

[1888.]

BI-COLORED STAMPS.

Read before the National Philatelic Society by J. W. Scott.

GENTLEMEN OF THE NATIONAL PHILATELICAL SOCIETY:

In looking over my album I was struck by the number of errors which occur when stamps are printed in two colors; and, as I am not aware of any paper on the subject having been printed, I thought the results of a careful examination of my collection would not prove uninteresting to my fellow amateurs.

Errors in postage stamps may be traced to three sources, which may be classed as follows:

First.—Governmental. Where stamps, for which there is no use, have been ordered by the authorities, or it has been decided to change the law after the stamps have been prepared. Confederate States 1c. orange may be taken as an example of the first, and the V. R. English to represent the latter reason. As a rule, labels of this class are not collected although there are cases where the stamp got so well established in the—shall we say—hearts of collectors that they have retained their place in albums after the mystery of their origin has been explained to all.

Second.—Artistic. The fault of the engravers. The great majority of stamps are printed from engraved plates made from transfers from the original engraving or mother die; these plates usually print one hundred stamps at an impression, and when printed, in one color only, mistakes are of rare occurrence.

Another and earlier style of producing a plate was for the engraver to copy the original design over and over again until the desired number of stamps could be printed at each impression. This mode is fruitful in errors, and has filled our albums with varieties more or less interesting.

Third.—Mechanical. Usually caused by carelessness of the printer, but sometimes in the act of transferring one portion of a stamp intended to be printed in more than one color, or by two distinct impressions. In many cases the body of the same plate is used for making an entire series of stamps. After the first value is printed, the figures or denominations are altered on each label, and then the next value worked off and so on. Where this cheap mode of production is employed it frequently happens that some stamp, or stamps, on a plate are overlooked; this results in two stamps in a set being printed in exactly the same color. It is impossible to say how often this has occurred because the mistake would soon be noticed, the plate corrected, and all evidence destroyed. A well-known example of this class of blunders occurred in altering the plate of the 8c. Porto Rico to 3 centavos, whereby each plate of the latter value contained an 8c. stamp printed, of course, in the color of the 3c. Strange to relate this has never been corrected, but allowed to run through two issues; they are found in all the catalogues as the 1882 8c. orange, error and 1882 8c. brown, error.

Stamps which are printed in two colors are subject to another kind of blunder, equally interesting and more noticeable; so much so, that in many cases, it seems impossible that such work could pass official examination undetected, but the fact of their being found in albums is evidence that our hobby sharpens the sight of its devotees above that of ordinary mortals. The class of errors I now refer to, are usually caused by the sheet of paper having been turned the wrong end up after having been through the press for the first impression; resulting in the central portion being printed upside down, leaving the Father of his country, in the case of U. S. revenue stamps, standing on his head like the clown at Barnum's circus; or in looking over our postage stamps, and seeing the pictures of the "Signing the Declaration of Independence" and the "Landing of Columbus" standing upside down, one would imagine the U. S. had gone out of business, and the pictures which used to adorn the capitol

had been sent to the auctioneers, and were waiting their turn for a final knock down. But I can assure the public that nothing as bad as that can happen while stamp collectors live in the land, and continue to multiply. Although "inverted heads," as they are usually termed, generally owe their origin to the carelessness of the printer, they may be due to one or more of the parts having been turned on the plate during the process of transferring. This we know to have been the case with the plate of the 15c. 1869 U. S. stamp. Shortly after they were issued, we discovered a used 15c. with inverted centre, and then made the discovery that only half sheets of stamps of this value were for sale at the New York post-office. We immediately dispatched orders for entire sheets of 15c. stamps to all large cities, but in no case succeeded in finding any, being invariably informed that they were only issued in half sheets; conclusive proof to us that the blundered portion of the sheet was destroyed by the Bank Note Company; but even this plate, with the blunder on, must have been printed at least once with the paper turned (making 99 stamps inverted, and one correct), as we were informed by Mr. Anthony that such a sheet had been given to him soon after the stamps were issued, and he returned it to the post-office. Another case came under the notice of Mr. Rasmus, the well-known collector, who possesses the only unused specimen known to the writer. This was given to him by a friend as a curiosity, who noticed that all the stamps on that part of the sheet purchased by him had the central portion of the device printed upside down. Major Evans catalogues both varieties of the 15c. with inverted centre, and presumably has seen them. All that have come under my observation were of the first or framed type; it is certain that no mistake occurred on the second plate as complete sheets of the reprints which were made from this plate have long been in the hands of collectors. As the value of their treasures is usually an interesting subject to amateurs, I may as well call their attention to the fact that the selling price of an "inverted" stamp would in a great measure depend upon whether it resulted from a turned sheet of paper or an inverted section of a plate. In the former case only one sheet may have been misplaced in an entire edition giving one hundred errors to hundreds of thousands of perfect stamps. While if a blunder had been made in the plate, we should have at least one inverted to every hundred perfect stamps printed, so that we have only to multiply the selling price of the ordinary variety by one hundred to arrive at a just price for the inverted stamp.

The used specimen of 12 cuartos Spain, inverted head, exhibited by me, and illustrated by the accompanying block of four (the property of Mr. Chas. Gregory) is a good example of a bungled plate. It will be seen that the frame of the corner stamp is reversed in order from that of the other three, and the heads being all the same way, when the stamps are cut apart we get another example of inverted head or frame whichever way we chose to look at it. As I do not for a moment suppose that I have found half the errors that can properly be included in the list I shall call your attention to the various countries and issues among which diligent search is likely to be rewarded. I omit stamps of which I have seen errors in printing, and trust some of the gentlemen here present have brought with them some heretofore unknown specimens.

I have used the word bi-colored but bi-printed would perhaps be more correct as some of the stamps included in my list are uni-colored although run through the press twice, Alsace and Lorraine for instance. Then again there are stamps which are both printed and embossed, as in the case of Naples and Italy, while the embossed issues of Austria, Portugal, etc., are completed at one impression.

It will be noted that in the following list I make no mention of surcharged stamps, even when they were originally issued in that way, such as British Columbia or St. Helena, but when the design called for two printings, as in Turkey and Egypt, they are included. Again there are cases where reversing the plate could not be detected, Denmark and some of the values of Heligoland for instance. Then I cannot conceive how a mistake in the

manufacture of the 1 krona official Sweden could occur, because it would result in printing one color on top of the other and leaving half the stamp blank, and this could not pass even an official printer—no I must qualify this statement, and add—outside of the United States, for here they have printed thousands of envelopes without any color at all.

LIST OF STAMPS MADE BY TWO IMPRESSIONS OF WHICH ERRORS ARE NOT KNOWN.

United States, State Department, 2, 5, 10 and 20 dollars; Envelopes, 1861, 12, 20, 24 and 40 cents.
Bhopaul, early issues.
Bolivar, 1882, 5 and 10 pesos.
Brazil, 1878, 300 reis, green and orange.
Bulgaria, 1879-81 and some of the latter issues.
Curaçao, 2 gl. 50c. violet and brown.
Dominican Republic, network could be printed sideways.
Dutch East Indies, 2 gl. 50c. green and purple.
Eastern Roumania, all.
Fiji Islands, 5 shillings, rose and black.
Finland, 1885, 1, 5 and 10 marks.
German Empire, 1871-4, except as noted and 1870 official stamps of the Confederation.
Great Britain, jubilee set.
Greece, unpaid letter stamps.
Hanover, network could be printed sideways.
Heligoland, some values would be affected by reversing one plate in printing.
Japan, 1871-2 issues, all values.
Netherlands, 2 gl. 50c. and 1881 unpaid stamps.
New South Wales, registered stamp.
Norway, 1878, 1, 1½ and 2 krona.
Persia, 1881-2 issue and officials.
Peru, 1863, 1 peseta brown; 1872, 1 p. orange.
Poland, 10 kop. red and blue.
Roumania, 1869, 25 and 50 bani.
Russia, all the early stamps.
Schleswig-Holstein, first issue and also Holstein of 1864.
Siam, last set.
Spain, 1865, 10c. rose and brown, 1867, 25 m. rose and blue.
Sweden, 1872, 1 r. d. blue and brown.
Switzerland, old issues.
Surinam, 2 gl. 50c. orange and green.
Turkey, 1865-76, including unpaid stamps.
Victoria, 5 shillings blue and rose, also too late and registration stamps.
Virgin Isles, 1867, shilling stamps.

I have now completed my list of what I *don't know*, and it is much longer than the table of bi-colored errors I am able to lay before you, but I trust with your kind assistance to materially lengthen it after seeing the treasures in this line, which have been brought by members of the society.

LIST OF KNOWN ERRORS OF PRINTING BI-COLORED POSTAGE STAMPS.

United States, 1869 issue, 15, 24, 30 and 90 cents.
Alsace and Lorraine 1, 2, 4, 5, 10, 20 and 25 centimes.
Egypt, 1875, 5 p. brown, sides of stamps reversed. Although this is printed in one color at one impression, I think it is fairly entitled to a place in the list, as the error lies with the printer instead of the engraver.

Germany, 1881, 7 kr. blue, 18 kr. stone, 1872, $\frac{1}{2}$ gr. violet, 2 gr. blue, 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ gr. brown, 5 gr. stone, 1 kr. green, 3 kr. rose, 7 kr. blue, 9 kr. brown, 18 kr. stone, with embossed arms reversed.

Guatemala, 1882, 2c. brown and green, 5c. red and green, 20c. yellow and green.

Heligoland, 1875, 1 pf. green and rose.

India, 1853, 4 anna, blue and red.

Italy, 1855-8, 5, 10, 15, 20, 40, 80 centavos and 3 lire.

“ Unpaid letter stamps, 1870-4, 2 and 50c. carmine and buff, 10 l. brown and blue.

Naples, 1861, $\frac{1}{2}$ t., $\frac{1}{2}$, 1, 2, 5, 10, 20 and 50 grani, these are all found with the embossed head reversed in frame, but I am inclined to believe that they are all reprints specially made this way for collectors.

Peru, 1862, 1 dinero, rose, embossed arms turned sideways.

“ 1868, 1 “ green, embossed arms inverted.

Spain, 1865, 12 cuartos, rose and blue, both perforated and unperforated.

Turkey, 1875, 10 paras violet, 1 piastre yellow, 1876, $\frac{1}{2}$ pre. or 20 paras green. Unpaid letter stamps, 20 paras yellow-brown, black inscriptions inverted.

Western Australia, 1858, 4 pence blue.

The following I have thought to be of sufficient importance to class separately. These are errors caused by printing parts of two different stamps together.

Egypt, black inscription of 10 piastres on 5 p. stamp.

“ “ “ “ 5 “ “ 10 “

Italy, Newspaper stamp, 1c. black with embossed numeral of 2 in centre.

“ “ “ “ 2c. black with embossed numeral of 1 in centre.

Russia, 1875, 3 kopeck green and black with background of 5 k. stamp.

Turkey, 1865, 1 p. green, black inscription ten paras. I scarcely think this is entitled to be included in my list as the mistake consisted in printing the plate of the 1 piastre in green instead of violet, and then treating it as a 10 para stamp.

This completes the list of all errors of postage stamps known to me caused by two printings. The total number is 61.

As many of our members are interested in revenue stamps, I have compiled a list of all inverted heads known to me among the revenue stamps issued by our own country.

UNITED STATES REVENUE, 1871 ISSUE.

INVERTED HEADS.

1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 25, 50 and 70 cents, 1 and 5 dollars, all blue with black centres.

1872 ISSUE.

2 cents, orange and black.
5 “ orange and black.
30 “ orange and black.
2.50 claret and black.

PROPRIETARY STAMPS.

1871 ISSUE, LILAC PAPER.

1 cent, green and black.
2 cents, green and black.

1874 ISSUE, GREEN PAPER.

2 cents, green and black.

Truly our country is still ahead, only seventeen misses out of a possible fifty-seven and all the remainder to hear from.

AN APOLOGY!

We are very sorry the way this number appears typho-
but we might have suspected it for the price we paid for
the job. Hereafter Mr. F. H. PINKHAM of Newmarket,
N. H. will print the NEWS who, you all know does a
first class job. Hoping this will justify us, we are,

Yours in Phitately,

H. B. WILBER & CO.