

A MAN WITH A PURPOSE:

MR. J. HENNIKER-HEATON, M.P., AND IMPERIAL PENNY POSTAGE.

BY JOHN OLDCASTLE.

THE battle of Imperial Penny Postage has been fought and won—fought hotly and won fairly. There has been ink-shed instead of blood-shed, but the contest has been close, and at moments, perhaps, dispiriting to all but the stoutest hearts among postal reformers. Now, however, it is an accomplished thing that letters will be posted to Canada, to the Cape, and to Natal for a penny, instead of twopence-halfpenny, and will come home at the same reduced rate. That is three-halfpencesaved, and therefore gained. But the gain does not end there. The matter is one of good-fellowship and of a closer tie between a Mother-land and her Daughters. That is well understood by the man but for whom Imperial Penny Postage would have had to wait many a weary year—Mr. J. Henniker-Heaton, M.P. His has been the stout heart, the unwearied brain, the hand that has held the pen of power, the tongue that has questioned ministers, in season and out, in the House of Commons. In his "When a Man's Single," Mr. J. M. Barrie has a delightful schoolboy who brags to his sister of the

bravery of the captain of the school—he is a boy who will say to the head master at table, "Pass the salt," that is the sort of boy he is. Surely it must have been Mr. Henniker-Heaton, for that is what he is perpetually saying in the assembly of men whom Praed (himself one of them) called "just Eton boys grown heavy."

To the Postmaster-General when he has him there), to the Leader of the House, Mr. Henniker-Heaton is constantly issuing the command, "Pass the letter—at a reduced rate." And passed at a reduced rate to Canada and to the Colonies it is to be.

John Henniker-Heaton, though by descent a Lancastrian (being one of the Heatons of Heaton in that county), was himself born in Rochester, being the eldest son of Lieut.-Colonel Heaton, R.E. It was in the May of the memorable year



THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

London 189 J
Imperial Penny Postage
 I appeal to the representatives of the British Empire on behalf of the hundreds of millions who own our gracious Sovereign's Sun. I ask them to make intercourse between their sundered coasts as easy as speech, as free as air. And I foretell that this reform when it is ours as it soon must be will confer a wide spread benefit on Commerce; it will bring new happiness into myriads of English homes x x x x It will from the East and not the least to their beloved Mother Country
 J. Henniker-Heaton

FACSIMILE OF POSTCARD CONTAINING MR. HENNIKER-HEATON'S APPEAL.

1848 that he was born, and he was only sixteen when, after a course at Kent House Grammar School, and at King's College, London, he emigrated to Australia and took to agriculture and to journalism, prospering in both. It was Mr. Heaton's boast (shade of Henry George, hear it not!) that he held

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at one time in his own name 3,000,000 acres—a larger territory than the whole county of Kent. In the newspaper world Mr. Heaton's holding became equally strong, and his marriage with Miss Bennett connected him closely with a great Sydney paper which

the day comes when somebody says, "Friend, come up higher," a speech not likely to be heard, Canterbury flatters itself, as long as the Postmaster-General, whose goad Mr. Heaton is proud to be for the public good, has his seat in the gilded chamber. The "Member for Australia" Mr. Heaton has been dubbed, but Canterbury is not jealous—Australia is so very far away.

It is just this distance between England and Australia, the Mother and the Daughter, that Mr. Henniker-Heaton has set himself to lessen. He is a man with a purpose. In his experience as the representative of the Government of New South Wales at the Amsterdam Exhibition of 1883, all he heard and saw as he travelled here and there only confirmed him in the belief that there was a great work to be done for England and for her Colonies by a postal reformer; and that postal reformer he decided to be. It was a plucky resolve for one to whom English life had become strange. It meant that most hateful of all things to a man of fixed habits—a new start. Two years later he had made a beginning; for he went to the Berlin International Telegraphic Conference at the instance of the Government of Tasmania, and succeeded in cutting down the cost of cable messages to Australia. That was the first of his triumphs, and it made him long for others.

After a call at Mauritius in 1884, where he had a hand in framing the new constitution, he settled in England, and, a few months after his election at Canterbury, he acted as commissioner for the Government of New South Wales to the Indian and Colonial Exhibition in London. You may be sure that he button-holed everybody who came within his courts on his great purpose. A man with a purpose is mostly

a man from whom you flee. But that is because he is apt to be a prig, which nobody ever yet accused Mr. Henniker-Heaton of being. The man with a purpose who is a good fellow to boot is always popular; and, together with his popularity here, he had a wonderful acquaintance with the men of the



MR. JOHN HENNIKER-HEATON, M.P. FOR CANTERBURY.

(From a photograph by Sir J. Benjamin Stone, M.P.)

her family founded and still maintains. It is, however, his public connection with Kent and with Australasia that is our concern. The first was re-formed when Canterbury sent Mr. Heaton to represent it in Parliament in 1885; and, having got him there, there it has kept him, and is likely to do so until

Colonies, for had he not written in the ancient days "The Australian Dictionary of Dates and Men of the Time"—eight

as two words? and why is West Derby charged as two words, but West Kirby as one word? Why is "upstairs" taken as one word, and "down stairs" taken as two words; "fish-market" as one, and "cattle market" as two? Why, indeed? Even the Department began to wonder, and something was done to simplify and unify the codification. There was only one point when Mr. Henniker-Heaton seemed temporarily to lose the sympathy of legislators. Theirs, it seems, is the conventional stage-view of that really delightful personage the mother-in-law; so when there was a question of charging one halfpenny instead of three-halfpence for the transmission of her title along the wires, there came forth even from the reformer's best friends what Lord Beaconsfield would call "a superb groan."

"I sha'n't rest until I have gained Imperial Penny Postage throughout the world." That was Mr. Heaton's proclamation years ago, and he has not gone back upon it. The man with a purpose has it still. That idea underlies all his deeds. It was with him when he attended, in 1887, the banquet given in his honour in Sydney, where met the members of the then ruling, and of the late, Governments, with the Mayor in the chair. It was with him when he organised the telegraphic chess match between the Houses of Parliament of England and America, Mr. Walter generously paying for the transmission of the moves, and a vote of thanks to Mr. Henniker-Heaton being proposed in Westminster, seconded in Washington, and passed unanimously all within three minutes. It was with him all the twelve years he lived and laboured at 36, Eaton Square, and it



Photo by]

[Elliott & Fry.

MRS. HENNIKER-HEATON.

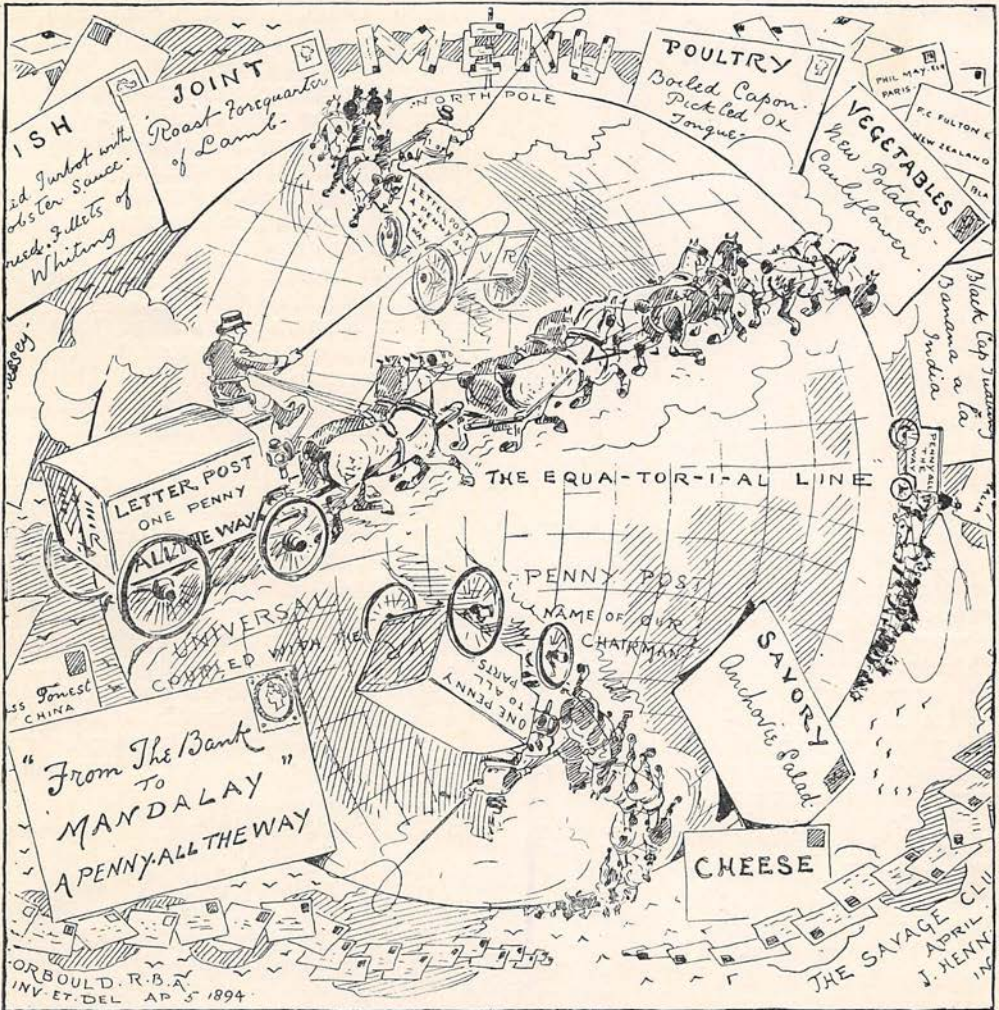
hundred of such heroes being named? With this double strength he pursued his plans; and, on the 1st of January, 1891, a good slice of the world had the benefit; for the postage to India and to the principal Colonies was reduced on that date to half the former rates.

The halfpenny open-envelope enclosure, the private post-card, the plain stamping on letters of the hour at which they were posted—these were among the reforms that followed. By 1895 Mr. Henniker-Heaton was able to boast that forty of the reforms he advocated had been adopted by Parliament and the post and telegraph authorities. The express letter system came a little later. Meanwhile the anomalies of the telegraph service were a constant butt. By what logic, asked the member for Canterbury, is Edge Hill in Warwickshire charged as one word and Edge Hill, Liverpool, charged



was somehow associated with his favourite hobby—the getting together of a complete collection of books connected with Australasia. It was with him when he went to Court and saw the Queen whose head he wished to multiply a million times the more. The public recognised the purpose and they bestowed titles on him accordingly. He

graphic reform, of the thousands of pounds he had expended on the propaganda. The officials, whom he kept on the move, were the only persons who did not applaud. Happily for Mr. Henniker-Heaton, the Duke of Norfolk came to be the head official of all—a man not to be exceeded in energy, industry, and goodwill. True, he is in



PART OF THE MENU OF THE DINNER TO MR. J. HENNIKER-HEATON, M.P., AT THE SAVAGE CLUB.

was the Member for Postal Reform; he was Postmaster-General of Greater Britain; he was the Apostle of Imperial Penny Postage; and he was Lord St. Martin's-le-Grand.

Those were popular recognitions of the thousands of days and nights Mr. Henniker-Heaton had devoted to postal and tele-

another House, and the captain's constant request to him to hand the salt does not fret his own ear. Mr. Hanbury is the whipping-boy. Little wonder, human nature being what it is, if he sometimes gives a kick. In the interests of the letter-writers of England and her Colonies, may Mr. Henniker-Heaton long remain a man with a purpose.