

gant of all the wild and visionary schemes he had ever heard of." "The walls of the Post Office," he declared, "would burst; the whole area in which the building stands would not be large enough to receive the clerks and letters."

Mr. Godby, of the Irish Post Office, said, "He did not think any human being would ever live to see such an increase of letters as would make up the loss by the proposed reductions." A Parliamentary Committee was appointed to enquire into the whole matter. It sat for sixty-three days, and reported in favour of penny postage. The bill passed both Houses of Parliament, and became law on the 17th of August, 1839.

To fix upon a simple, practicable plan of prepaying letters was a matter of no small difficulty. The Government issued a proclamation inviting all artists, men of science, and the public in general, to offer proposals as to the manner in which the stamp may best be brought into use; and two prizes of £200 and £100 were offered for those deemed most deserving of attention. Nearly three thousand proposals were sent in. A stamped envelope designed by Mr. Mulready, R.A., was accepted, and after six months' trial was a complete failure. The adhesive stamp, such as we have at present, and for which there were over a thousand designs, was adopted.

For many years the stamps could only be separated from each other by the primitive process of cutting with scissors or knives. In 1847, a Mr. Arthur offered to the Postmaster-General a machine he had devised "to pierce the sheet of stamps with holes, so that each sheet might be torn apart." His machine was purchased for £4,000. It had, however, to be greatly improved before it was made to answer the public wants.

Many and great were the diffi-

culties which Rowland Hill had to overcome. In 1854 he was appointed chief secretary to the Postmaster-General, and for ten subsequent years devoted all his great energies to the development of his plans, and with extraordinary success. In 1860, the Queen conferred on him the distinction of Knight Commander of the Bath. In 1864, Lord Palmerston moved for a grant of £20,000 in consideration of his eminent services, and testified to the "great genius, sagacity, perseverance and industry, and eminent services rendered by Sir Rowland Hill to this and other countries."

He died on the 27th of August, 1879, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

The last sixty years have produced a development in the postal service of Great Britain such as neither Hill nor any of his coadjutors ever dreamed possible.

Steam and electricity, and indeed all sorts of modern discoveries and devices, have been largely utilized to increase and perfect the postal service of the country and of the Empire. The finest merchant fleets of the world carry the British mails to all parts of the globe. The fastest railway trains bear their immense postal burdens to almost every nook and corner of the Kingdom. The most ingenious devices for time-saving have been introduced, such as the duplicate net apparatus—one fixed on the railway station, the other on the train, and where the mail-bags are tossed from that on the train into that on the station, while the train is flying at the rate of sixty miles an hour.

In 1870, the telegraph system of Great Britain was taken over by the Government, and since that time it has been under the direct control of the Post Office. The same thing happened with the British telephone system in 1896. The work of the British Post Office has, therefore, become one of the most im-