

[1901]

ENGLAND, ITALY, FRANCE, GREECE, MONTENEGRO,

AUSTRIA,
CRETE,
MALTA,
ANDORA,
SAN MARINO,
IONIA,

THE STORY OF

WILLIAM B. HALE ABROAD

BREMEN,
BERGEDORF,
TUSCANY,
HOLLAND,
SWEDEN,
TRIESTE,

GERMANY, SWITZERLAND, MONACO, HELIGOLAND, ETC.



THE recent safe return of William B. Hale, the well-known stamp-man, from a long trip to foreign lands, is an apt illustration of the immensity of the stamp collecting fad. A year and a half spent in nearly every country in Europe and many countries in Africa and Asia on matters philatelic proves beyond question that stamp collecting is fast assuming gigantic proportions; and the "wee bits of paper" are having universal attention. The story of Mr. Hale's most interesting trip is best given in his own words; and so amid piles of satchels, cases, books, steamer trunks, etc., the writer has prepared his tales of travel for PERFORATOR readers.

"Of course I am glad to be back again in the 'States'; and if a record of my trip abroad will interest American stamp collectors, I will feel well repaid. I have witnessed many very important Philatelic exhibitions and have been in every stamp centre abroad. I have also attended the large meetings of dealers in Germany and spent much time at the Paris Exposition exhibit of stamps; where many rare and wonderful things were shown.

"A good deal of the first months were spent in Paris and Bruxelles where I learned to 'Parley vous francais,' though I had side trips in England, Scotland and Switzerland.

"Living in these Latin countries is quite different from living in American. In Paris, you are wakened each morning at eight by the servant, who walks in your chamber with coffee and rolls on a tray, which refreshment over, you still in bed, may roll over and go to sleep again if you've had a particularly late evening

previous. Paris and Bruxelles have many stamp dealers, some can speak English as in the case of Messieurs Bernichou, Lemaire, Geliand LeRoy; but many cannot. In Switzerland, German is often spoken, as well as French.

"The Paris Stamp Bourse, an institution peculiar in its magnitude to that city, though Liege, Anvers, Amsterdam, Hamburg and some other places have the idea in a different way, is a spot of Mecca-like charm to any stamp stranger; and as well to the Parisian. Although he may get cheated by some wily Italian in his desire to get something for nothing, or he may find that the Abyssinian gentleman did not come from further than Cairo, and bought his Abyssinias in Paris and can give them with obliterations of the rubber stamp in his vest pocket. He may find some of the stamps are mended when he looks them over on the morrow, but he remembers the good bargains he got on another day and the bargain his neighbor got, and will go again the next Sunday, the speculative instinct that makes these people support Lottery drawings to the enormous extent prevalent on the continent (Loteries maintained by the Government usually), will cause him to buy stamps again.

"Stamp collecting is really much more common abroad than here, true, too, they have more dealers. Rather less frivolous it is considered there, as people of high degree, merchants and many persons in any prominent walks of life are collectors and do not usually conceal their light under a bushel.

"The Paris Stamp Bourse meets twice a week, has about 200 attendants each time and a lot of exchanging and business is done. It is called by the frequent

"habitué" the place of "wet feet," a local idiom, which people sometimes find quite true.

"My Christmas holidays were spent in Bruxelles with M. Laurie, and after again retracing my steps through the country of the Walloons and Central France, I spent my winter in the South. Delightful days in the blue Mediterranean were those. Sunny Spain and dazzlingly warm Africa, the Rocks of Gibraltar and its post office presided over by a lady. Across and visible to the eye, resting Tangier, where start many of the camel post and minor Morocco post routes, which have made stamps for themselves, though much of the business is franked with the surcharged stamps of France, Germany and England. Many collectors, largely army officers and tourists, are seen and not a few dealers. Here also is the first time one sees slavery. I am not sure that the trade is active however. Algiers, lying on a low stretch of white sand near brick colored bluffs, full of fleas and crippled mendicants is not very inviting, but some good hotels and "pensions" have a full complement of visitors in winter. It happens to please me the best and praises I will sing of the Riviera, the idealistic winter spot where one goes in spring costume in winter in a climate resembling Southern California, embellished by the villas, chateau and palace grounds of foreign Princes and wealthy loungers, where there are enough of the aristocrat Philatelists to keep one nicely busy and where one again hears some English spoken. The winter carnival at Nice; the sumptuous Salon at Monte Carlo; the blue roadstead Ville France, where anchors the squadrons of the various naval powers, the blue Isles of Hyeres, historically and from sentiment interesting as the place where the "Man of the Iron Mask" had to spend his dreary days and many other points are but little short of Paradise in beauty and life.

"Here is the miniature principality of Monaco rising like an amphitheatre and naturally hemmed in by rocks, but possessing a little harbor on the south. This bit of Geography governed by a hereditary Prince, policed by its force of 60 men with the moral backing of France requires no army, enjoying that emancipation of which the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg, equally strong as a natural strategic point, is the only other, in all Europe. The area is less than that of many cities, yet it contains three towns, each having its tiny post office. Here

the scarce 5 franc will sell at about full catalog (Dealers take note when you want to sell).

"Not to be partial, I went to other tiny spots such as the Republic of Andorra, the San Marino, Montenegro, Crete, Malta, Ionia, Heligoland, Berge-dorf, Bremen and Luxemburg. All of whom get on in their own peculiar ways with "better or worse" governmental regime.

"San Marino is 'a little bit off the top' of an Italian mountain. To go there one may ride on a donkey, he may walk or go in a balloon, most people never go, it takes a long while anyway and one gains the idea that it is free, because no one cares to take trouble to get it. San Marino has a town hall now, a nice little new one, the proceeds of selling postage stamps, of which a picture appears on one stamp.

"In Turin one is offered many bad forgeries of stamps. The vendor claims them as fine as the originals, but they are not as good as the illustrations in the Standard catalogue. Rome, the eternal city, I visited Easter Sunday and the ten succeeding days, on one of which I was presented to the Pope, a rare bit of good fortune and indeed hard to achieve, but accomplished by the kindness of a friend who was a priest. Stamps were good in Rome. Dr. Dienna, one of the great lights in Italian Jurisprudence was visited and had a collection of literature exceeding any I have seen in Europe and of stamps filling, if I remember correctly, sixty volumes. I made three calls but felt I had seen but little of his collection.

"In Southern Italy I made some splendid finds in Hawaii, Chinese, and Argentine. So thorough was my search that friend Sellschop despairs of ever getting any more there, he says, and he is a hustler.

Naples, under the awful ominous, yet captivating Vesuvius in constant eruption, and the near by buried Pompei was left on a boat of the Compania Florio going through the Mediterranean Isles to Greece and the Holy Land. Singularly, I met on board a Chinese missionary friend, and was presented to another who was from Uganda. Enquiry brought forth the fact that this later gentleman was the first in Mombassa to get out the type written Uganda stamps. Had he known of their value he would have made a nice sum on them for they were common with him at first. He explained that the money used in Uganda is in

shells called "cowrie" and sheets of calico, so many shells equaling a piece of cloth. The stamps were valued at so many shells worth, and were put on letters, placed in a cleft stick and carried by native runners from one mission to another. The denomination affixed indicating the sum to be paid the colored man for carrying: later the Government Agent took it up and now they have a regular post system, the sea outlet or connection being Zanzibar.

"At Greece, Crete and Ionia I was well received and met with pleasant officials, and got a good lot of these stamps including some obsolete ones.

"Egypt was hot, the plague coming on, so I tarried but little. But I must say, it spoils ones romance to go whizzing out to the Sphinx and Pyramids on an electric car. If any of my readers are Schriners I could tell them a thing or two of the hot sands of the desert. Cairo is a good city, the most cosmopolitan yet seen and said to have no equal that way.

"Jerusalem and Constantinople are enchanting from afar, historically interesting, but inside full of disappointments and barking dogs. Even the stamp dealers 'bark' much and do little. Yet I got many Oriental stamps, but could sell next to nothing. Constantinople has more kinds of money than a 'penny grab' coin dealer.

"I met the gentleman of the kind that are making history with Miss Stone, maybe the same ones, they looked bad enough. Montenegrins and Bosnians are no better in my idea. Some of the Austrian and Russian officers, diplomats and attaches of these places are collectors and well advanced. Once, by actual count, 22 of us had to bunk in one court, or guest room. I could eat hay, nearly, at times, and after sheeps milk for a while, that of a goat is a treat indeed. My good luck was at my elbow and I met no harm and usually did something in stamps all the time.

"Spring time finds Venice a dream, quaint with its Piazza di San Marco, its palaces and Gondolas exactly as it was five or six hundred years ago. Here, by odd luck I stumbled into three hundred of the 2nd issue, blue and black, U. S. Fiscals, including \$1.60, \$1.30, \$5, \$3 and

so on, like finding Hawaii Numerals in Europe.

"It is hard to make finds over there as there are so many dealers and collectors; but occasionally I stumbled on stamps in the most out-of-the-way places for instance a valuable lot of Chinese in Florence, Italy. I also found a fine lot of Hawaii numerals—but they were in a Korfu gentleman's collection. He lived on the island Korfu near Grecian Delmatia. Venice has no dealers now.

Across to Triste and on to Gratz, Buda Pesth and Wein over the scenic 'Semering Pass' in the last of May, is a delight for any tourist and in each of these places my relations philatelic were most excellent and satisfactory. Vienna, though larger has not the number of dealers that are in Berlin. In which latter city I was privileged to attend the Dealers Congress in September, a fine gathering of fine men. The summer of each year saw me in the cool mountains of Switzerland, Tyrol and the Black Forest, so I escaped the heat of summer and the winters rigor.

"One of my most pleasant periods was spent at the International Exhibit in Paris, where eight Americans were entered and all received prizes. The Frenchman Miraband showed re-constructed sheets of early Australians, six Hawaii missionaries, eight of the New Brunswick one shilling and two twelve pence Canada, one of the latter on laid paper. Ferary did not exhibit. One exhibitor displayed twenty-eight copies of the 3 penny Saxony. Friedel of Vienna showed Austrians valued at \$10,000 in a book ten inches thick. One collector had the early India in o. g. sheets. Bernichon and Miraband exhibited copies of the rare post office Mauritius. I also met a speculator in Zurich who holds one hundred of the 4r Zurich, a great holding to us.

"One thing remains to be said Europe is ahead of America in collecting along scientific lines: but we are fast outstripping them in all branches of Philately. I certainly met stamps I never dreamed of and it proves that things turn up where least expected. But the future of stamp collecting appears bright universally."

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The little article on the previous pages appeared in the December number of an American stamp Monthly and at the suggestion of its editor, who had received a very large number of requests for this travel sketch, the matter was printed in this leaflet form. I would have preferred to have made some revisions, gramatical and otherwise, but believe my friends and the fraternity in general will glean that I was well and pleasantly occupied this last eighteen months; following me in mind over the semi-tropical lands of winter, the lazy and decadent Eastern realm of Turk, Greek, Slav and Czch in springtime; northward as the season advances into the German speaking Empires, the low lands of North Europe, and British Isles, the Summers heat inclining my steps again toward cool mountains, lakes and fashionable lounging resorts of Swiss, Tyrol and the Schwaben Black Forest.

As the American Stamp Drummer will journey southward this winter along the Atlantic States, in the spring in the North Central and Eastern States. Will call on Philatelists by appointment.

Can *always* be addressed at this permanent mail address where my mail trade will continue. Correspondence in English, French, German, Spanish or Italian.

I act as Broker for Import or Export and frequently serve customers in both ways.

You can imagine me in any season delving after stamp bargains, exchanging perhaps quantity for quality to acquire wholesale stock, perhaps selling, perhaps buying, always acquiring things interesting for my U. S. or Paris trade; and now I am home in America with a fresh stock of wholesale and retail goods.

I intend to make a short trip over next summer selling the principal wholesalers and consequently am open to negotiate for Philatelist's surplus of certain U. S. and Canada stamps which I can trade abroad. Likewise my acquaintance there makes it feasible to get stamps, when so ordered, that possibly are not "getable" here. I invite correspondence from those who want to get things or want to sell.

For dealers and collectors I recommend strongly the beautiful Duplicate Stock Books I import; in beauty, capacity and practicibility excelling our American makes, yet they are cheap.

The Stock Books come in four kinds and various bindings; pocket size and larger—beside one for entires. The prices are uniformly *one half American prices* for poorer articles of similar size.

I have also four kinds of Imported Peelable Swiss Hinges, in seven sizes. My prices for these are the lowest also—and they are flavored—"they taste good." 10 cents a pack.

I import packages of from 100 to 4000 varieties of stamps. The *quality* of my packets is superlative and my prices the cheapest. A pleasing combination you'll agree. I have sets too.

Perforation gauges and all accessories are carried.

WILLIAM B. HALE,

WILLIAMSVILLE,

MASS., U. S. A.