letters have since come forward, which I
 have pleasure in subjoining:—

“ THE INVENTION OF THE ADHESIVE STAMP.

“ To the Editor of the *Dundee Advertiser*.

“ SIR,

“ I was greatly interested in reading in your impression of
 “ the 24th instant Mr. Whitelaw’s clear but emphatic testimony
 “ to uphold the claim of the late Mr. James Chalmers to be the
 “ inventor of the Adhesive Post Office Stamp. It is not often that
 “ such carefully detailed evidence can be got, and at such a distance
 “ of time. If there are others who claim priority in this matter to
 “ Mr. Chalmers it is open to them to establish it by credible
 “ evidence equally distinct that they were before Mr. Chalmers in
 “ suggesting the Adhesive Stamp. There are still a few of our
 “ older citizens surviving, whose testimony might be of value as
 “ corroborating Mr. Whitelaw’s evidence, though that alone, in my
 “ opinion, would be enough. Such gentlemen as Dr. Boyd Baxter,
 “ ex-Provost Rough, Mr. Alexander Easson, and Mr. William Thoms,
 “ who not long since bore testimony to the interest taken by the
 “ leading citizens of Dundee, and the compliment paid to Mr.
 “ Chalmers for the part he took in promoting Post Office reform. It

" is to the honour of Dundee that one of her citizens has such a
 " well-sustained claim in this matter, and that Dundee may not
 " lose the honour, I humbly suggest that a small representative
 " Committee should be appointed—say the Secretary of the Cham-
 " ber of Commerce, the Provost, the Dean of Guild—to enquire
 " whether any one else has established by evidence as distinct as
 " Mr. Whitelaw's that they were before the late Mr. Chalmers in
 " inventing the Adhesive Stamp. I am sure there are those still
 " alive here and elsewhere who could furnish information on the
 " subject if the Committee advertised for it. Dundee has had
 " many distinguished citizens, and will doubtless have many
 " more; but let us not fail to pay honour where it is due.

" I am, &c.,

" P. WATSON.

" TOWER LEAZE, SNEYD PARK, BRISTOL.

" 26th April, 1882."

" THE INVENTION OF THE ADHESIVE STAMP.

" To the Editor of the *Dundee Advertiser*.

" SIR,

" Having observed Mr. Whitelaw's letter in your issue of
 " the 24th ult. regarding the above, allow me to corroborate his
 " statement in so far as I have heard my late father* (whom he
 " mentions in connection with it) relate the same over and over
 " again, and express his surprise that the Government did not at
 " the time accept and appreciate an invention so designed to
 " facilitate the working of one of their chief sources of revenue.
 " I have only thought of writing this after reading a letter in your
 " issue of Monday last from the pen of our townsman Mr. P. Watson,
 " who suggests that every information on the subject should be
 " gathered, so that the credit of so useful an invention may be
 " awarded to whom it is due.

" I am, &c.,

" JAMES PATON.

" 62, COMMERCIAL STREET, DUNDEE.

" May 3, 1882."

*Over 26 years in Mr. Chalmers' em-
 ployment.*

" 11, DERBY TERRACE,

" GLASGOW, 13th November, 1882.

" DEAR SIR,

" Being desirous to add anything in my power to
 " the evidence upon the subject of your late father's invention of
 " the ' Adhesive Stamp,' letters with reference to which have lately
 " appeared in the Dundee press, I beg to say that I was connected
 " with the Post Office in Dundee, from 1835 to October, 1842—
 " senior clerk. The then postmaster, Mr. Robert Bell, had many
 " and long conversations with your father, Mr. James Chalmers,
 " who took a very great interest in Post Office reform, on Post
 " Office matters. I am *perfectly certain* your father was the inventor
 " of the Adhesive Stamp; such in fact was quite a matter of
 " notoriety at the time. Being in Dundee on business last week,
 " I had an interview with the present Postmaster, Mr. William
 " Gibb—in my time a clerk with me at the Post Office—who quite
 " corroborates my conviction as to your father being the inventor of
 " the Adhesive Stamp—certainly not Sir Rowland Hill. Honour
 " to whom honour is due.

" Yours truly,

" JAMES R. NICOLL.

" PATRICK CHALMERS, Esq.,

" Wimbledon."

I am further enabled to add valuable testimony from one of the pioneers of Post Office reform, the co-temporary of Mr. Hume, Mr. Wallace, Mr. Chalmers, and of others who worked in that field prior to the period of Sir Rowland Hill. I refer to the Rev. Samuel Roberts, M.A., of Conway, North Wales, yet carrying on his ministry at the age of eighty-three.

" Fifty-two years ago, ten years before Rowland Hill," the Rev. Mr. Roberts "pleaded for a *Uniform Inland Penny Postage*," and for other Post Office improvements. "He repeatedly petitioned the

Government and memorialized the Post Office on the subject." But, as stated in my late pamphlet, this was "merely to encumber the official pigeon-holes of the day;" had Mr. Roberts *published* as Rowland Hill did, and so brought public opinion to bear upon his proposals, his name and deserts would have been better known. At the same time, it was the *system* as a whole proposed by Rowland Hill and copied, as I have shown, from this "Fifth Report," which carried the day, as without "pre-payment by stamp," a uniform Penny Postage was impracticable. How this idea on the part of Rowland Hill came about, Mr. Roberts in his printed statements now in circulation tells us:—"The Memorials of Samuel Roberts, seconded by appeals from some of his correspondents induced the Government, about the year 1835, to appoint a Commission of Inquiry,* and that Commission, in a Report published in 1836, recommended that the postage of trade circulars, prices-current, and such like documents, should be one penny." (This is the fifth Report I have brought to light, comprising besides the uniform Penny Postage, the principles of charge by weight and prepayment by stamp, at the rate of 1d. the $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.)

Soon afterwards," says Mr. Roberts:—"Sir Rowland Hill took up the Penny idea and extended its usefulness. He worked perseveringly for reform, but it should be remembered it is not right to honor him as the *originator* of the Penny system. The *plan* had been drawn and he did the work."

"Sir Rowland Hill was nobly rewarded for his ability and perseverance in carrying out a scheme important portions of which had been suggested and recommended by others. He deserved honor as an able *copyist* of other men's plans; but it was not fair to honor and reward him as the *inventor* of the uniform Penny Postage system. It really is no honor to his memory that he grasped to himself all the rewards and honors of the postal reform of those days."

Here, from the pen of a Post Office reformer of fifty-two years ago (yet alive and at work) fully acquainted with all the circumstances, is confirmed the very statements put forward by me through mere investigation with respect to the original and foundation of

* Introduced and carried in Parliament by Mr. Wallace, as already stated (p. 5).

the Penny Postage system of 1837, hitherto understood, and so handed down to us as having been "the sole and undisputed invention of Sir Rowland Hill."

But this, though the chief, is not the only field in which Mr. Roberts has laboured for the public good; other branches of philanthropy have had his able suggestions in advance of the age, so much so, that now many of our public men have come forward to aid his declining years by pecuniary support. The list of subscribers includes such well-known names as those of Mr. Samuel Morley, Mr. Bright, Mr. Rathbone, the Earl of Derby, Sir Edward Baines, the Duke of Westminster, Mr. Herbert Gladstone, Lord Dalhousie, the Prime Minister (£50), from Her Majesty's Royal Bounty Fund, &c.

"Some friends," Mr. Roberts goes on, "acquainted with the pioneer appeals of the writer for a uniform system of Inland Penny Postage, and other postal conveniences, complimented him as being the inventor, or suggestor of the 'Adhesive Stamp,' but he had at once to disown that honor; for he was not then up to that glorious pass in the progress of postal reform. He had heard that some keen business patriot had suggested the plan, and that it had been accepted by the authorities of the Post Office. It was long supposed and was generally asserted that it had been invented by Sir Rowland Hill, or one of his subordinates, and he took the honor; but it is now known that it was a thoughtful, calculating, unassuming, patriotic reformer of Dundee, of the name of James Chalmers, that invented the 'Adhesive Stamp,' and it was very unjust in the authorities of the Post Office to withhold from the real inventor, and to grasp to themselves, the reward and honor due to another for an invention that has proved so essential. Patrick Chalmers, son of the said James Chalmers of Dundee, has given us in his pamphlets fresh and very interesting chapters in the history of the Post Office reform of those days. The said James Chalmers, the inventor of the 'Adhesive Stamp,' though overlooked by Post Office officials, was honored by his neighbours who were well acquainted with his suggestion: and he will be honored by future generations as the inventor of the 'Adhesive Stamp.'"

Since seeing my pamphlets, Mr. Roberts has favoured me with some correspondence, from which I give extracts. On 24th March, 1882, he writes:—

"Thanks for your letter of 22nd inst., and for the circular containing the statements you addressed to the Corporation of the City of London as to the history of the Penny Postage system."

"You make out a clear case that Sir Rowland Hill was a "copyist" of the scheme, and not its inventor; and the conduct of the Committee of his 'Memorial Fund' has been palpably unfair in persevering to honor and reward him for public services that had been conceived and commenced by others."

" 25th March.

"You have at last convinced even the Committee of the Rowland Hill Memorial, that the Penny Postage scheme was not his invention, but only a concealed copy. And it was a noble victory, for it is of great and lasting importance to know the *truth* in a matter of such public and general importance."

" JUNE 8th.

* * * " I sincerely rejoice that you have made so clear and convincing a case that Sir Rowland Hill was not the *originator* of the Penny Postage system.

" You have rendered a very important service to a large branch of our country's history. In haste and weakness, faithfully,

" Your Servant and Admirer,

" SAMUEL ROBERTS."

The above from one not only conversant with the circumstances, but who personally was one of the pioneers of Post Office reform, yet still alive to relate and confirm all I have advanced, forms testimony of the most agreeable and conclusive nature.

The great merit of Mr. Chalmers' invention, when applied to letters, does not only lie in its being an easy and practical way of doing what was wanted, but further in that it solved the paper difficulty which had stood in the way equally in the proposals of Mr. Hill and of the Select Committee of the House of Commons. By this plan the paper trade was not interfered with—the trade sold the paper, the Post Office the stamp.

It will have been noticed that Mr. Chalmers displayed his plan to his fellow townsmen, including the Postmaster, only too anxious that the same should be generally known. Amongst others, Mr. Hume knew of it—and it would be strange indeed if Mr. Knight himself, the proposer of the Impressed Stamped Wrapper, was not in one way or another, in correspondence with the firm as with other London publishers, or through his travellers, made acquainted of this rival idea on the part of Mr. Chalmers. At that period Mr. Knight was publisher of the works of the Useful Knowledge Society—the “Penny Cyclopædia,” the “Pictorial Bible,” the “Penny Magazine,” the popular works of the day, which it was Mr. Chalmers’ business to procure and sell. Both were ardent Post Office reformers, and Mr. Knight subsequently was publisher of Mr. Hill’s Pamphlet of 1837.

The Select Committee of the House of Commons appointed to consider the Penny Postage Scheme of Mr. Rowland Hill, met in November, 1837. In a former publication, I said that it was from Mr. Chalmers as a source, spreading through Mr. Hume and Mr. Wallace, that the Adhesive Stamp came to be adopted in 1839. From a letter written by him, of date 18th May, 1840, now published by Mr. Pearson Hill in his paper contributed to the Philatelic Society (afterwards given, page 63) the link of proof is now supplied that Mr. Chalmers at once laid his plan before Mr. Wallace, the Chairman of that Committee, and which Mr. Wallace acknowledged under date 9th December, 1837, saying such would “be duly submitted to the Committee.” This same letter of 18th May, 1840, also shows that Mr. Chalmers sent his plan of the Adhesive Stamp to Mr. Chalmers, M.P. for the Montrose Burghs, also a member of Mr. Wallace’s Committee, who replied that he had laid the plan before the Committee.

With this plan of Mr. Chalmers’ before the Committee, let us now notice what was there said with respect to such a plan of a gummed or affixed stamp. Mr. Rowland Hill, in his evidence, when asked what was to be done where a person could not obtain a

stamped cover, had pointed out that, as every letter must be sent to a Post Office, where it would be compulsory to keep stamped covers, every letter must be sent to a place where covers are kept; but, he added, where a letter must be re-directed at a Post Office, to avoid that trouble (and, as he elsewhere explained, where the messenger is unable to write, and no penny can be taken in payment) he had proposed that small pieces of paper, bearing the stamp only, having a glutinous wash at the back might, under such circumstances, be used. Various opinions are given with respect to the gummed label, adverse on the whole. Mr. Dickinson, a paper-maker, urged that every protection against forgery would be attained by using his "peculiar paper" for Mr. Hill's plan of stamped covers; and, being supported in this by other witnesses, Mr. Hill's plan, with this safeguard, the "peculiar paper," against forgery, was adopted, as already stated (see ante, p. 20).

One witness, however, and this no less a man than Mr. Cobden, is strongly in favour of the Adhesive Stamp. On being referred to Mr. Hill's plan of stamped covers, he at once states his opinion to be, preferentially, in favour of "a small vignette" . . . "something to be affixed by the party with gum on the letter."*

The use made by Mr. Wallace of this suggestion has been already shown in his speech of July 5th, 1839. In the dilemma of the Government as to the difficulty with the paper-makers under Mr. Hill's plan, he in the Commons, and Lord Ashburton in the Lords, interpose in favour of such a plan, and Mr. Warburton presses for plans to be applied for from the public best adapted to the prevention of forgery, and which advice is now taken.

* Is it too much to assume that Mr. Hume and Mr. Cobden may have conversed about this Penny Postage Scheme—had spoken of the difficulty in the way of carrying it out—and that Mr. Hume had told of the plan proposed by a busy-minded postal reformer in his part of the country—the Adhesive Stamp. Mr. Hume himself was not a witness before this Committee, nor a member of it, and so all the more likely, with Mr. Cobden, to have been one of those who, as Mr. Wallace says, had put the plan before the Treasury direct.

THE TREASURY.

ON the passing of the Bill, Mr. Hill was relegated to the Treasury for the purpose of superintending its execution, and a Treasury Circular of date 23rd August, 1839, was issued, inviting plans from the public for "stamped covers, stamped paper, and stamps to be used separately," that is, "adhesive stamps, as suggestions already received," to quote from Mr. Pearson Hill's "paper." A large number of plans were sent in, but no one plan was apparently found to meet all requirements as against the risk of forgery and otherwise, and all were rejected. Mr. Chalmers sent in his plan of an Adhesive Stamp as already laid before Mr. Wallace, in December, 1837, and brought forward by him in his speech of 5th July, 1839. In that speech Mr. Wallace stated that, besides having been laid before himself, this plan had been recommended to the Treasury and the public offices. But it has to be borne in mind that an interval of a year and a half had elapsed betwixt the date of that speech and the laying of his plan by Mr. Chalmers before Mr. Wallace, and during which interval the plan, as distinguished from that of Mr. Hill, was discussed before the Select Committee. Mr. Cobden strongly recommended such a plan in preference to the impressed stamped covers of Mr. Hill. That he or others had, therefore, recommended it to the Treasury prior to July, 1839; that there were *now*, in reply to the invitation from the Treasury for plans, as Mr. Pearson Hill informs us in his "paper," forty-nine plans and designs recommending the Adhesive Stamp, and on that principle, interferes in no way with the preferential claim of Mr. Chalmers, though such materi-

ally accounts for the decision Mr. Hill and the Treasury now arrived at in adopting the same.

For such was the decision arrived at. Messrs. Bacon & Petch, the eminent engravers, were called in to provide a suitable die, and to contract for the supply of stamps, to be printed on sheets of gummed paper; and here at length we have the Adhesive Stamp, exactly on the principle as described and proved to have been got up in Mr. Chalmers' premises in Dundee, in August, 1834.

The next step was to issue the following "Treasury Minute" of date 26th December, 1839, explaining to the public how to proceed, and in what manner the new Penny Postage was to be carried out:—

EXTRACT OF TREASURY MINUTE, DATED 26TH DECEMBER, 1839.

Their Lordships, upon full consideration, have decided to require that, as far as practicable, the postage of letters shall be prepaid, and to effect such prepayment by means of stamps. Their Lordships are of opinion that the convenience of the public will be consulted, more especially at first, by issuing stamps of various kinds, in order that every one may select that description of stamp which is most suitable to his own peculiar circumstances; and with a view of affording an ample choice, their Lordships are pleased to direct that the following Stamps be prepared:—

First—Stamped Covers; the stamp being struck on pieces of paper the size of half a sheet of quarto letter-paper.

Second—Stamped Envelopes; the stamp being struck on pieces of paper of a lozenge form, of which the stationers and others may manufacture envelopes.

Third—Adhesive Stamps; or stamps on small pieces of paper with a glutinous wash at the back, which may be attached to letters either before or after they are written. And

Fourth—Stamps to be struck on paper of any description which the public may send to the Stamp Office for that purpose.

The paper for the first, second, and third kinds of stamps to be peculiar in its

water-mark, or some other feature, but to be supplied to Government by competition.

My Lords direct that the Commissioners of Stamps and Taxes and the Commissioners of Excise should receive the official directions to take the necessary steps, in conjunction with this Board and with the Postmaster-General, for the preparation of the stamps herein enumerated.

* * * * *

On the use of stamps, however, my Lords have fully decided; they will be prepared with the least possible delay, and, when ready, due notice will be given of their introduction.*

The first thing to notice with respect to the above "Minute" is the issue of stamps as originally proposed by Mr. Hill, but as modified by the Select Committee, with the object of preventing forgery. The First and Second in this way authorize the issue of stamps upon two different sizes or shapes of paper, upon the plan of the Committee, to be "peculiar" in some feature, and to be selected from the tender most likely to secure the desired end—the prevention of forgery—and to be under Excise supervision. Pass on to the Fourth, and here we have one of the most singular proposals possible to imagine. It will be remembered that the paper-makers and the Government objected to the proposed stamped covers of Nos. 1 and 2—it was unbearable monopoly. To meet this objection, then, we have No. 4. To avoid this monopoly, permission is given to *any one* to send in his own paper to be stamped, of any sort or size, from any part of the country and back again. The transmission would be a clumsy, tiresome, and expensive sort of business of itself; but what about the forgery question? After declaring by Nos. 1 and 2, that forgery can only be prevented by the most stringent regulations, that the safeguard is to be in the *paper* and not in the *stamp*,—after having recited in the Penny Postage Act of Parliament: "Which *paper* shall have such distinguishing words, letters, figures, marks, lines, threads, or other devices, marked into or visible in the substance of the same. and the said Commissioners of Excise shall from time to time order

* The Adhesive Stamp came into use on May 6th, 1840.

"and direct; and all such paper shall be made and manufactured under such regulations, and by such person or persons as the said Commissioners of Excise shall appoint or contract with for that purpose." Persons "receiving or having in possession paper provided for postage covers or stamps, before being stamped and issued for use, manufacturing or using paper similar to that used for postage covers," to be guilty of misdemeanour and subject to imprisonment. After, and notwithstanding all this, this Minute positively opens the door to forgery on the widest, easiest, and most irrepressible scale! leaving the fair trader at the mercy of those who "stamped their own paper," or were supplied by some organized system. With one hand the Treasury Minute, following the Act, hedges round the issue of stamped envelopes by the most stringent (and what turned out to be ineffectual) measures; with the other it clears the way to the widest and most certain plunder, not alone of the revenue, but of the fair trader too. A more inconsistent muddle was never issued from a public office. Even the "peculiar paper" became largely sent over from Calais and Boulogne, ready stamped*; so, hedge it round as how you might, the Impressed Stamp was found impracticable. It was tried, found wanting, and as with the Mulready envelope, left the Adhesive Stamp in possession of the field.

What then saved the scheme? No. 3, the Adhesive Stamp. And who? The man "who took it at the birth, nourished it at the pinch, and has tended it ever since" with this stamp. And the man who supplied this working plan not only supplied a working plan, but he saved the scheme of Mr. Hill for the country."

The circumstances attending the "decision" to adopt the

* "I know that stamps are sold abroad, at Calais and Boulogne, and we are in correspondence with the French office about it. If these stamps, sold at Calais and Boulogne, are manufactured abroad, the revenue may be defrauded to a great extent, and I am not aware that there is any power to prevent their being manufactured abroad." (Colonel Maberley, before Select Committee on Postage, 1843.)

Adhesive Stamp are disclosed in evidence given before a Select Committee of the House of Commons in the year 1852, upon what is known as "Archer's Patent." A Mr. Archer had, in the year 1847, submitted to the authorities a plan for perforating the sheets of Postage Stamps, such as the public is now familiar with. Up to the time of its adoption the stamps were torn off, or cut off with scissors, or a pen-knife. This invention of Mr. Archer, as every one can see, is an immense improvement, and the expense immaterial. For five long years, however, Mr. Archer pressed his improvement upon the authorities without avail. At length some Members of Parliament took up his case, and Mr. Muntz obtained a Select Committee to enquire into the matter, who at once saw its merits and insisted upon the thing being done, and Mr. Archer got £4,000 for his invention.*

Now, before this Committee, Mr. Hill and Mr. Bacon, the contractor for the supply of Postage Stamps, gave valuable evidence as to what took place at the Treasury after all the plans had been examined and rejected. In considering the replies of Mr. Hill it will be borne in mind that the Adhesive Stamp had carried the day and saved the scheme, while the Mulready envelope or other impressed stamps under Nos. 1 and 2 of the Treasury Minute had proved unsuccessful.

MR. ROWLAND HILL, EXAMINED 30TH MARCH, 1852.

Question 962. Chairman, Mr. Muntz: I believe you are the original inventor or the proposer, of the penny postage stamp?—*Yes.*

963. How many years is it since it was first introduced?—It was in 1840 that would be twelve years since.

964. And you were one of the parties, I believe, who were appointed to investigate the best mode of carrying out the manufacture of the stamps, were you not?—It was left very much with me; the investigation was carried on in the Treasury, and I acted under the instructions of Sir Francis Baring, who was then Chancellor of the Exchequer.

* For such as may have access to "Hansard," Vol. 142, for June, 1856, an interesting debate having reference to this subject will be found.

965. And you went through an extensive examination of the best mode of manufacturing the stamps, so that they should not be subject to forgery or fraud?—Yes, in conjunction with the Stamp Office, I made that investigation.

966. And after a long examination and deliberation you determined that the present mode was the only safe mode of doing it?—That was the decision of the Treasury, on my recommendation.

973. And since you have proved this mode of carrying it out for twelve years, has there been any forgery committed upon the present plan?—There have been one or two attempts, but they were detected immediately.

981. Have you seen Mr. Archer's plan for piercing?—I have seen the results—not the machine itself.

982. What is your opinion as to the advisableness of adopting such a principle?—My opinion is, it is advisable. I have stated that opinion in a minute addressed to the Postmaster-General, which is now before the Committee. I do not speak strongly upon the matter; my opinion is it would be useful and acceptable to the public to a certain extent.

991. The Committee of 1837-8, for enquiring into the postage, do not appear to have entered to any extent into the difficulty of forgery with those different systems?—I think not, according to my recollection; they took the opinion of the Stamp Office, which was to the effect that practical security against forgery could be obtained.

992. Their principal hope as a preventive of forgery was in adopting a distinctive sort of paper for envelopes, was it not?—I cannot recollect. I should mention, perhaps, that immediately after my plan was adopted by the Legislature, the Treasury issued an invitation to the public to suggest means of constructing stamps, and they offered premiums, or rewards, for the best means suggested. The result was that about 3,000 plans, I think, were sent into the Treasury, and the first duty I had to perform was to look over these 3,000 plans, to select those I thought best, and to recommend to the Treasury what individuals should be rewarded; and using those plans, and making use, of course, of the investigations which I myself had previously made to advise the Treasury as to the best mode to be adopted. Of those plans, several, I recollect, consisted of proposals for surface printing, some of them submitted by men of great eminence as printers, and fully acquainted with the subject of printing.

1004. What do you think is the great preventive of forgery now?—The extreme difficulty, amounting, as I believe, almost to impossibility, of transferring the stamp, and then printing from the transfer. The danger of forgery consists almost entirely in using the genuine stamp as a means of obtaining an imitation.

1007. Would not the letter so supposed to be a forgery be sent to the headquarters of the Post Office?—It was thought at the time that any considerable sale of stamps so printed, all having the same letter, and being sold separately, not in sheets, would necessarily attract attention and lead to inquiry; and the fact by some means or other we did succeed in obtaining a stamp which costs very little indeed in the production, and which does, so far as we can judge from an experience of twelve years, afford great security to the revenue; and here I think I ought to add that I consider the Government and the public greatly indebted to Messrs. Bacon and Petch for that stamp, for we were obliged to rely mainly upon them for suggesting the means of execution.

1008. Chairman: They were the first proposers of this plan?—They were the proposers of the plan *in its details*. When it had been decided that such a stamp as that which is now issued should be adopted, we called in Messrs. Bacon and Petch to advise as to the means, and they took great pains and incurred, I have no doubt, considerable expense in giving advice; and hence it is that the first contract which they entered into gave them a somewhat larger remuneration, probably, than would have been the result of competition.

1046. Who were the parties in conjunction with yourself who investigated the different modes of engraving and preparation of the stamps prior to the adoption of the plan now in use?—I think the investigation rested almost entirely with myself, it being understood I was to apply to any one I pleased in matters of difficulty.

1047. It was you, principally, who conducted the investigation?—Yes, it was.

MR. BACON'S EVIDENCE, 20TH APRIL, 1852.

1690. I believe that you have engraved and printed the postage stamps since the first commencement of that system?—We have.

1691. Your own professional business is that of a copper-plate engraver?—Engraver and printer.

1692. Being first-rate copper-plate engravers, you came into contact with this business first, when it was first introduced?—I will tell you how. We were not among any of the **200** or **300** applicants for the prizes, and for the work of the Government. So far from favouritism towards us, we did not even apply, and never had dreamt of having the work to do; but *after the whole of the plans had been investigated*, and from some cause or other not being found to answer, then a gentleman, Mr. Cole, came to us and said, "Why did you not put in for this contract? I answered, "We cannot put in; the probability is the Government want some cheap kind of thing that copper-plate cannot compete with, and your size is too large." I said, "You want envelopes, and steel plates could not be made

at the price the Government would give." He said, "Oh, you are quite deceived, an inch would do for us." Then I replied, "We can compete;" and we took a little time, when we promised to give him everything he wanted. We made drawings that were approved of, and from that hour to this we have done everything we pledged ourselves to do.

Before dealing with the remarkable reply of "Yes," in answer to the first question of the foregoing evidence, it should be noted that the Adhesive Stamp had proved free from forgery—that Mr. Hill could not recollect that his safeguards against forgery had been superseded by the Committee with a proposal of their own for a "peculiar paper," nor could he recollect what that proposal was. This is the more remarkable, looking at the restrictions of the Penny Postage Act itself, looking equally at the terms of the Treasury Minute of 26th December, 1839 (see ante—page 47) *Mr. Hill's own Minute*, authorizing the issue of the Impressed Stamp under the safeguards and restrictions deemed necessary by the Committee. One or more of this 1852 Committee might recollect these matters. Mr. Hill could *not* recollect. Was it that Mr. Hill had been disappointed with the results of his Impressed Stamp, and the less said about it the better; while the marked success of the Adhesive Stamp, that stamp universally used, and which saved his scheme, showed him that was the one to stick to.

But what we have principally to note in this evidence is Mr. Hill's reply to Question 1,008—"When it had been decided," &c. It was *then* and *then only*, towards the end of the year 1839, after having applied to the public for plans, after having examined these plans, that the "decision" to adopt the Adhesive Stamp was taken, and Messrs. Bacon & Petch communicated with on the subject.*

* The Report of Committee on Archer's Patent gives copy of agreement with Messrs. Perkins, Bacon, & Petch, for providing a die—an engraved design of Her Majesty's head reduced from Wyon's City medal—printed on sheets of gummed paper, at 6d. per 1000 stamps, dated 5th May, 1843, as before provided and now continued. Renewed 5th July, 1851, for five years, at 3d.

We thus at length find the Adhesive Stamp adopted, and a contract made for its supply. And to whom do we now find the merit of this stamp to have been attributed by Mr. Hill? Who was its inventor and proposer? Was this merit attributed to Mr. Wallace, or to Mr. Warburton, or to Lord Ashburton, in consequence of their timely interposition under the difficulties of the Government? Was it to Mr. Cobden, who had strongly recommended it, in preference to Mr. Hill's plan, before the Committee? Was it to Mr. Chalmers, or to any other of the forty-nine competitors who suggested plans upon this principle in reply to the invitation from the Treasury? No; to none of these. Mr. Hill determined that to no one other than himself did this merit belong. He was both the inventor and proposer. This was his decision, though no public intimation was given to this effect, nor of the grounds upon which Mr. Hill arrived at same. These grounds the competitors and the public, *then* well acquainted with the circumstances, were competent to criticise and to challenge; but it is only a generation which knows nothing of Mr. Hill's original proposals, nothing of the difficulties which beset the carrying out of the scheme, or of the application to the public for plans—a generation which has simply *grown up* in the belief that Rowland Hill has done everything—that these grounds are announced. And what these grounds are, we now find in "The Life of Sir Rowland Hill" lately published, page 271.

Shortly after the publication of his pamphlet early in 1837, Mr. Hill was called upon to give evidence before the Commissioners of Inquiry, then enquiring into the local or Two-penny Post arrangements, the subject of their Ninth Report. When asked his proposals as to pre-payment, he hands in the proposals in his pamphlet for an Impressed Stamp, as already given here at pages 17 and 18, but to which he now adds as follows:—

"The only objection which occurs to me to the universal adoption of this plan is the following:—Persons unaccustomed to write letters would perhaps be at a loss how to proceed. They might send or take their letters to the Post Office

“without having had recourse to the stamp. It is true that, on presentation of the letter, the receiver, instead of accepting the money as postage, might take it as the price of a cover or band, in which the bringer might immediately enclose the letter, and then redirect it. But the bringer would sometimes be unable to write. Perhaps this difficulty may be obviated by using a bit of paper just large enough to bear the stamp, and covered at the back with a glutinous wash, which the bringer might, by applying a little moisture, attach to the back of the letter, so as to avoid the necessity of re-directing it.” * “Ninth Report of Commissioners for Post Office Inquiry, pp. 32, 33. Same substantially, ‘Post Office Reform,’ second edition, pp. 41-45.”

On the strength of this passing remark, consequently, as to what was to be done in a most exceptional case, Mr. Hill attributed to himself the merit, not alone of being the *proposer* of the Adhesive Stamp for the purpose of carrying out *in its entirety* the Penny Postage Scheme, but of being the actual *inventor* of same. And Sir Rowland Hill goes on:—

“It is curious to observe, by the last paragraph of the above, that the Adhesive Stamp, now of universal and almost exclusive use, was originally devised as a mere expedient for exceptional cases, the stamped cover, which it has displaced, being the means of payment which was expected to become general. Although I hoped at this time that, in order to relieve the Post Office of all account keeping, and to prevent all avoidable delay in delivery, prepayment would in the end be made universal, yet, knowing how much better it is to induce than to compel, I proposed that in the outset, at least, the alternative should be allowed, the old rate of twopence or threepence remaining undiminished where payment was deferred.” (“Ninth Report of Commissioners for Post Office Inquiry, pp. 38-40.”)

From all this the modern reader carries off the impression that somehow or other Mr. Hill's *original* plan provided for *both* stamps, a situation not arrived at, as we have seen, until the end of 1839, when, after having investigated the plans sent in, it was “decided” that the Adhesive Stamp should be adopted, and Messrs. Bacon and Petch called in. And it is upon the above suggestion as to what might be done in a most exceptional case (where a stamp of some sort was to be compulsory—*where no penny could be received*

in payment), that Mr. Hill considered himself entitled to all the merit of the invention and ultimate entire adoption of the Adhesive Stamp; and we are referred to this Ninth Report and to this Second Edition for the proposal quoted as being the grounds upon which his claim rests. But who was to look up, or who *has* looked up these documents of over forty years old, and so find *what more* they said, and which Sir Rowland Hill has not thought it necessary or desirable to state? Though *these two* are, as Sir Rowland Hill says in his foot-note, the "same substantially," on looking them up a most substantial omission discloses itself, making just all the difference betwixt leaving a proposal in force and leaving no necessity for it whatever—no possible opportunity for utilising it. Sir Rowland Hill tells us he left the alternative of paying twopence where "payment was deferred;" but what he does *not* tell us—what is *not* made clear—is that Mr. Rowland Hill restored the option immediately of paying the penny, by saying:—

"Probably, however, the preferable plan, in the first instance "at least, would be to adopt a combination of the two modes.* "giving to the public an option, as regards packets not exceeding "the half-ounce, to use the stamp *or pay the penny*. If it were "required that all packets exceeding the half-ounce should be "enclosed in stamped covers (and, the number being comparatively "small, and their admission for the most part a novelty, no one "could object to such an obligation), the receiver would have to "account for penny letters only, and the index of the tell-tale "stamp would at all times exhibit the exact amount of postage "received. No operation could be more simple or more free from "the possibility of error."

This very substantial paragraph, *omitted by Sir Rowland Hill*, restores, it will be seen, the option of paying the penny, so that even the illiterate person who could not where necessary re-direct a letter

* The two modes—that is, the first mode of simply paying the money with the letter or letters; the second mode, prepayment by Impressed Stamp. (See ante, p. 17.)

at a Post Office, had only to pay the penny (*stamped covers* being "required" for all packets exceeding the half-ounce), no bit of paper covered at the back with a glutinous wash being wanted to get him out of his difficulties. Was it quite ingenuous, therefore, of Sir Rowland Hill to omit this important restoration of paying the penny in cash restored by Mr. Rowland Hill? For what is the effect of this restoration? Simply to leave matters in the second edition of his pamphlet practically as they were in the first edition. No gummed stamp was wanted or asked for, so long as the option of paying the penny in cash existed; and such existed for years after 1840. "The optional pre-payment in money of inland letters," says the Post Office, in courteous reply to my enquiry, "appears to have ceased at the Provincial Offices generally on the 13th Sept., 1847; at receiving offices in the rural districts on the 1st July, 1850; then at branch and receiving offices in London on 1st August, 1852; and finally at St. Martin's-le-Grand on the 16th August, 1855. (Signed, G. HARDY.)" So, up to these respective periods and localities, Mr. Hill's bit of gummed paper was not asked for—would never have been wanted, and after these dates *only* where a letter had to be re-directed at a Post Office and the messenger could not write.

It is then, upon the strength of these passing words with regard to this very exceptional case, for a moment pre-supposing the compulsory use of a stamp of some sort, but at once restoring the option to pay the penny in money (the paragraph restoring which option being left un-quoted by Sir Rowland Hill), that Mr. Hill attributed to himself, and this under the circumstances we have seen, and upon grounds not made public when they ought to have been so made public, the merit of the invention of and the proposal of the Adhesive Stamp in its entirety for the purpose of carrying out his scheme. The fallacy of this far-fetched conclusion will be at once apparent to any impartial mind, and the more so the more it is examined. The question here is, "Who proposed what was wanted, the universal adoption of the Adhesive Stamp for the purpose of carrying out this scheme?" *Not* Mr. Hill. So bent

was he from first to last upon the universal adoption of the Impressed Stamp, that this bit of gummed paper is only brought upon the scene, and this only for a moment, in order "to obviate " the only objection he can think of" towards its universal adoption. How, then, can the Adhesive Stamp be claimed by or for one only too anxious for the *universal* adoption of the Impressed Stamp? If Mr. Hill thought he wanted the Adhesive Stamp, why did he not say so? He did not say so because he did not think of wanting it. Why have troubled the public and not at once have called in Bacon and Petch? It was only *after* having troubled the public, found the strong opinion in favour of the Adhesive Stamp, after as well as before the application to the public, with no better plan offering, that he "decided" and set about it. If in any way contemplated, why was not its issue included amongst the "powers" asked for? No "power" was asked for, because it was not contemplated. A "power" was asked for the only stamp contemplated, the Impressed Stamp covers. If Mr. Hill's plan included the Adhesive Stamp—that stamp which solved the paper difficulty and left the trade free—how came it that the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his dilemma what to do with the paper makers knew nothing to that effect? "If it were to go forth to-morrow morning," says he, on the 5th July, 1839, "that the Government had proposed, and the " Committee had adopted the plan of Mr. Rowland Hill, the " necessary result would be to spread a conviction abroad that, as " a stamped cover *was absolutely to be used in all cases*, which " stamped covers were to be made by one single manufacturer. " alarm would be felt lest a monopoly would be created, to the " serious detriment of the other members of a most useful and " important trade." Glad, only too glad, would have been the Chancellor to have found the Adhesive Stamp in Mr. Hill's plan. But it was not there—"a stamped cover was absolutely to be used in all cases." How was this if Mr. Hill's plan included the Adhesive Stamp? And how was it that, equally with the Government, Mr. Wallace, and Mr. Warburton, and Lord Ashburton, did not know, but had to interpose and ask for some consideration of such a plan?

And it will now be asked here, how does Sir Rowland Hill in his "Life" explain the words and the actions of all these gentlemen at the period of the Bill, if his plan was understood to propose, or had provided in even however small a way, for the use of the Adhesive Stamp, that stamp, "which it is curious to observe," had unexpectedly carried the day. Sir Rowland Hill solves this difficulty in the easiest possible way, by simply *saying nothing on the subject*, by making *no allusion whatever* to such matters; and as the modern reader knows nothing of such matters, believing that Rowland Hill did everything, he is not disappointed at the absence of any such explanation! Lastly, if Mr. Hill's plan included the Adhesive Stamp, how came it that the press and the public knew nothing about it; for what says the "Times," so late as the 30th August, 1839, just a week after the Treasury had advertised for "plans." "The Penny Postage will commence, we learn, on the 1st January next. It is intended that stamped envelopes shall be sold at every Post Office, so that stationers and other shopkeepers may, as well as the public, supply themselves at a minute's notice.—*Cheltenham Examiner.*" Where is the Adhesive Stamp here?

No. At the end of 1833, *after* having examined the plans and found nothing better, did Mr. Hill then, and not till then, "decide" upon the Adhesive Stamp. And if he then did so, who initiated that decision? Was it not the man who, having invented the plan in 1834, laid it before Mr. Wallace in December, 1837, James Chalmers, of Dundee?

The grounds, then, upon which Mr. Hill attributed to himself the sole merit of this stamp are, I submit, wholly mistaken and untenable, and in not having published these grounds for the information of the competitors and the public, it may be that Mr. Hill himself had a suspicion to the same effect; but, "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 this reform." So, *after* the "decision," this far-

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fetched and passing remark was seized upon, this straw was caught at—a straw and nothing more.

Then, did this passing remark describe an "invention" on the part of Mr. Hill, or merely an acquired idea? This remark of Mr. Hill with respect to the bit of paper with a glutinous wash at the back shows he *knew* of some such principle as the Adhesive Stamp for postage purposes; but did he "*invent*" it? as, if not, there is nothing more to be said; as far as he is concerned the question is disposed of. If an invention, why did he not bring in his remark in the First Edition of his pamphlet? What took place in the interval—(while it should also be noted that Mr. Hill had issued privately his pamphlet amongst those interested in Post Office reform before even publishing his first edition)—why Mr. Hill became the lion of Post Office reforming circles; every suggestion was laid at his service; he was invited to give evidence before the Commissioners. But a space of two years and a half had elapsed since Mr. Chalmers had conceived and advocated this invention, sufficient, and more than sufficient, for this idea on the part of one who had done some service in the cause to have become well known—a stock piece—a current notion—in those circles of which Mr. Hill had just become the prominent figure. What was the failing of Sir Rowland Hill, as already too clearly shown? What are we to say, now that it has transpired that the principles and figures of the Penny Postage scheme itself—those principles which we have been given to understand "he first laid down"—that system, hitherto supposed to have been his "sole and undisputed invention," turn out after all to have been only a copy—acquired ideas—from beginning to end. What are we to say to those vital omissions in the "Life of Sir Rowland Hill," written by himself, just pointed out, and only capable of being discovered by looking up the Blue Books and events of over forty years ago? Do we not find displayed here a wholesale system of assuming as invention what were only copies; of omitting to notice what it was not convenient to notice; of forgetting what it was not convenient to recollect? And are we, with all this before us, to conclude that

this Adhesive Stamp *alone* was an invention, and an invention under such circumstances? The answer, I submit, is plain—and if not an invention the case is disposed of. Our acknowledgments are due to Mr. Hill for having *adopted* the plan in 1839, but for nothing more; he neither invented it, nor was he the first to propose it.

THE CORRESPONDENCE.



SOMETIME ago, in referring to me before the Commissioners of Sewers of the City of London, Mr. Pearson Hill said or wrote he had found a correspondence which had taken place betwixt Mr. Chalmers and the then Mr. Rowland Hill, on the subject of this Adhesive Stamp. Mr. Chalmers, it seems, had put forward his claim, Mr. Hill had replied. Several letters appear to have passed, and Mr. Chalmers had ultimately withdrawn in a letter of date 18th May, 1840. Mr. Pearson Hill, however, did not produce any of these letters on that occasion, but in the paper contributed to the Philatelic Society, that letter, or, as he states, "rather a long extract from it," is now given. Now, when a claim is made and ultimately withdrawn, the value of the withdrawal will depend upon the value of the representation made to the person claiming. It would have been well, therefore, had Mr. Pearson Hill given us the letters of both parties; but even with only such portion of the correspondence before me as Mr. Pearson Hill has thought proper or necessary to produce, I view this letter of 18th May, 1840, without dismay.

This letter or extract, then, is as follows:—

" DUNDEE, 18th May, 1840.

" ROWLAND HILL, Esq.

" SIR,

" I received your favour of 18th January last, relative

to my claim for the 'Postage Adhesive Stamp,' for which I thank you, as it certainly would have been far from satisfactory to me to have received only the Treasury Circular, refusing my claim without any explanation.

"My reason for not replying sooner proceeded from a wish to see the stamps in operation, which, although not general, they now are. I, therefore, conceive it only an act of justice to myself to state to you what induced me to become a competitor; for in that capacity I never would have appeared if I had known that any one, particularly you, had suggested anything like the same scheme. But having given publicity to my plan nearly two years before the Treasury Minute of August last appeared, inviting competition, and having in my possession Mr. Wallace, M.P.'s letter of 9th December, 1837, acknowledging receipt of my plan, wherein he says:—'These and several others I have received will be duly submitted to the Committee on Postage;' also your letter of 3rd March, 1838, a copy of which I prefix; and one from Mr. Chalmers, M.P., October 7th, 1839, in which he says several plans had been submitted to House of Commons Committee, 'including yours;'—from all these I was naturally induced to believe that I was *first* in the field, and consequently became a competitor. Your letter, however, of 18th January undeceived me on that point, although I cannot help saying that my scheme has rather a closer alliance to the one adopted than can be inferred from the copy of your evidence sent to me.

"I have, however, only to regret that, through my ignorance, I was led to put others and myself to trouble in the matter, besides some unavoidable expense, while the *only* satisfaction I have had in this, as well as in former suggestions (all original to me) is that these have been adopted, and have and are likely to prove beneficial to the public."

With reference to the above, I have addressed the following letter to Mr. Pearson Hill:—

“ WIMBLEDON, 7th Sept., 1882.

“ SIR,

“ From a paper contributed by you to the Philatelic Society, in November last, upon the subject of the Adhesive Stamp, a copy of which has been sent to me, I find that there had been a correspondence upon that subject betwixt the late Mr. James Chalmers and the late Sir Rowland Hill, about the years 1838 to 1840, a portion of which only is there given. But, as the merits of a case can in no way be impartially arrived at through the mere partial publication of the letters of one of the parties thereto, I now write to invite you to be good enough to furnish me with a copy of the *whole* of the correspondence, as noted below, if in your possession, and not at the Treasury.

“ I remain, &c.,

(Signed) “ PATRICK CHALMERS.

“ Copies of the whole of the letter of date 18th May, 1840, from which an extract is given, including that of 3rd March, 1838, from (the then) Mr. Rowland Hill, referred to in said letter as being ‘ copy prefixed.’

“ Also, copies of the letter of date 18th January, 1840, from Mr. Rowland Hill to Mr. J. Chalmers—with that or those from the latter to the former, complete, which called forth the said letter of 18th January, 1840, from Mr. Rowland Hill.

“ PEARSON HILL, Esq.”

Not having been favoured with any reply to the above, I again addressed Mr. Pearson Hill, as under. But here it may be permitted me to ask, why should this correspondence, and, as it also appears, the forty-nine plans—a portion of which Mr. Pearson Hill explains and examines in his “ paper,”—be in the private possession of Mr. Pearson Hill, something which, as he states, “ had belonged to his father, the late Sir Rowland Hill?” These plans, I submit, were public property, as was likewise all correspondence connected with same; such were sent to Mr. Rowland Hill in his then public capacity at the Treasury, and ought to be accessible to all concerned.

“ WIMBLEDON, 9th October, 1882.

“ SIR,

“ Having ascertained that the correspondence asked for in my letter to you of 7th ult. is not at any of the public offices, I conclude that such is in your hands.

“ The letter of 18th May, 1840, which you have put forward as a withdrawal of his claim on the part of Mr. Chalmers, so far from being the complete renunciation you appear to consider it in your paper to the Philatelic Society, is very much the letter of one only too ready not to contest a point in his own personal interest, so long as the interest of the public is equally served by giving way. He re-asserts the originality of his invention (now confirmed by ample living testimony to have been in August, 1834), and points out that such was officially laid before Mr. Wallace in 1837, two years before same was adopted for the purpose of carrying out the Penny Postage System by the then Mr. Rowland Hill.

“ When a claim is made, and subsequently withdrawn or modified, the value of such withdrawal will depend upon the value of the representation made to the person who made the claim.

“ In this instance, the terms and value of the representation made to Mr. Chalmers demand special scrutiny, inasmuch as it now transpires that the principles and figures of the Penny Postage Scheme itself, hitherto looked upon by the public, and by our best informed journals, as having been ‘ the sole and undisputed invention of Sir Rowland Hill ’—“ from the workshop of an inventive mind ”—were, after all, only a copy, applied to letters, from beginning to end.

“ In representing himself to Mr. Chalmers, consequently, as the ‘ inventor ’ of the Adhesive Stamp, or by inducing or allowing Mr. Chalmers to believe that what was merely an acquired idea to have been an invention, a parallel case on the part of Mr.

“ Rowland Hill presents itself. If the press and the public have for
 “ over forty years been misled with respect to the main scheme
 “ itself, that Mr. Chalmers was equally misled on the subject of
 “ the stamp is quite comprehensible.

“ Whatever may have been the representation made to Mr.
 “ Chalmers by Mr. Rowland Hill in that letter of 18th January
 “ 1840, it is clear that Mr. Chalmers in his reply had been led to
 “ understand and believe that the principle of the Adhesive Stamp
 “ by way of pre-payment on postage was an invention and not
 “ merely an acquired idea on the part of Mr. Rowland Hill, and
 “ any admission obtained from Mr. Chalmers under an erroneous
 “ impression on this fundamental and vital point, is wholly invalid.

“ I remain, &c.,

(Signed)

“ PATRICK CHALMERS.

“ PEARSON HILL, Esq.”

It is, therefore, only under the presumption that the Adhesive Stamp was an “invention” on the part of Mr. Rowland Hill, and not merely an acquired idea, that Mr. Chalmers' withdrawal has any validity—a vital and fundamental point, of which we have not only no proof, no information as to when or under what circumstances he invented it, but as to which, under what we now know, the presumption is wholly against any such conclusion.

And what further does Mr. Chalmers' letter demonstrate? Mr. Hill had proposed the Adhesive Stamp *prior* to 1839, how was it that one who, like Mr. Chalmers, had closely followed the subject, knew nothing of any such proposal any more than did the Government or the Press? How was it that both Mr. Wallace and Mr. Chalmers, M.P., members of the Committee, accept Mr. Chalmers' plan as a novelty, and submit it to the Committee? Why do they not reply, “We have already got that from Mr. Hill; you are too late”? These points I put in addition to the proofs already given

to the same effect. But further, here is a letter of 3rd March, 1838, from Mr. Hill to Mr. Chalmers, a copy of which the latter now returns to Mr. Hill; and why? All the admissions that letter may make we do not know, but this much we can gather from its being returned to Mr. Hill "copy prefixed"—that *in 1838 Mr. Hill made no pretension to the Adhesive Stamp*; it is only from Mr. Hill's letter of date 18th January, 1840, that Mr. Chalmers *for the first time* becomes aware of any such pretension on the part of Mr. Hill. I repeat, therefore, it was only at the end of 1839, after having examined the plans—then, and not till then—that Mr. Hill "decided" upon the Adhesive Stamp. His pretension to the merit of proposing this stamp was simply an "after-thought."

It may be here observed, if Mr. Chalmers in his letter displays what may now seem a singular apathy or indifference in respect of being personally recognised as the author of the Adhesive Stamp, so long as the public interest was equally served, the value and importance of this invention and proposal on his part to Mr. Wallace, bear a very different aspect now, after forty years of valuable experience, than could then have been in any way measured or anticipated; while those who knew him will only say it was "just his way" of personal abnegation. This stamp was issued only on the 6th May, not a fortnight before that letter was written.

Failing, then, the letters from Mr. Rowland Hill himself to Mr. Chalmers, let us turn to the explanation of the matter given by Mr. Pearson Hill in his paper to the Philatelic Society, and which is this, that "In all scientific societies, as of course the gentlemen present are well aware, the rule by which rival claims to any discovery or invention is decided, is by priority of publication." The evidence of Mr. Rowland Hill in this Ninth Report (see ante, p. 54) was of date 13th February, 1837, while Mr. Chalmers' letter to Mr. Wallace, as his date of *first* publishing the plan, was only of November or December, 1837; consequently, the "invention" must be credited to Mr. Rowland Hill. Exactly; but, then, here is

assumed (naturally, on the part of Mr. Pearson Hill, but which I have given conclusive grounds for disputing,) the vital and essential point already dealt with, that it *was* an "invention" on the part of Mr. Rowland Hill. Mr. Pearson Hill makes much of a sentence he finds in one of Mr. Chalmers' letters, to the effect that "he *first* published his plan in November, 1837." Now, no one will expect me to explain away or put to rights just such isolated extracts from this correspondence as Mr. Pearson Hill thinks well to produce; but if the period of this official letter to Mr. Wallace corresponded with his first publication, that perhaps may be explained from such having been the first occasion when any official publication was called for, the proposals in 1834 with respect to a Penny Postage on newspapers having come to nothing. It is perfectly clear that in his own locality the plan of Mr. Chalmers had become a matter of notoriety, while ever since his invention of 1834 Mr. Chalmers, no mean worker amongst the pioneers of Post Office Reform, had been pointing out his invention to everybody who would listen to him on the subject. Are we to understand that if A invents something, the idea of which B picks up before A finds an occasion officially to put it forward, it is B, and not A, who is the inventor?

Again, before this "rule" can be applied, the "invention" must stand the same on the part of both claimants; you must otherwise *first* arrive at the point of equality in both before this rule can be called in to decide the matter. If the two things "published" are not only not the same, but very different, there is no case for the application of the rule. Here we have two proposals diverse in substance, intention, and result. The scope and intention of Mr. Hill's gummed label have already been noticed; the scope limited to a person at a Post Office unable to write, if a stamp of some sort was to be compulsory, a compulsion immediately withdrawn by the restoration of the option to pay the penny;* the intention, to secure

* The clause restoring this option, as now found in the originals of Mr. Rowland Hill's proposals, I have already pointed out as being omitted in the corresponding account of the matter in the "Life of Sir Rowland Hill."

the universal adoption of the Impressed Stamp; the result, *nil*. For all the benefit his scheme would have derived from this proposal or "invention," even if such it had been, made and left as it was by Mr. Hill, the scheme would have been left mouldering in the pigeon-holes of the Treasury to this day—a scheme, and a scheme only. Of Mr. Chalmers' proposal, on the contrary, the scope of the label was to be universal—its object, the universal adoption of the Adhesive Stamp—the result, entire success. There is no point of equality betwixt the two things "published," and consequently no case or occasion for the application of this "rule" to decide betwixt the claimants. Of what avail was it for Mr. Hill to be *cognisant* of this principle for prepayment of postage, even had such been an invention, if he did not propose to *use* it—the option of paying the penny being restored to the person unable to write, any use for Mr. Hill's gummed label disappeared. There is the same difference here betwixt the two things "published" as betwixt a wooden horse and a living horse; yet we are to be told it is a case for the application of this rule! Even *had* this idea been an "invention" on the part of Mr. Hill, it is not the man who, to no purpose, sees the apple fall; but the man who utilizes the sight for the public benefit, who becomes the Newton of the situation.

Further: and what will be found conclusive, if any doubt yet exists with respect to the "rival claims" under consideration—for here I will call a witness whose testimony Mr. Pearson Hill himself will be the first to respect. How can any such rule as respects mere "priority of publication" be appealed to, when the "priority of invention" (if even "invention" this idea ever had been on the part of Mr. Hill) is left in no doubt by the statements of no less a witness than Sir Rowland Hill himself? For what says Sir Rowland Hill in his "Life"? Referring, Vol. I., page 218, to Mr. Knight's suggestion of stamped covers for newspapers, in the "Companion to the Newspaper" for June, 1834—the very occasion of Mr. Chalmers' Adhesive Stamp invention (see ante, p. 37)—this is how Sir Rowland Hill concludes: "*Of course, Adhesive Stamps were yet undreamt of.*" But, if unknown to

Mr. Hill, they were immediately not alone "dreamt of," but *produced* by Mr. Chalmers, as already proved. With such evidence, such admission as this, on the part of one of the claimants, nothing further is required—here is Sir Rowland Hill's own statement showing that at the period when Mr. Chalmers produced his invention, he himself knew nothing of the Adhesive Stamp.

And, if "invention" it ever was on the part of Mr. Hill, why does not Sir Rowland Hill go on to tell us, here or elsewhere, when and under what circumstances he *did* "dream of it"? Simply, as I submit, because, where there is nothing to tell nothing can be told—he picked up the idea, of which he made no use, just as he acquired all the principles and figures of the Penny Postage Scheme itself, at second-hand.

The following letter addressed by me to Mr. Pearson Hill sums up the case:—

" WIMBLEDON, Nov. 28th, 1882.

" SIR,

" With reference to the paper contributed by you to
 " the Philatelic Society upon the subject of the ' Adhesive Stamp,'
 " a reply to same on my part is about to be published, a copy
 " of which will be sent to you.

" You will find therein distinct proof, from ample living evi-
 " dence, that Mr. James Chalmers had invented and produced in
 " his premises the principle of the Adhesive Stamp for postage
 " purposes, printed on sheets of gummed paper, as early as August,
 " 1834. I beg to refer you to the ' Life of Sir Rowland Hill,' vol. I.
 " p. 218, where it is stated, with reference to this very occasion
 " and period (namely, that of Mr. Knight's proposal of impressed
 " stamped penny wrappers for newspapers)—' Of course Adhesive
 " ' Stamps were yet undreamt of.'

" The priority of invention, if ' invention ' it ever was on the

part of Sir Rowland Hill, is thus distinctly cleared up by the statement of Sir Rowland Hill himself.

“The first mention, as you agree, of this idea on the part of Sir Rowland Hill is in his evidence given in the ‘Ninth Report of the Commissioners of Post Office Inquiry,’ on the 13th February, 1837, *subsequent* to the publication of the first edition of his pamphlet on ‘Post Office Reform.’

“That such idea was then no exceptional ‘invention’ on the part of the then Mr. Rowland Hill, but merely an ‘acquired idea,’ like each and all of the principles of the scheme itself, is the obvious conclusion under the circumstances of the case. The omission in the ‘Life of Sir Rowland Hill’ of any notice of vital statements bearing on this question in Parliament and otherwise (statements wholly antagonistic to his theory that his original plan for collecting the revenue provided for *both* stamps), and likewise the fact, which has now transpired, that the principles and figures of the Penny Postage Scheme itself, hitherto understood to have been his ‘sole and undisputed invention,’ ‘from the workshop of an inventive mind,’ turn out to have been a copy from beginning to end,—all this, and more which I have pointed out, leads to the obvious conclusion that the principle of the Adhesive Stamp was equally no ‘invention,’ but merely an acquired idea on his part—*one*, moreover, of which it will be further noticed he proposed to make no effective use.

“As already stated in my letter of 9th October, any admission obtained from Mr. Chalmers under such circumstances is wholly invalid.

“For the circumstances which ultimately led to the *adoption* by Mr. Rowland Hill, at the end of the year 1839, of this Adhesive Stamp in conjunction with his own plan of the impressed stamp, I refer to my pamphlet. It will be found that not only was Mr. Chalmers its inventor, but further that, through laying this plan

Mr. Hill, they were immediately not alone "dreamt of," but *produced* by Mr. Chalmers, as already proved. With such evidence, such admission as this, on the part of one of the claimants, nothing further is required—here is Sir Rowland Hill's own statement, showing that at the period when Mr. Chalmers produced his invention, he himself knew nothing of the Adhesive Stamp.

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"You will find therein distinct proof, from ample living evidence, that Mr. James Chalmers had invented and produced in his premises the principle of the Adhesive Stamp for postage purposes, printed on sheets of gummed paper, as early as August, 1834. I beg to refer you to the 'Life of Sir Rowland Hill,' vol. I. p. 218, where it is stated, with reference to this very occasion and period (namely, that of Mr. Knight's proposal of impressed stamped penny wrappers for newspapers)—'Of course Adhesive Stamps were yet undreamt of.'

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“ before Mr. Wallace, the Chairman, and before another member
“ of the Select Committee of 1837-38, it was Mr. Chalmers who
“ took the initiative in promoting its ultimate adoption in 1839.

“ I take this opportunity to request that you will not again
“ interfere in a manner calculated to prevent my statements seeing
“ the light. In these statements every justice is done to the
“ great services of Sir Rowland Hill; it is the MONOPOLY he has
“ aimed at which I dispute. If you still desire to assert this
“ monopoly, the Press is as open to you as you will see it has,
“ notwithstanding your interference, been to me.

“ I remain, &c.,

“ PATRICK CHALMERS.

“ PEARSON HILL, Esq.”

CONCLUSION.

I HAVE NOW clearly shown that we are indebted for this Adhesive Stamp to the late Mr. James Chalmers, of Dundee, not only as having been his invention, but from his having promoted its adoption through his timely representation of the plan to members of the Select Committee of 1837—38.

Here it must be noted that James Chalmers' share of this work is no mere detail—it is an integral and inherent portion of the structure. What a detail is may be exemplified by a reference to Archer's Patent; that was an advance in detail, but it was not an inherent and indispensable portion of the whole. What would have been said had Mr. Hill left out any mode as to how to work his revolutionary scheme? Why, that he had omitted a point of vital necessity. But Mr. Hill did not leave this out; he gave his proposals as an inherent portion of the scheme, and the man who takes Mr. Hill's place here joins him in the structure. A scheme, be it ever so good, is useless if you cannot work it. What is the fine steamer without the engines, the railway without the locomotive, the watch without the spring? All useless for their intended purpose; and what was Rowland Hill's scheme but equally imperfect as any or all of these until supplied by James Chalmers with the motive power?

In putting forward my father's claims, I have had many and strong obstacles to contend against, not the least of these being the indisposition of the press and public to alter pre-conceived and deeply-rooted convictions with respect to one to whose "energy and perseverance" we owe the great boon of Penny Postage reform.*

* Or, as Mr. Pearson Hill puts the matter in his paper to the Philatelic Society, in which the statements of "a Mr. Patrick Chalmers" are contemptuously dealt with, such are "about as likely to succeed as an attempt to prove that the world is flat, or that the moon is made of green cheese."

An unknown and solitary individual has had to assault this stronghold, and this, moreover, where the reputation of a favourite and hitherto great name was concerned. That, under such circumstances, my progress has been so far indifferent, is not surprising. Armed, however, with a good cause and an unanswerable case, it cannot surely be doubted that, in a land where truth and enlightenment are ever welcome, the truth as respects what Sir Rowland Hill has and has *not* done, may yet be made manifest. To borrow without acknowledgment from a Blue-book, it may have been said or felt, hurts nobody; and, wrong if it was, why should such be ventilated?—"we have got the benefit, say nothing about the plagiarism." But such reasoning can satisfy no candid mind where the claims of a deserving man are concerned. While every recognition is still rendered to the great services of Sir Rowland Hill, the monopoly he has claimed cannot be sustained—another asks for his name that recognition in the work to which it is entitled. It may not be that both or either of the two great and powerful journals from which I have quoted (see ante, p. 8) may yet be disposed to tell their readers that the impressions under which they called for the bestowal of the highest honours of the State upon the memory of Sir Rowland Hill were a mistake—still, it would be wrong to doubt that the press and public will remain true to those traditions which have ever led both to recognise the names of those who have done some service—that the facts of this Penny Postage story will yet be made manifest, and justice done to the memory of a deserving and unassuming man.*

* In Mr. Chalmers' Day the newspaper stamp was 4d.; the Excise duty on paper was 3d. per lb., or 1d. per sheet; the lowest advertisement duty was 1s. 6d.; the selling price of a newspaper 7d. Under such burdens as these, it is not surprising that the *Dundee Chronicle*, and many other attempts to circulate information, succumbed. To remove these burdens, as well as to remedy the abuses of the Post Office, Mr. Chalmers did his best. To-day the press is free from each and all of these burdens—is prosperous and all-powerful. Is it to be said that this press will not now, in the days of its prosperity, hold out a helping hand to one of the early supporters of the abolition of the "Taxes on Knowledge" will refuse to bestow a line of recognition upon the undoubted originator of the "Adhesive Stamp?"

Mr. Chalmers died at Dundee on the 26th of August, 1853, at the age of seventy-one. His funeral was largely attended. I was then still abroad, and for some time after. The following notices respecting him appeared in the Dundee press of the period :—

THE LATE MR. CHALMERS.

(From the *Dundee Courier*, of September 3rd, 1853.)

In our obituary of this week will be found the name of an old and respectable citizen, with which the public has long been familiar. Mr. James Chalmers, bookseller, whose death took place on Friday last during the more active portion of his life occupied no inconsiderable space in our annals. At a time when burgh politics ran high, Mr. Chalmers took a prominent part, first as a Deacon, and afterwards as Convenor of the Nine Incorporated Trades. At a subsequent period he was returned to the Town Council, and held the office of Treasurer for several years. While zealous in expressing his own opinions, he was uniformly courteous and candid towards those from whom he differed; and hence little of the acerbity of party spirit was ever charged against him. In our local charities, and in every public-spirited and philanthropic movement, Mr. Chalmers was every ready to lend a helping hand. But his exertions were not confined to his own locality. At one period he applied himself to what was then, as it is still, an object of vast importance to a mercantile community—the acceleration of the mail; and mainly through his efforts a gain of forty-eight hours was effected in the correspondence betwixt Dundee and London. Mr. Chalmers' services at that time were publicly acknowledged by some of the leading periodicals of the day. At a subsequent period, when Rowland Hill's plan of Penny Postage came into operation, Mr. Chalmers, who had upwards of twelve months previously recommended the use of adhesive slips as a means of franking letters, competed for the premium offered by the Government; and it was the opinion of many, including Mr. Joseph Hume, that our townsman ought to have obtained the reward. Shortly after that time, a public movement was made by some influential parties in Dundee to present Mr. Chalmers with a public testimonial for his services in connection with the Post Office, the result of which was that upwards of £100 was raised; and on the New Year's Day of 1846 Mr. Chalmers was publicly presented with the testimonial, at a numerous meeting of the subscribers in the Town Hall. This mark of public approbation, as might have been supposed, was very gratifying to Mr. Chalmers, and he ever afterwards referred to it with a feeling of honest pride. In his own profession, Mr. Chalmers held a highly honourable position, and in all his dealings was characterised by sterling integrity. His shop has long been a favourite resort of the better classes, both in town and country, and his cheerful and obliging disposition was appreciated by all. In private life he was modest and unassuming, while his conversation was pervaded by a playful humour, which

rendered him an agreeable companion. It is not surprising that the removal of such a man should be felt in our community.

THE LATE MR. JAMES CHALMERS, BOOKSELLER.

(From the *Dundee Advertiser*, of 2nd September, 1853.)

Yesterday the remains of this excellent citizen (who died at his residence at Comley Bank this day week) were attended by a large number of his friends to the place of interment in the Old Burying Ground. It becomes a duty, although a melancholy one, to pay a tribute of respect to the memory of one who, during a long lifetime, took an active and disinterested part in the public business of the town, but who so tempered his zeal in discussing local management, and amid the strife of party factions, that seldom has the grave closed over an individual with more general regret. Mr. Chalmers occupied the public offices of Deacon, and then Convener of the Nine Incorporated Trades, also that of Town Treasurer, and in all these places of trust he devoted himself with great energy to local improvement and to the advancement of benevolent institutions. The deceased was a great Post Office reformer, and had he been as fussy as some others who now lay claims to great merit in connection with the introduction of Penny Postage, and other beneficial changes in that department, perhaps he, too, might have had his name more closely associated with this important movement; but he was satisfied with the consciousness of having done his duty, and with the approbation of his fellow-citizens; and they, on New Year's Day, 1846, much to their credit, presented him, in the Town Hall, with a public testimonial for his labours in this matter, as shown in contending for, and ultimately obtaining, an acceleration of the mail, and in throwing out valuable suggestions regarding the Penny Postage. Mr. Chalmers was an excellent man of business, and in all his commercial transactions well known for his integrity and upright character. In private, he was a kind husband and father, and a sincere friend. His gentle disposition was enlivened by a quiet, dry humour, which made his companionship desirable at all times. His death, at a good old age, is yet felt as an event sufficient to excite public regret for the departure of a worthy man and an enterprising citizen.

H. J. P.