

Postage Stamps—Important Case

The following extract was made from the "MANCHESTER EXAMINER" of 21st February, and appeared in other Provincial and London Papers:— 1868?

"CHARGE OF 'RECEIVING' 7,000 STAMPS—At the Manchester Police-court on Wednesday *John Howarth*, provision-dealer, Cross-street, was charged with receiving, from errand-boys and junior clerks in various Manchester offices, a large number of stamps in payment for bread and cheese, he well knowing the said stamps to have been stolen. Inspector Shandley said he searched the prisoner's premises, and in a drawer he found 4,800 penny stamps, 810 twopenny stamps, and 2,210 receipt stamps; the total number being 7,820, and the value 35*l.* 19*s.* 2*d.* The majority of them were new stamps—that is to say, they had not been stuck upon letters, but a certain portion of them—and these the officer found done up in a packet by themselves—had the appearance of having been fixed upon letters and taken off again, the edges being slightly jagged and the 'sticking stuff' looking not fresh. In fact, the charge against the prisoner originated in a letter being so tampered with. Mr. Slater, St. Ann's-square, suspecting something amiss in the posting of a letter containing two halves of 5*l.* notes—the letter not having been heard of—had asked Inspector Shandley to make inquiries. The result was that the errand boy confessed he had kept back the letter for the sake of the penny stamp (with which he bought a bun at the prisoner's shop), and when he found, on tearing the letter in two, that it was a money letter, he became frightened at what he had done, and he tucked the letter and the enclosed half notes between the bars of a 'grid' in Red Lion-street, where the officer found them. The stipendiary magistrate (Mr. Fowler) thought it a most important case, and he remanded the prisoner for a week to enable Inspector Shandley to make the most searching inquiry possible."

A plan has been devised in connection with "SLOPER'S PATENT PERFORATING SYSTEM" for *effectually* preventing the recurrence of such cases in future, and has been submitted to and allowed by the Post Office Authorities.

This plan, which has just been adopted by many of the most influential Firms and Public Companies in London, will be in full operation as soon as the Patentee has prepared his Machinery to meet the demands which he anticipates,

All applications addressed to—"THE MANAGER,

"Office for Sloper's Patent,

"WALBROOK HOUSE, WALBROOK, LONDON."

SLOPER CIRCULAR ACQUIRED by N.P.M. Bulletin 272 Pg.12-13.

ROLF NIEVERGELT from Switzerland has furnished me with the photocopy, on the previous page, of an almost identical circular to the one shown on Page 13 of Bulletin 272. He says it was sold in auction in 1993.

The quality of the reprint is not as good as the one in Bulletin 272 but it is worth publishing because of the perforated date at the left hand side:- 14-3-68. This is the day after the Post Master General granted permission to Joseph Sloper to perforate postage stamps.

It would therefore tend to put this circular a year earlier than Maurice Harp had thought: and indeed show that Joseph Sloper was geared up to exploit his patent to the full as soon as he had official blessing.