
A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

THE

CHURCHMAN

A Monthly Magazine

CONDUCTED BY CLERGYMEN AND LAYMEN

OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

VOL. XII.

LONDON
ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER ROW
1885

history. The age which saw the grandest sacrifices of patriotism and the noblest inspirations of poetry witnessed also the highest moral standard. From this high-water mark public and private morals sink together until one stood "on Mars' hill" five centuries later and proclaimed the regeneration of the world.

HENRY HAYMAN.

ART. VI.—THE ROYAL MAIL.

The Royal Mail: its Curiosities and Romance. By JAMES WILSON HYDE, Superintendent in the General Post Office, Edinburgh. Second edition. William Blackwood and Sons.

THIS is a very readable book, and we are by no means surprised to observe that a second edition has been quickly called for. The author has held an appointment in the Post Office, we learn, during a period of twenty-five years; and it has been his practice to note and collect facts connected with the Department whenever they seemed of a curious and interesting character. He has made good use of the Annual Reports, and various authorities, official and private; but his information is given in a chatty and anecdotal style.

The chapter headed "Strange Addresses" contains many amusing instances of mistakes made, from various causes, in addressing letters. Sometimes the writing is so bad as to be all but illegible; sometimes the orthography is extremely at fault; sometimes the writer, having forgotten the precise address, makes a paraphrase; sometimes, through forgetfulness or interruption, only a part of the address is given. The vagaries of writers in addressing letters indeed are manifold.

"No. 52, Oldham and Bury, London," was once written for "No. 52, Aldermanbury, London." "Epsig," "Ibsvig," "Ipswitz," and fifty-two other varieties of Ipswich were noticed on letters addressed to the Danish and Norwegian Consul in that town. A letter from Australia addressed to

Mr ———
Johns 7
Scotland

proved to be intended for Johnshaven, a village in the north of Scotland. On one occasion the following address appeared on a letter:

too dad Thomas
hat the old oke
Otchut
10 Bary. Pade
Sur plees to let olde feather have this sefe;

the address being intended for—

The Old Oak Orchard,
Tenbury.

The following address was written, it is presumed, by a German:

Tis is fur old Mr. Willy wot brinds de Baber in Lang Kaster ware ti gal is. gist rede him assume as it cums to ti Pushtufous;

the English of the address being—

This is for old Mr. Willy what prints the paper in Lancaster, where the jail is. Just read him as soon as it comes to the Post office.

Whether the address "Mr. ———, Travelling Band, one of the four playing in the street, Persha [Pershore], Worcestershire," served its intended purpose or no, we are not told; but the writer had added a request on the envelope, "Please to find him if possible." In the two following instances the indications sufficed, and the letters were duly delivered. Thus:

To my sister Jean
Up the Canongate
Down a Close
Edinburgh.

She has a wooden leg;

and—

My dear Ant Sue as lives in the Cottage by the Wood near the New Forest.

This letter had to feel its way about for a day or two, but "Ant Sue" was found living in a cottage near Lyndhurst. An American gentleman having arrived in England, and not knowing where a sister was residing at the time, addressed a letter to her previous residence thus:

Upper Norwood,
or Elsewhere.

The letter having been delivered to the lady, the writer intimated to the Post Office that he had received a reply in ordinary course, and explaining that the letter had been delivered to her on the top of a stage-coach in Wales. In admiration of the means taken to follow up his sister, the writer ventured to add that "no other country can show the parallel, or would take the trouble at any cost."

In the London Post Office, indistinctly addressed letters are at once set aside, so as not to delay the work of sortation, and are carried to a set of special officers—apt to decipher—who oddly enough are termed the "blind officers."

A very interesting chapter is headed "Abuse of the Franking Privilege, and other Frauds." In its earlier days the Post Office, says our author, was called upon to convey not only franked letters, but, under franks, articles of a totally different

class. The following cases are taken from the first Annual Report of the Postmaster-General—the things consigned having been admitted for transport on board the special packet-ships of Government, sailing for the purposes of the Post Office:

Fifteen couple of hounds going to the King of the Romans with a free pass.

Two servant-maids going as laundresses to my Lord Ambassador Methuen.

Doctor Chrichton, carrying with him a cow and divers other necessaries.

Two bales of stockings for the use of the ambassador of the Crown of Portugal.

The privilege of franking was much abused. Before the year 1764, members of Parliament had merely to write their names on the covers to ensure their correspondence free passage through the post. Packets of such franks were furnished by the members to their friends; and even a trade was carried on in franks by servants of members. On the introduction of the penny postage, of course, in 1840 the franking privilege was abolished. The Post Office has been exposed to frauds in other ways. Thus it was a common device to take a newspaper bearing the newspaper frank, prick out with a pin certain words in the print making up a message to be sent, and the newspaper so prepared served all the purposes of a letter as between the sender and receiver. Other expedients were resorted to in order to avoid paying postage. The late Sir Rowland Hill told the following anecdotes:

Some years ago, when it was the practice to write the name of a member of Parliament for the purpose of franking a newspaper, a friend of mine, previous to starting on a tour into Scotland, arranged with his family a plan of informing them of his progress and state of health, without putting them to the expense of postage. It was managed thus: he carried with him a number of old newspapers, one of which he put into the post daily. The postmark and the date showed his progress, and the state of his health was evinced by the selection of the names from a list previously agreed upon, with which the newspaper was franked. Sir Francis Burdett, I recollect, denoted vigorous health.

Once on the poet's [Coleridge's] visit to the Lake district, he halted at the door of a wayside inn at the moment when the rural postman was delivering a letter to the barmaid of the place. On receiving it she turned it over and over in her hand, and then asked the postage of it. The postman demanded a shilling. Sighing deeply, the girl handed the letter back, saying she was too poor to pay the required sum. The poet at once offered to pay the postage, and did so. The messenger had scarcely left the place when the young barmaid confessed she had learnt all she was likely to learn from the letter; that she had only been practising a preconceived trick—she and her brother having agreed that a few hieroglyphics on the back of the letter should tell her all she wanted to know, whilst the letter would contain no writing.

Our author gives a very readable description of "Old Roads," and his quotations from travellers in days before the Post Office

had a history, and for some time after the birth of that institution, will be to many readers new. In the year 1690, Chancellor Cowper, who was then a barrister on circuit, wrote to his wife that the Sussex[1] ways were "bad and ruinous beyond imagination." In Scotland the roads were no better. The first four miles out of Edinburgh, on the road towards London, were described in the Privy Council Record of 1680 to have been in so wretched a state that passengers were in danger of their lives, "either by their coaches overturning, their horse falling, their carts breaking, their loads casting and horse stumbling, the poor people with their burdens on their backs sorely grieved and discouraged; moreover, strangers do often exclaim thereat." We are told that the common carrier from Edinburgh to Selkirk, a distance of thirty-eight miles, required a fortnight for the journey going and returning, and the stage-coach from Edinburgh to Glasgow took a day and a half for the journey. In the year 1703, in the course of a journey made by Prince George of Denmark from Windsor to Petworth, where a length of way was forty miles, fourteen hours were consumed in traversing it; "almost every mile was signalized by the overturn of a carriage, or its temporary swamping in the mire. Even the royal chariot would have fared no better than the rest had it not been for the relays of peasants who poised and kept it erect by strength of arm, and shouldered it forward the last nine miles, in which tedious operation six good hours were consumed." In the year 1727, King George and Queen Caroline were proceeding from the palace at Kew to that at St. James', when they had to spend a whole night upon the way; between Hammersmith and Fulham the coach was overturned, and the royal travellers were landed in a quagmire.

Mr. Hyde's chapter on curious letters, one of the most interesting in the book, has many entertaining quotations. The following are specimens of letters addressed to the "Dead Office:"

We heard in the paper about 12 or 14 months back Mary Ann —— the servant girl at London was dead. Please send it to the Printer's office by return of post whether their was a small fortune left for ——.

---

[1] Sussex, no doubt, had a bad name. Defoe mentions that near Lewes "a lady was usually drawn to church by six oxen, the ways being so stiff and deep, that no horses could go in them." Dr. John Burton similarly speaks of the proverbial "*Sussex* hit of road," as a specially bad bit. He says: "Come now, my friend, I will set before you a problem in Aristotle's fashion. Why is it that the oxen, the swine, the women, and all other animals are so long-legged in Sussex? May it not be from the difficulty of pulling the feet out of so much mud by the strength of the ankle, that the muscles get stretched, as it were, and the bones lengthened?"

I rite a Line two see if you hard Enny thing of my husband —— that was left at —— ill. pleese will you rite back by return of post as we are in great trobble.

To controul of the
Dead Office, Newcastle.

Lord John Manners, in the Reports, gave many curious and entertaining letters. Here is one application:

May 1878.

My Lord,—I ask you for some information about finding out persons who are missing. I want to find out my mother and sisters who are in Australia, I believe. If you would find them out for me please, let me know by return of Post, and also your charge at the lowest.

Yours, &c.

The following letters of inquiry tell their own tale:

Springfield Illinois U.S.
1 *Jan.* 1878.

Mr. Postmaster if you would be so kind as to seek for us work as we are two colored young men of —— Illinois, and would like to come to England and get work as Coachmen or race horse trainers, as we have been experance for twelve years practicesing training—if any further information about it we can be reckemend to any one that wish to hire us, pleas to advertise it in the papers for us.

Kansas
Feb. 16—1878.

Honerad Sir,—My Grandfather Mr. John —— made a will on or about 22 Oct. 18— dated at —— leaving to his son, my Father, £1000, the interest to be paid to him half-yearly, the prinsaple to be divided among his children at his death. My father died on the —— last leaving myself and one brother who wishes you to look up & collect the money for us.

Dec. 31 1877.

John —— acting as Farmer here would be very much obliged to the Postmaster at —— if he would be so good as to name a suitable party at —— to whom he might sell a 30 stone pig of good quality well—for he understands it is the best place to sell. The pig is now quite ready for killing.

April 1878.

Sir,—Will you, if you please, let me know if there is such a gentelman as Mr. —— in ——. i beleave he is a Chirch Clurdgman. There is a young man in —— who has been engaged to my sister and he says Mrs —— at —— is his sister. i should very much like to know, if you will oblige me by sending. i thought if Mrs —— was his sister i would rite and ask for his charetar because he is a stranger to us all.—please oblige

——, ——.

—— Kent.

Sir,—Will you please inform me if there is to be a Baby show this year at Woolwich; if so, where it is to be holden, and what day.
I have enclosed —— stamp.

A Frenchman writes "A Monsieur le Directeur de la poste de Londres" as follows:

J'ai cinquante trois ans. Veuillez être assez bon de me faire réponse

pour me donner des résultats sur l'existence de Madame —— ? Si parfois elle était toujours veuve, je voudrais lui faire la proposition de lui demander sa main d'après que j'en aurais des nouvelles. En attendant, Monsieur, votre réponse,—J'ai l'honneur d'être, &c.

Mr. Lewins's description of the scene at the General Post Office in London, as six o'clock in the evening draws near, is graphic and well known:

> Now it is, that small boys of eleven and twelve years of age, panting Sinbad-like under the weight of large bundles of newspapers, manage to dart about and make rapid sorties into the other ranks of boys, utterly disregarding the cries of the official policemen, who vainly endeavour to reduce the tumult into something like post-office order. If the lads cannot quietly and easily disembogue, they will whizz their missiles of intelligence over other people's heads, now and then sweeping off hats and caps with the force of shot. The gathering every moment increases in number; arms, legs, sacks, baskets, heads, bundles, and woollen comforters—for who ever saw a newspaper boy without that appendage?—seem to be getting into a state of confusion and disagreeable communism, and yet "the cry is still, they come."—"Her Majesty's Mails," by W. Lewins (1864).

But the stirring scenes which used to attend the closing of the letter-box at St. Martin's-le-Grand (when the great hall led right through the building) no longer exist, at least as things worthy of note. The pillar-boxes and branch offices, in all large towns, lessen the pressure at the chief office.

Mr. Hyde's chapters on Stage and Mail Coaches, Postboys, the travelling Post Office, and those relating to the Savings' Bank and Telegraphic Departments, are interesting and instructive. The volume is well got up, and has several illustrations.

Reviews.

A Historical Introduction to the Study of the Books of the New Testament: being an Expansion of Lectures delivered in the Divinity School of the University of Dublin. By GEORGE SALMON, D.D., Regius Professor of Divinity. London: John Murray. 1885.

THIS is an excellent work; and we may hope that before long the Committee of Bishops will place it among the subjects of examination for candidates for Holy Orders. As regards intellectual training for the ministry, there are not many English books which give the information supplied by Dr. Salmon in anything like the same clear and well-balanced way. One feels as one reads that one is in the hands of a writer who is master of his subject, and who treats it with a reverent freedom and fairness.

The book is well-timed in its appearance at this season. The lectures were delivered some years ago, and the steady "expansion" of them under the pressure of modern controversy has more than doubled them