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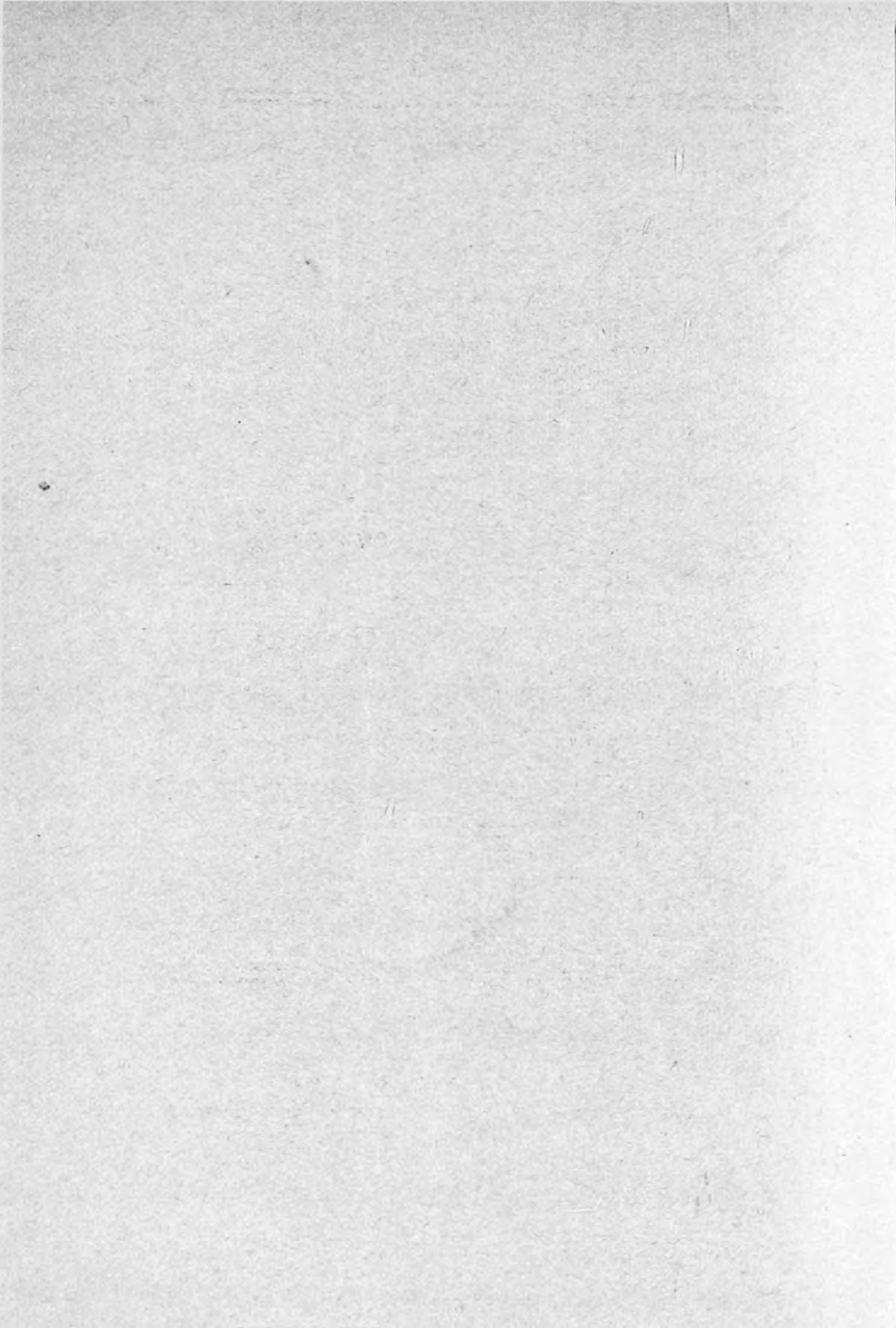



HOW TO
COLLECT
STAMPS




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BOSTON MASS.





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TO COLLECT
STAMPS



A. BULLARD & Co.

. . PUBLISHERS . .

446 Tremont St., BOSTON, Mass.



DOES stamp collecting pay? We answer emphatically "yes" not because of any single advantage which we may claim for it over certain other pursuits, but because of the multiplicity of its varied good qualities—advantages too numerous to mention in a single article. To enumerate the more important benefits to be derived from a collection of stamps, aside from the pleasure one gets out of it, the habit of saving, which is acquired by the collector, is perhaps the first which should be mentioned, as its bearing upon any future success in life is obviously great. Collecting postage stamps has had a greater influence in this direction than any other of the so called "fads." For over 40 years the pursuit has been followed by people of every age in all classes of society. To day the mighty army of stamp collectors, found in every civilized country of the world, numbers into the hundreds of thousands. The result of this is that postage stamps now have a market value, a value that is governed by the same laws of supply and demand that regulate the prices on precious stones, works of art, and other important luxuries of life. To collect stamps is to collect something of real value, and in this respect quite different from the accumulation of odd buttons, monograms, or articles of like worth. It follows then that judicious stamp collecting is a good investment, for as the demand for old stamps increases their value rises, and as the years go by the stamps become more and more costly. Teachers agree that there is no greater help to the study of geography than stamp collecting. Many stamps are veritable works of the fine arts, and thus develop an artistic taste in those who collect them. The inscriptions etc. upon these stamps teach a great deal of history. They interest collectors who finally resort to books to further satisfy their acquired taste for learning.

THE TERM "PHILATELY."

AS the interest in stamp collecting increased and the study and classification of the stamps was undertaken in a more scientific way, it was thought advisable to coin a word to denote the pursuit, just as numismatics stands for the knowledge of coins and medals, and mineralogy, the science of minerals. The word "Philately" was suggested by Mons. Herpin of Paris and is derived from two Greek words, "philos" meaning "fond of" and "atelia," translated into "exempt from tax." The Greeks had no word for stamps, having never used them, so this was the nearest approach to a Greek equivalent. Hence we have the generally-accepted terms to-day of Philately, pronounced "fi-lat'-e-li" with the accent on the second syllable, meaning, the pursuit of collecting and classifying postage and revenue stamps; philatelic, pronounced "fil-a-tel'-ik," with accent on the third syllable, also philatetical, both adjectives to the above noun, meaning, of a philatelic nature; and the philatelist, pronounced "fi-lat'-e-list," with accent on the second syllable, who is generally defined as (1) an advanced collector of postage stamps, or (2) one who studies and classifies the various postal issues.

The much-discussed question whether philately is a science or not we will leave to the option of the reader; but whether it be or not it is well to use the above terms, which are words understood by collectors in all civilized countries.

For the word "stamps" the French say "timbres," the Germans, "Marken." For "postage stamp" the former say "timbre-poste," the latter "Briefmarke."

ADHESIVE POSTAGE STAMPS.



THE establishment of the post office is an institution clouded with mystery. Post roads existed before Caesar's time and inscribed bricks bearing messages were sent from Assyria into Egypt in the time of Moses. But the use of postage stamps to denote the prepayment of a message or letter is of more recent origin. Just when and where the first label was used for this purpose cannot now be told, but in 1840 Sir Rowland Hill was the first one to establish the custom permanently in England, and England on the same date issued the first adhesive postage stamp known to the collector, as well as a stamped envelope and letter sheet. The adhesive was a one-penny stamp printed in black and unperforated. An adhesive, as the term indicates, is a stamp which can be stuck to anything, as distinguished from an envelope stamp, the latter being printed direct upon the envelope and requiring no pasting or gumming.

Although the 1p stamp of Great Britain of 1840 is the oldest postage stamp catalogued, its value is not great as compared with the next issue recorded, which came from Mauritius in 1847. This is known as the "post office" Mauritius, and as only some 500 copies were printed, most of which are now lost, this stamp is a great rarity. Its name is derived from the inscription at the left which reads "post office." The next year a second issue emanated from Mauritius consisting of the same design with "post paid" in place of "post office," but this is not a particularly rare set. It was not before 1850 that European countries generally began to issue stamps, but in 1845 they were used in this country.

STAMPS FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES.



BESIDE the stamps used for ordinary postal purposes, there are several kinds of adhesives for special purposes which, nevertheless, come under the head of postage stamps.

Unpaid letter or postage due stamps are issued by between 50 and 60 countries or colonies out of a possible 800. They are used on letters not sufficiently prepaid, and denote the amount of postage to be collected. The official stamp, with its 1000 or more varieties, is used by the members of the government. Commemorative stamps are for holidays or special occasions. The too-late stamp is in virtue a fee



to ensure the departure of a letter after the hour of closing the mails. Under this head is included the special delivery stamps of the U. S. and Canada. The

registration stamp is used to ensure the safe delivery of valuable letters. The postal packet stamp is used in some countries where the post office carries packages of considerable weight, such as the express companies handle here. Beside the above, newspaper stamps should not be left out.

There is another class of stamps, the uses of which are too numerous to mention, which may be collected in a separate album, but which are not postage stamps. Among these we will just mention the post-office seals, revenues (called "fiscals" in England), the telegraph stamps and possibly the railroad stamps of Great Britain.

LOCALS.



A LOCAL stamp, as its name implies, is issued or used in a definite locality, such as a district or canton of some state or country, or more usually within the limits of a certain city. In Europe, Russia and Germany probably lead in local issues, although the number of locals which have been in use at various times throughout Europe is very large. American collectors as a rule are not much interested in the

local stamps of any nation, excepting, perhaps, the local issues of the Confederate States of America and of the United States.

The Confederate locals, more properly called "provisionals" were gotten up by the postmasters in such cities as Atlanta, Charleston, Knoxville, Memphis, Nashville, New Orleans, and some 40 smaller places, to meet an emergency, and were type-set or wood-engraved and printed usually upon the envelope, although a few imperforate adhesives were also used.

The United States locals were issued by messenger or express companies which alone carried the mails before the government established a post office of its own. Local issues date from about 1843 down to almost the present time, for in 1882 the Ledger Dispatch was in operation in New York city, and in 1883 the St. Louis City Delivery handled mail, and Wells Fargo & Co. issued their last newspaper stamp in 1888. As late as 1894 a bicycle post was established near San Francisco during a strike and tie-up of the railroads carrying the mails.

Among the U. S. local stamps may be mentioned those issued by Adams & Co., Allen, D. O. Blood & Co., Boyd, Brown & Co., Hussey etc.

REVENUE STAMPS.

EVERY collector must decide for himself whether he will include revenues with the stamps which make up his collection. There is one class of revenues, however, which cannot be excluded from a complete collection of postage stamps, namely, revenues used for postal purposes. Chile, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, (see illustration), the Philippines, Hong Kong, St. Helena and some other countries use such stamps. American collectors are naturally more interested in the revenues of their own continent than those which come from Europe, and many collect the revenue stamps of the United States, Canada, and Mexico, and no others.



Revenues, or fiscals, as they are called in England, are used upon commercial paper and other articles to pay the government tax, and will not, except as mentioned above, prepay postage. The revenues of the United States, which number some 700, form a collection in themselves and consist of the general government issues for documents, proprietary articles, playing cards, tobacco, and beer, and private issues for matches, canned fruit and medicines. The civil war revenues are the most interesting stamps of this class and are in great variety. Separate stamps were printed for proprietary articles, express companies, telegraphs, playing cards, bank checks, foreign exchanges, inland exchanges, agreements, bills of lading, contracts, power of attorney papers, bonds, certificates, entry of goods, life insurances, protests, warehouse receipts, conveyances, leases, mortgages, etc., etc.

ENVELOPE STAMPS.



THE present tendency among the philatelists is to separate all envelope stamps from the adhesives, collecting them entire in albums by themselves. This practice originated with the specialists who were interested not only in the stamps themselves but in the kind of paper upon which the stamp was printed, as well as the size of the envelope and the gumming of the same. Hence we find the terms "long gum" or "short gum" applying to the gumming upon the flap of the envelope, and the term "knife" which means the steel punch used in cutting out envelopes of the various sizes.

The average collector should be satisfied with cut-square specimens of envelope stamps which he keeps in the same album with his adhesives. By "cut square" we mean not cut to the shape of the stamp, but with a square margin around all sides, so that the paper the stamp is printed on can be examined, and it can be told whether the paper is wove paper with a texture like cotton cloth, or laid or ribbed paper with parallel lines water-marked upon it. Collectors used to cut to shape all envelope stamps, but such specimens are today considered worth only fifty per cent. of catalogue value.

In some cases adhesive stamps on the original envelope are more valuable than when removed from the envelope; they are known as "stamps on the original cover" and are usually kept in an album designed for such specimens and also for entire stamped envelopes.

For the average collector cut-square envelope stamps in an album with adhesives serves the purpose well enough.

POSTAL CARDS.

ON account of the size and thickness of entire postal cards a separate album, with pages usually of thin card, is provided for these specimens. Any blank book of stiff paper, however, will do, if about two-thirds of the pages are cut out, with stubs left in to allow for the thickness of the cards, and the closing of the covers. To mount the card four diagonal slits may be cut in the page near the corners of the card, and the corners pushed through. A drop of glue in the centre of the card or four hinges in the corners may also be used.

Rubber bands stretched across pasteboard pages are sometimes used to hold cards in place, but after a time they lose their elasticity and new bands have to be put on. The most satisfactory method, however, of mounting valuable cards is as follows: Seal the flap of an ordinary envelope and cut off the four corners. Paste these upon the page so that the corners of the card will fit into the pockets thus made from the envelope. To save space some collect cut-square postals, but the practice is not very general, and not to be recommended. Since the collecting of souvenir cards has become a popular fad, a renewed interest is similarly taken in the postal-card issues of all nations.

The price of cards compared with stamps is not high, and there is no reason why stamp collectors should not include cards with their collections. Their relation to the various adhesive postage issues is certainly more close than that of the revenue stamp to the postage stamp.

ENGRAVED STAMPS.

OF the three processes of printing known as engraving, lithography, and typographical (or surface printing) the former, although the slowest and most expensive, is by far the most satisfactory for the manufacture of postage stamps. Every line of a well-executed engraving is sharp and distinct and on this account it is more difficult to immitate or counterfeit an engraved stamp than one made by any other process. The preparation of the original die is a slow process for every line of the design has to be scratched, (or engraved) with a sharp, fine tool upon a smooth plate of soft steel. This plate is afterwards hardened and the design upon it transferred by



pressure to the surface of a soft steel roller which is in turn hardened and pressed into numerous sheets of steel or copper, sometimes one-hundred impres-

sions, in rows, being taken on a single plate, from which a sheet of 100 stamps is to be printed.

The final plates are covered with a thick ink which is rolled into every line or crevice and afterwards wiped off, so that before taking an impression the ink only remains in the sunken lines. A sheet of damp paper is then placed on top of a plate and both run through a press which squeezes the ink upon the surface of the paper, thus printing the stamp or sheet of stamps, as the case may be. Under the microscope the lines of an engraving are seen to be raised and they often feel rough to the touch.

LITHOGRAPHED STAMPS.



LITHOGRAPHY is the process of printing from stone. The design is first printed or drawn with a greasy ink upon paper to be transferred to the stone. Sometimes the drawing is made directly upon the stone itself. Then the stone is wet with an acidulated solution which repels the greasy lines of the design as well as the printing ink, also of an oily nature. As the inked rollers pass over the stone, they deposit the ink only upon the lines of the design, so that when the impression is made the color is transferred to the paper only from these lines.



The lithograph may be a close imitation of copperplate engraving, but the lines are not as distinct and the general appearance is of a duller character. By rubbing the finger over the lithograph it will be found that the lines are not raised as in the engraved stamp. The process is a less expensive one than that of engraving, and many countries make use of it on that account. The first issue of Samoa, the 1854 $\frac{1}{2}$ India red and the first issues of Spain are examples of lithography. A lithographic plate or stone differs ordinarily from any other kind of plate by having an even surface over all; however there is a process by which the parts of the stone which do not print are eaten out by acid, until the stone resembles a typographed plate. A certain amount of hand engraving is also done upon some stones to obtain the best results.

TYPOGRAPHED STAMPS.



TYPOGRAPHED stamps are printed upon newspaper or job presses from type, wood blocks or electrotypes made from either of the two. The process is the reverse of engraving, since the sunken lines do not print,

while the raised surface of the plate, after being inked, stamps the design upon paper when subjected to pressure. The plate may be compared to a rubber stamp, and the press to the hand which presses the stamp upon the paper.

Typographed stamps are the least expensive to manufacture, and are used by countries consuming large numbers, such as Great Britain, France, and Germany. Type-set stamps are printed from movable letters, rules and ornaments, such as printers use. The early issues of British Guiana, Hawaii, and the Reunion Islands are type-set specimens.

From what we have said above we think it will be understood that typographed stamps may or may not be type-set. The type-set stamps are generally speaking the earliest issues, while those printed from electrotypes of wood engravings may be early issues or the most recent.

All surcharged specimens are to an extent typographed stamps; that is, the surcharge is type-set and printed on the stamps in sheets by means of a letterpress. A further description of surcharges will be found in our article on that subject.

SURCHARGED STAMPS.

SURCHARGES, or provisionals, are stamps which have been altered in some way by printing across their face, usually in black ink, a new name, value, or other mark of distinction. They are used in cases of emergency when there is not time to prepare permanent stamps, or when the number to be used will not warrant the manufacture of a distinctive stamp. The first stamps used by the United States in Cuba, Porto Rico, etc., were made by surcharging the general issue. Our first cut represents a German stamp thus treated for use in one of her colonies. Sometimes a stamp is surcharged by initials as in the next illustration which



represents a stamp of India which was used by the "Chinese Expeditionary Force" operating in China. The majority of surcharges, however, have a new



value printed across them, as shown in the next two illustrations. A few years ago the wholesale surcharging of French Colonies for



speculative purposes discouraged many

collectors of having anything to do whatever with surcharged issues. With the introduction of commemorative issues the use of surcharging purely for speculation has fallen off, and collectors are beginning to outgrow the prejudice against surcharged stamps. All stamps of two or more colors must not be confused with surcharges. Certain issues are printed in color without any value and the value afterwards printed in, as is the case with the 1895 bi-colored issue of Portugal.

PERFORATED STAMPS.

IN 1850 Henry Archer, of London, invented the modern method of separating stamps from the sheet by means of punching small holes in the margins, or "perforating" the stamps as it is commonly called. The subject of perforations is an important one. While the average collector pays little or no attention to varieties of perforation, the specialist finds in them sufficient material for study and classification. Stamps with odd-sized perforations are in demand by a certain few who will pay a higher price for such specimens than the ordinary stamps.

For purposes of measurement a "perforation gauge" is used, which is a scale printed on cardboard, celluloid, or other material, with several rows of black dots within the space of two centimetres. The first row contains but a few dots, each spot representing a perforation hole. The number of dots within the same space increases as the scales are repeated. Number thirteen, for instance, represents thirteen holes in two centimetres, or 787 thousandths of an inch. Now to find the size of a perforation the stamp is placed on the various scales until one is found which fits the perforation. In other words, the proper spots just fit into the perforations.

As a detector of counterfeits the perforation scale is invaluable. As it seldom happens that counterfeit stamps have the same size perforations as the originals, this is one of the general methods of comparing the two. Some stamps are perforated in several sizes, for each time a new supply is printed the stamps are perforated on a different machine. These are the varieties of perforation which certain specialists will pay a premium for, but which do not interest the general collector. "Well-centered" stamps are those perforated exactly in the margins so that the design is not cut into on any side.

IMPERFORATES AND ROULETTES.



WHEN postage stamps were first used, no provision was made for the separation of the stamps from the sheet. This the purchaser had to do with scissors or penknife, as such specimens were imperforate or unperforated, according to philatelic terms used to-day. Fifteen years elapsed before any means of separation were devised, and then rouletted stamps appeared on the market. The roulette consisted of a series of slits made with a sharp-toothed wheel which revolved as the printed sheet passed under it.

One difference between a perforated and rouletted stamp is that in the former a part of the paper is removed from the margins of the stamp, while in the latter no paper has been taken out. Most rouletting is done by means of a straight cutting instrument, but there is also the arch-shaped roulette (*"perces en arc"* according to the French), the zig-zag (*"perces en scie"*), the serpentine consisting of wavy lines, and the lozenge-shaped roulettes.



We also find stamps rouletted in colored lines, according to the philatelic term, a word of explanation being necessary here to distinguish these from the other varieties. Around each electrotype block from which the stamp was to be printed a printer's dotted rule was inserted, and the rouletting and printing done at once, both the block and the rule taking the ink from the printing rollers. See stamps from Luxemburg and Thurn & Taxis.

Perforated stamps have of late years taken the place of both imperforates and rouletted specimens, and few of the latter are used to-day.

WATERMARKS.

WHEN you hold a sheet of writing paper against the light, you usually see some design or pattern, known as the watermark, in the substance of the paper. Where the watermark appears the paper is semi-transparent because not so thick as in other parts of the sheet. To avoid imitation some countries, especially Great Britain, print their stamps upon paper watermarked with heraldic emblems or other designs. Some of the early British colonials are upon paper watermarked with a star; others, from N. S. Wales Tasmania, and Victoria, for example, on paper marked with figures or words denoting the value of the stamps. But the majority of British colonials have for their watermark a crown and above it the letters CC or CA. The CC, which stands for "crown colonies," was used down to about 1882, when CA, ("crown agents") was substituted as being more correct.

The watermark (abbrev. "Wmk") in some cases affects the catalogue value of the stamp. The 1p Sierra Leone, wmkd. crown and CC, is a rather scarce stamp, worth \$1.00, while the same design wmkd. crown CA catalogues at 4c.



It is not always an easy matter to discover the watermark in a stamp. It requires patience and practice to become an expert. The usual method is to hold the stamp against the light and look at the back at different angles until the wmk. appears. If there is still difficulty the stamp should be wet with water, or preferably a drop or two of benzine, and placed face down on a black surface. The latter method almost invariably reveals every line of the watermark.

COUNTERFEITS.

THE counterfeit stamp is the worst blot on the page of philately—a blot that may never be erased, although public sentiment against counterfeiting is growing stronger every year and the laws are becoming more stringent. The government is on the sharp outlook for counterfeits of current stamps (because such specimens are made to defraud the government out of postage) and hence few imitations of this class exist. Furthermore, stamps which are not listed high in the catalogue are seldom counterfeited because it does not pay to make the plates. The rare stamp is practically the only one that collectors need look out for.

Counterfeits are of two classes, namely, where the entire stamp is a counterfeit, and where only a part of it is imitated. The constant handling of genuine stamps, and a study of the various processes of printing are the best helps to enable one to detect a spurious print. The imitation is usually a rough box-wood engraving, poorly printed on a letter press, while most of the genuine early issues are finely executed steel engravings. When the reproduction is made by the same process as the original, however, only a comparison of the two, under the microscope at times, can reveal the counterfeit.

The counterfeits of the second class are usually more dangerous than the first. False surcharges on genuine stamps are the ones most to be dreaded. They are placed, however only on stamps which unsurcharged are worth much less than the surcharged specimen. The early French colonials, for instance, have been falsely surcharged so often that many collectors will not have anything to do with them, or surcharged stamps in general. Above all collectors should buy their stamps of responsible dealers.

REPRINTS.

REPRINTS, or re-impressions, are stamps printed from the original plates, blocks, or stones, but at some date later than the time when they were actually used for postage. They are not to be confounded with counterfeits, as the latter are printed from new plates which only imitate, with more or less accuracy, the original stamps, and are of no value to a collector. The reprint has been subjected to much abuse of late by certain writers who have sums invested in originals or make a practice of disparaging everything not rare. The reprint is not a valuable stamp, but on this very account—its low cost—the collector has an opportunity to add to his collection for a small outlay stamps which in the original would cost many dollars. "Government" or "official" reprints are made by the government and sold to collectors. In a few instances the plates have been sold to individuals who



SOME COMMON REPRINTS.

print the stamps from them for their own profit. Such stamps are known as "private reprints." We get reprints from the following countries: Alsace & Lorraine, Austria (early issues), Belgium (1849), British Guiana (1850-62), Bergedorf, Cape of Good Hope (triangular), France (early issues), Fiji (1870-71), Hamburg, Hanover, Hawaiian Islands (1851-69), Heligoland, Hungary (1872-4), Italy (1851-62), Mexico, New South Wales, Oldenburg, Paraguay, Persia, Peru, Portugal and colonies, Prussia, Roman States, Roumania, Samoa, Spain, Swaziland, Sweden, Tasmania, Tuscany, U. S., Wurtemberg.

THE VALUE OF STAMPS.

AT first sight it would seem that the market value of postage stamps depended entirely upon the relation of the supply to the demand. Supply and demand are certainly important factors in determining values, yet not the only ones. When the demand is greater than the supply we may expect prices to rise; but when the supply exceeds the demand, this rule, for various reasons, does not always work the other way.

In the case of unused stamps the face value prevents most specimens from falling below a certain price. The condition of the used or unused specimen also has a great deal to do with the value. Prices are fixed by the publisher of the catalogue who may control a certain issue and keep the price up as a matter of speculation, regardless of the supply. Age is also a controlling factor in fixing values.

Those who collect for an investment should be careful in selecting the right stamps, as all stamps do not increase in value with age. It is not always wise to buy the popular stamps, for popularity is constantly shifting from one country of issue to another, and after a stamp loses its popularity it often decreases in value. Generally speaking, the old issues which have never been reprinted, or sold in unused condition for less than face, and which, year after year, remain about the same in the catalogue, are the ones which some day will take a sudden rise in value. Also the present issues which sell for a cent or two each because they are now current, may in time become valuable if they do not remain in use long, or if they belong to some country which uses but a limited supply of stamps annually and prints only enough for actual postal purposes. Speculative issues are not likely to ever become very valuable.

THE STAMP DEALER.

THE Stamp Dealer is the chief promoter of philately at the present day. His presence in the world of postage stamps is as great a necessity to the collector as that of the butcher or baker to the average housekeeper. It once was otherwise, when a few men controlled the stamp market and charged exorbitant prices for their goods. The increasing number of collectors has induced a great many who have the means and a knowledge of the pursuit to engage in this line of business, there being no less than one thousand



WHITFIELD KING'S STORE, ENGLAND.

dealers to day in the U. S. and Canada alone.

The rivalry among the various stamp concerns has had a tendency to put prices where they belong, resulting in larger sales, and no doubt benefiting dealers as well as collectors in the long run. As the dealer imports his stamps in large quantities, the collector can usually purchase stamps of him for less money than by writing direct to the country issuing the stamps.

THE AUCTION SALE.

EVERY commercial method employed to-day for the transaction of business on a large scale is taken advantage of by wide-awake dealers in foreign stamps. The sale of stamps at auction has become a popular way of disposing of large collections and entire stocks.

The principal business of some of the dealers in large cities is to conduct auction sales every week, or less often, during eight or ten months of the year, offering single stamps to collectors and large wholesale lots to dealers. Those who cannot attend these sales send in their bids by mail selecting the stamps they desire from a catalogue of the sale which has been mailed to them.

When a collector wishes to dispose of a large collection he usually carries it to a stamp dealer who makes him an offer on the entire collection. If the price is not satisfactory he is advised to sell at auction. The dealer conducts the sale, breaks the stamps up into lots, lumping the common ones and cataloguing singly the rare specimens, and then charges the collector a certain per cent. on what the stamps realize.

It is a lively sight to watch a stamp auction in progress. When a score or more collectors are outbidding each other for a single rare stamp, and the contest grows hotter as the bids ascend, it is a pretty good proof that old stamps have an actual commercial value. It is also a noteworthy fact that certain rare stamps invariable bring over catalogue value whenever they are offered at auction. On the other hand collectors pick up "snaps" at these sales, getting fairly good stamps at perhaps half of the catalogue rate.

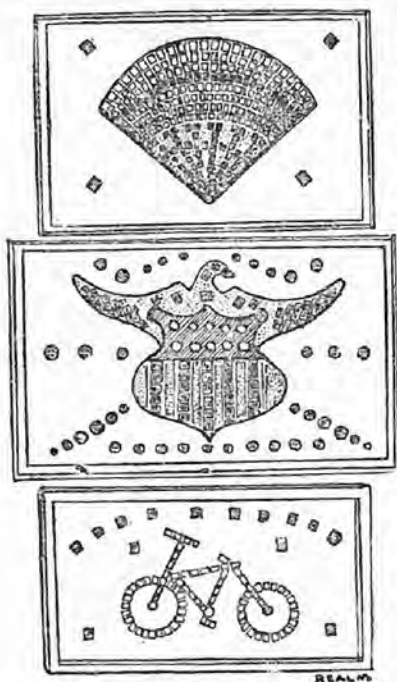
FORMING A COLLECTION.

EVERY beginner should start in a small way and add a few stamps to his collection from time to time until he has a goodly number. There is far more enjoyment to be had from the pursuit by going at it moderately than by expending all one's cash and enthusiasm at the start, and regretting afterwards of the poor deal made: the worthless trash bought, or the poor condition of the best stamps in the collection. For when a collector buys with discretion he studies his stamps carefully, each one before mounting it in his album, and becomes wiser with each purchase, until he learns something of the value of stamps and what constitutes a perfect specimen. He can then buy in larger quantities without running any risk of losing. Above all, the beginner should buy of some responsible party who will not overcharge or sell him worthless goods.

An album is the first requisite after a few sets or packets of stamps have been bought, and also a package of hinges or a sheet of gummed paper for mounting the stamps. A priced catalogue of stamps is another necessity which every collector must have if he wishes to know whether he is paying too much for his stamps or buying for a song. If there are any rare stamps in his collection he wants to know it before the other fellow, who is ready to trade, offering two stamps for one, etc. We refer the beginner to the article on stamp albums in this series for a further consideration of the subject.

SOME ODD COLLECTIONS.

THE first stamp collector did not have a fine stamp album with printed squares for the various issues, in which to place his stamps. His



first receptacle was undoubtedly a box, and many primitive collections are kept to-day in boxes or envelopes. The blank book was an improvement on the box, and the printed album, in most cases, a still greater improvement. Some collectors are not satisfied with a book of any kind, and show their ingenuity in various ways by pasting their stamps upon the walls of a room or by making wall pictures of them, grouping the stamps into fantastic designs, many of

them quite beautiful. We know of an entire room papered with unused stamps.

Stamps are also arranged in blank books into geometrical designs which sometimes add to the appearance of the collection. A stamp dealer was asked one day to show his collection. He pointed to a large cabinet of shallow drawers, each one containing 100 or more small boxes, and each box a dozen to a couple hundred stamps comprising his collection or stock in trade.

MINOR VARIETIES.



THE multiplicity of postal issues is responsible for a new phase of the pursuit known as specialism. It used to be the object of every philatelist to collect as large a variety of the postal issues of the world as possible. Within the last twenty years the field has grown so large, however, that it is impossible for the average collector to pick up one-tenth of all the varieties of stamps known to exist, and many have confined themselves to one or a few countries only.

The careful study of a limited number of stamps, aided by the microscope, has brought to light, in numerous instances, several varieties of one and the same stamp, due usually to duplicate printings on a variety of papers from plates which have often been slightly changed. Thus we have "retouched" or "re-engraved" stamps where the old plates have been touched up for a second printing; stamps on wove paper, laid or ribbed; stamps containing the original gum (abbreviated O. G.), or with the gum soaked off; stamps with dark, white, colored, smooth, or crinkly gum; stamps printed in various shades of the same color of ink; stamps perforated with different-sized holes; etc., etc. These variations have an influence, in some cases, on the catalogue value of the stamp. "Essays" are designs of stamps submitted but not accepted. "Plate numbers" are the private marks upon the margins of entire sheets of stamps of certain countries, the use of the marks being to aid the printer in keeping a record of the plates entrusted to him. Some collect these, others keep stamps in blocks of 4, or in panes (small sheets) regardless of any plate numbers. All can't be specialists and the "general collector" is the happiest.

STAMP HINGES.

THE manufacture and sale of stamp hinges has become an important branch of the stamp business, as collectors the world over now mount their specimens by means of the hinge, instead of gluing the stamp to the page. The advantage of this method is apparent when the stamps are to be removed from one book to another or the gum or watermark on the backs are to be examined. Hinges are now made in a variety of shapes, sizes and thicknesses to suit every taste. As is generally understood, the hinge is a small rectangular piece of gummed paper which may be bent in the middle and one end stuck to the stamp while the other is attached to the page on which the stamp is mounted. Some prefer a hinge of very thin paper which does not raise the stamp much above the surface of the sheet. A thick hinge, however, holds the stamp in place better. A large hinge is also preferable to a small one on this account. But those who are particular about watermarks, varieties of gum, etc., place their hinges as near the top of the stamp as possible and do not use a very long hinge. Others use a "peelable" hinge, that is, one that can be removed from the stamp without tearing the latter. But unless one specializes in varieties of paper etc., we would recommend a hinge sufficiently large, thick and adhesive to hold the stamp fast in place. Some make their own hinges from narrow strips or entire sheets of gummed paper but this process consumes so much time that most collectors prefer to buy die-cut hinges or a new hinge which now comes already bent for use.

STAMP ALBUMS.

THE selection of a suitable album for one's collection is of great importance. The size of the album must depend upon the number of stamps to be put in it. A large, costly album is not so good for a small collection as a book which sells for from 25 to 50 cents. Neither is a small album suitable for a large collection.

The more you increase the number of pages of the album the smaller your collection will appear. Five-hundred specimens make a good appearance in a small book, but put them in an album of say 700 pages and they are almost lost from sight. Many pages in succession, holding such a collection, would not contain a single stamp, and the examiner would weary of looking over a collection thus scattered. In our opinion no collector of 5,000 varieties, on the other hand, should confine his collection to a printed stamp book of any kind. The blank album with movable cards or leaves, affording limitless expansion, is the proper book for him. The ideal collection to be put in such a book as the International album, which contains printed squares for a large number of stamps of all nations, must not be too large or too small. Some collectors believe, in starting a collection, that it will be economy to purchase at the outset an album large enough to hold all the stamps they will ever get. For the first two or three years they suffer the disadvantages of having too large an album for the size of their collection, and then when the album really commences to be of any value to them it is worn out or out of date, and has to be discarded for a later edition. It is the collection, not the receptacle of it, which is of prime importance, and every cent saved on the album will help get your collection started. Next to the collection in importance, however, comes the album, which should be neat and strongly bound for use.

THE STAMP MAGAZINE.



THE success of our hobby during the past 25 years is due in a great measure to the prominent part which the press has taken in disseminating a knowledge of the pursuit and keeping alive a spirit of enthusiasm in those who by nature do not interest themselves long in one thing. To-day, in almost every large city throughout Europe and America one or more magazines are published in the

interest of philately, and in this country alone the total number reaches about 50. The less pretentious ones usually represent the first attempt of some amateur in the field of journalism and are nothing to boast of. The better class rank with the best periodical literature of to-day and have a wide circulation.

The stamp magazine, like the fraternal or trade journal, keeps its readers informed of every bit of news relating to its subject. Whenever a new issue of stamps appear from a country of any importance, the same are described and perhaps illustrated. Any discovery made in some former issue is noted. What is going on in the stamp societies and what the stamp dealers are doing are all reflected in this mirror of public criticism and condemned or approved. If a dishonest collector has a scheme to obtain stamps fraudulently of some dealer he is shown up immediately. If a counterfeiter thinks he can deceive the unwary collector, his methods are disclosed. These are matters of vital importance to collectors because they relate to the subject of stamps. Journals indulging in personals are of little value.

THE STAMP SOCIETY.

IN the United States alone there are some fifty societies of stamp collectors, counting national and local organizations. The American Philatelic Association, which is about 20 years old, is the most influential body in America, with a membership of about 600, including men who stand foremost in the pursuit. Other societies made up of younger collectors have a larger membership but they have not been in existence so long and do not have the standing of the A. P. A.

The principal event in the club world is the annual convention held in different cities each summer and attended by delegates and friends. These annual conventions are the means of stimulating the pursuit to a degree unattainable possibly by any other method. They bring together from every section of the country a large number of enthusiasts; and by the exchange of ideas, and the united action of these organized bodies, great good is certain to result. The newspaper reports of the conventions give publicity to the pursuit. In every city where the A. P. A. has met, the local daily papers have made mention of the convention under bold headlines, and this comment has usually been followed by long illustrated articles on stamps and the societies, in the weekly and Sunday editions of these papers. The general press has then copied from these reports, and the news have drifted over the country from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The result of this free advertising has been an increased number of philatelists in all parts of the country.

Not only has the convention been the means of thus enlightening the non-collecting public and of making new converts, but it has also re-enthused the old members and inspired many a past-day collector to start afresh.

CONCLUSION.

IN preparing the manuscript for this series of articles on "How to Collect Stamps," it has been the writer's object to acquaint the reader with the various points of interest which are directly or indirectly connected with the subject of Philately. Leaving it an open question whether philately is a science, as some claim it to be, the amount of pleasure it yields together with its educational and commercial value make it a pursuit worthy of the attention of young and old alike. Recognizing this, people of every age and rank, in every civilized country of the world, and in most half-civilized countries as well, join themselves to the vast army of stamp collectors whose number to-day is almost countless.

To sum it up, we will quote from an article by Edward J. Nankivell, in which he says:

"In the busy contentious bustle of the competition of the day, the brain, strained to its utmost tension, demands the relaxation of some absorbing, pleasure-yielding hobby. Those who have tried it attest the fact that few things more completely wean the attention, for the time being, from the vexations and the worries of the day, than the collection and arrangement of postage stamps. It has an ever-recurring freshness all its own, a scope for research that is never likely to be exhausted, a literature varied and abundant, and a close and interesting relation to the history and progress of nations and people, that insensibly widens the trend of human sympathies and human knowledge."

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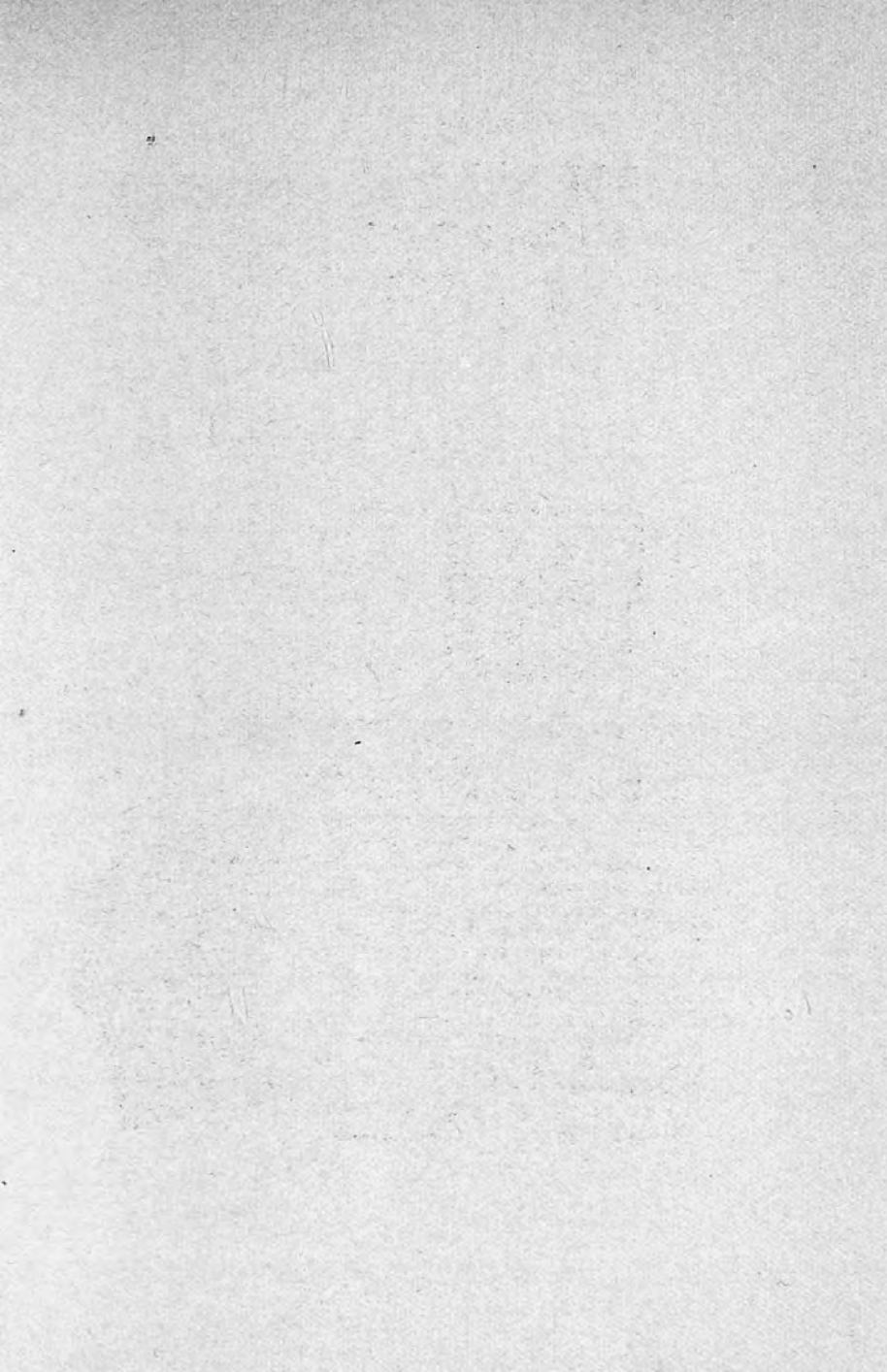
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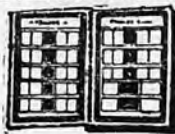
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