

A lengthy article lately appeared in *The Leader of New York* entitled "Monumental Fraud," in which it was stated that Sir Rowland Hill who for the last 50 years has been credited with inventing the adhesive penny postage stamp, and to whose memory a monument has been erected in London, had stolen the idea from James Chalmers of Dundee, giving the circumstances of the discovery as follows:—

"Mr. Patrick Chalmers, a wealthy Scotchman who for many years had been living abroad, read in a Dundee paper which had been sent to him by some relative that at the occasion of Sir Rowland Hill's death the local papers of Dundee had recalled the fact that on January 1, 1846, a public testimonial had been presented to Mr. James Chalmers, Mr. Patrick Chalmers' father, at the Dundee Town Hall, in recognition for his services as a postal reformer, the testimonial consisting of a silver jug and salver and a purse of fifty sovereigns. Mr. Chalmers, not knowing that his father had had anything to do with postal reforms, inquired into the subject. He returned to his birth place, the city of Dundee; and, looking over his dead father's long forgotten correspondence, he found ample proof that his father had printed experimental stamps from ordinary type in August, 1834.

A sheet of these stamps, was sent to the commission then taking evidence in different parts of London with a view to reforming the postal system.

Rowland Hill was at that time in London. He had been recalled from Australia, and was waiting for some other political job to turn up. Accidentally making the acquaintance of one of the postal commissioners, he came into the possession of the material gathered by them, and, sharp, shrewd politician as he was, he conceived the plan of pushing himself to the front, and into office again by carrying out the recommendations of the commission. He wrote a pamphlet on uniform postage rates, using the facts and figures elicited by the commission, had the same printed and distributed it among the members of Parliament.

Mr. Chalmers proving to the satisfaction of the Town Council of Dundee the truth of the forgoing, they passed the following resolution:

Considering the proof laid before us by Mr. P. Chalmers, regarding the origin of the adhesive postage stamp, "this Council are of opinion that it has been conclusively shown that the late James Chalmers, bookseller, Dundee was the originator of this indispensable feature in the success of the reformed Penny Postage Scheme, and that such be entered upon the minutes."

The proof of Hill's fraudulent claim has been conclusively established. In August, 1834, James Chalmers had made in his printing office at Dundee, experimental adhesive stamps, printed in sheets, gummed and ready to be cut off and used separately as occasion required; he had communicated his plan pretty generally, at the time and subsequently, to the many parties with whom he was associated in advancing postal reforms, and seems to have promulgated his views in a printed circular fully explaining the plan, which is identical with that adopted and now in use. This was accompanied by samples of the proposed stamps.

The plan was then sent to Mr. Hill, in London, and adopted in December, 1839. Mr. James Chalmers, on again writing to Mr. Hill about his invention, is coolly informed (January, 1840) that he (Hill) had himself proposed the adhesive stamp in 1837 before Mr. Chalmers. Mr. Chalmers in reply expressed his surprise, enclosed Mr. Hill's letter of 1838, and contenting himself with the only satisfaction he had had in this, as well as former suggestions, all original with him, was, that these have been adopted, and have proved beneficial to the public. Awaited that tardy justice which after nearly half a century now begins to acknowledge his claim to the world.

The intended inscription upon Hill's monument was left out by the Mayor of London upon the proof being furnished