

CHAPTER I.



THE NAME of Evan Evans was a household word in the Dead Letter Office. For four generations a certain desk had been occupied by a bearer of that ancient and highly respectable patronymic, and no letter was ever considered thoroughly defunct until its funeral oration had been pronounced by an Evan Evans. A conservative family the Evans's; Welsh—very much Welsh, as their name implies—with a pedigree reaching far, far back beyond mortal ken till it became merged in the halo surrounding the palace, or, more probably, the hovel of an original Cambrian king.

The Evans's were proud of their royal descent, but they never made any boast of it, not even to the extent of parading a family tree. It was their privilege, in common with other Welshmen, to be descended from royalty, and in the magnanimity of their race they would have been quite ready to associate on even terms with Anglican dukes and marquises of even recent creation had opportunity