

## MR. CHALMERS AGAIN.



E have before us another of Mr. Patrick Chalmers's serio-comic pamphlets, entitled *Sir Rowland Hill and James Chalmers, the inventor of the adhesive stamp*. The serious aspect of Mr. Chalmers's publications is the cowardliness of the attacks put forth in them, on the memory and honour of a dead man whose fair fame is happily as far beyond the reach of his

slanders, as these are beneath the contempt of those interested in the questions at issue, whom he seeks to mislead. Mr. Chalmers cannot but be aware that, had he advanced these charges during the lifetime of Sir R. Hill, he would have incurred such rewards as the law metes out to slanderers. As it is, he is safe in attacking the dead, so long as he continues to observe the caution which, we are bound to admit, he shows in dealing with the living representatives of the object of his defamation. As regards the rest of his subject matter, his grotesque diction, clumsy logic, and udicrous unfairness are absurd in the extreme.

Mr. Chalmers is most careful not to reproduce or answer any arguments which have been advanced against him. His last pamphlet, as its date, 1883, shows, was published at least a month after he had received the Philatelic Society's Report (printed by us last November), setting forth that his assertions had been carefully investigated and disproved; yet he omits all reference to the fact that the most competent authority in such matters has given judgment against him. On the other hand, he reprints for the fourth or fifth time the memorable letter which he received from the last Lord Mayor in answer to one from him carping at the honours about to be rendered, in the shape of a monument, to Sir Rowland

*Chalmers has again lately submitted all his papers to the Philatelic Society, asking a reversal of the decision against him. The Society has read every thing sent to them, but informed him that they ~~could not~~ see no reason to alter it. However, instead, they decided without hearing what he had to say.*

Hill. That we may not be accused of injustice we also give this letter, to which Mr. Chalmers attaches so much importance, in full, in order that our readers may judge of its weight in the controversy, and of the very decided opinion on the question which Lord Mayor Ellis expresses in it: "*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 instant, which shall have due attention.*" His lordship could hardly have been less civil to a little dog who had asked for a bone. ✕

Reverting to Mr. Chalmers's pamphlet, we will give a few more instances of his unfairness. He repeats, without the slightest qualification, his contemptible charge against Sir R. Hill of having put forward as his own plan a "concealed copy" of the recommendations of the fifth Report of the Commissioners of Post Office Enquiry, though, as our readers are aware, Mr. Chalmers well knows that this charge has been proved to be not only untrue, but impossible. Untrue, because the plans were essentially different; impossible, because, as Sir Rowland Hill submitted his scheme to the identical commissioners who had signed that report, there could have been no concealment even had there been anything to conceal.

In order to make it appear that Sir Rowland Hill in his pamphlet (issued in February, 1837) did not suggest adhesive stamps, Mr. Chalmers quotes from that pamphlet the paragraphs in which, no doubt, stamped envelopes and stamped sheets of paper only are mentioned. He, however, keeps back the fact that in the very next paragraph in that pamphlet Sir Rowland Hill proposed the adhesive label. This paragraph Mr. Chalmers characteristically suppresses.

In support of his claim that his father, Mr. James Chalmers, of Dundee, was the originator of the adhesive label, Mr. Patrick Chalmers puts forward letters which he says he has received from certain persons, whose memory is apparently so extraordinary, that they are able, nearly fifty years after the event, to declare they recollect that the adhesive stamp was proposed by Mr. James Chalmers, not in 1837 (as he himself says), but in 1834. And here Mr. Patrick Chalmers suppresses the fact that, as shown in our number for November, 1881, his father in a letter of October 1st, 1839, and in his printed statement, dated February 8th, 1838, distinctly gives November, 1837—nine months later than Sir

✕ Chalmers constantly asserts that the Mansion House Council have acknowledged the justice of his contributions, and altered the inscriptions on the City Statue, in accordance therewith. The statement is not only untrue, but the very reverse of the truth. It was publicly made at the St. ... address in ... the Hon. Sec. of the Comm.

Rowland Hill's pamphlet was published—as the date when he “first” brought forward his suggestion. ✕

These are but a few specimens of the manner in which Mr. P. Chalmers appears to think he is entitled to deal with facts and documents—a somewhat remarkable exhibition, to say the least of it, on the part of a man who comes forward to charge Sir Rowland Hill with a want of candour.

Whether Mr. Chalmers is desirous of rivalling the reputation of a certain Mr. Chaffers, or is actuated by a morbid craze for notoriety we are unable to say; but if the latter, we fear that even in this hope he is doomed to disappointment. The public are far too busy to attend to him and his silly pretensions, or even to laugh at him. They are, luckily for them, so accustomed nowadays to the benefits of Sir Rowland Hill's great reform that they do not trouble themselves about details, and, with the exception perhaps of our own readers, they care no more who invented penny labels than they do who invented penny whistles. If Mr. Chalmers thinks it profitable to expend his money in printing pamphlets which, unless they are thrust upon them, few persons are likely ever to read, and still fewer to believe, or in circulating paragraphs in obscure country newspapers, advertising his wares, and praising his own virtue in bringing forward such charges, we suppose that we must rest content with the reflection that his money, time, and labour might perhaps be even worse employed. We cannot entertain an ingenious suggestion, which has been put before us, that the whole proceeding is a farce, and that he is really employed by Messrs. De La Rue and Co. to advertise, at his own cost, the *Life of Sir Rowland Hill and History of Penny Postage*, though so far that has been the only result, if any, of his proceedings. Publishers so respectable as Messrs. De La Rue and Co. would not be likely to have anything to do with publications conceived in the spirit which we deplore in Mr. Chalmers's pamphlets.

James Chalmers statement that he first made his proposal public in Nov: 1837, and in his subsequent withdrawal fallow to priority, after reading Rowland Hill's evidence of 13 Feb 1837; Philatelic Record Nov: 1881-1882-1899) there is not the slightest hint of his having invented ~~the~~ adhesive stamps in 1834. If it be supposed that Charles Knight having in 1834 suggested stamped covers for papers, Mr James Chalmers might easily have gone the little

either I have suggested that the stamps should be made adhesive, it may be pointed out Mr Charles Knight's suggestion never came to anything, as the effort to obtain the repeal of the Newspaper stamp duty (which would have afforded an opportunity for the use of covers) was unsuccessful, resulting only in a reduction of the duty, in 1836, from 4 to 1 per copy. As, however, every newspaper still had to be printed upon paper bearing the Newspaper Duty Stamp - whether it went by Post or not - it was therefore still entitled to free transmission through the Post Office, no postage stamp, or adhesive stamp of any kind was necessary.

Beyond Mr Patrick Chalmers unsupported assertions there is no evidence that Mr James Chalmers was ever in communication with Mr Charles Knight or knew anything of all of the latter's suggestion - but as already pointed out, Mr James Chalmers makes no claim beyond the year 1837 when, as he says, he first gave publicity to his plan -

As pointed out in "The Post Office of 50 Years ago" first published by Messrs Cassell & Co. "Valuable <sup>and</sup> never published, are worth no more to the public than good advice never given, and any claims founded thereon are too absurd to deserve attention."

Samuel Hill

Chalmers' assertions as to Samuel Robert having suggested uniform Postage before 1837 - are absolutely unsupported by any documentary evidence - Where are these suggestions if they were ever published?