



# Philatelic Rambles

and Other Papers  
in Popular Vein

*Acknowledged*

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# PHILATELIC RAMBLES

AND OTHER PAPERS  
IN POPULAR VEIN

BY

JULIAN PARK

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(England); American, French and Belgian Philatelic Societies;  
Boston Philatelic Society; etc., etc.

BUFFALO:

1912

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1912

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*To C. A. Howes:*

A token as small as the esteem is great



## INTRODUCTORY

IT is far from my wish to add to the already vast philatelic journalism of the day by another periodical. The only excuse for the present pamphlet is a fond imagining that perhaps the annual or biennial collection of certain of my "stamp scribblings" might serve as a kind of Christmas greeting to some of the collectors and students for whose firm friendship and coöperation I am indebted to philately. It is through no exaggerated sense of their importance that these casual papers are here collected, and their author does not flatter himself that they will be preserved in the files of what is really essential in our philatelic literature. As they show only too obviously, they are not the product of any extended study, and if they are sufficiently free from the more technical and abstruse side of our science to convey the intimate touch of the personal greeting, they fulfill their little destiny.

Of of the five papers here included, one, "The Story of Trinidad," has not yet been printed. As for the others, both parts of the Spanish-American "Rambles," with others not included, were printed in *Everybody's Philatelist*, 1912; the review of the Crawford catalogue appeared in the *American Philatelist*, 1911; and the attempt at philatelic (?) fiction is resurrected from the college literary magazine, the *Williams Literary Monthly*, in which it first appeared many years ago, being inserted later in *Redfield's Stamp Weekly*, 1908.

510 Delaware Ave., Buffalo, Nov. 20, 1912.







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# PHILATELIC RAMBLES IN SPANISH AMERICA

## I. The Argentine Republic

The Argentine Republic little resembles its northern neighbors Nicaragua or Honduras, yet those who have not been there are still apt to interpret it in terms of "The Dictator" and "Soldiers of Fortune." True as these entertaining fictions may be to the palms of the Caribbean, they have little more relation to life in Buenos Ayres than Remington's cowboys have to Boston. To peruse those yarns, humorously illustrated, and inserted from time to time in the "polite" magazines by way of paprika relief, one might suppose that all Latin America was a sort of comic-opera land where gigantic young "Anglo-Saxons" stalking through narrow streets like Gulliver among the Lilliputians, had but to roar "Americano" to make presidents resign. It is embarrassing in the extreme, for instance, after you have carefully explained to your host that we have no imperial designs on South America, to have him toss across the table one of our barber-shop papers with a cartoon depicting Uncle Sam as a gigantic paterfamilias spanking a lot of little brown babies, or the Monroe Doctrine as a hen sitting on a lot of South American eggs—as if Argentina, possessing some of the biggest battleships in existence, were not well able to take care of herself, allied as she is to Brazil and Chile for defensive purposes!

Side by side are the new and the old. Under the wilting sunshine of Brazil the pink pills of our New England landscape reappear in lazy Portuguese as the "Pilulas Rosadas para Pessoas Pallidas"; on walls against which Pizarro's men may have leaned, is lifted the hopeful figure of our benevolent Dr. Munyon.

It is only of recent years that the American invasion of South America has extended into the domain of philately.

Now, however, as well as France and other countries, England and America are making up for lost time. Simultaneously appear most painstaking researches,—Charles L. Pack and Pierre Mahé are taking up Brazil for extended study, Mr. Phillips (head of Stanley Gibbons) is writing at great length of Paraguay, while Sr. Simon Barcelo and Dr. José Marco del Pont are internationally known for their studies in the postal issues, respectively, of Venezuela and Argentina. Within two years prices have soared away up, and there is no safer investment today than the older issues, especially, of Argentina and provinces, Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Peru. The “boom” in Mexicans is of longer duration. We may look now for a similar rise in Central American stamps, and surely there is no more fertile and interesting field for study than Guatemala.

A few of the Spanish-speaking countries have always been great favorites of mine in a philatelic way, and so it was with peculiar interest that I haunted the stamp marks of Buenos Ayres. Unfortunately it was before the day of Stanley Gibbons’ successful Argentine branch that now, no doubt, eclipses any of its competitors, which were at that time mere cubby-holes in the alley-like side streets, for the most part conducted by unenterprising but courteous Spaniards. Notable exceptions, which I hasten to record, were the stamp shops conducted by Senores Roberto Rosauer (now, I believe, Gibbons’ agent) and José Sechen.

The President of the republic is elected for six years (would that ours were, or like the French Republic, for seven, and ineligible for re-election)! One must have noticed, in the albums and elsewhere, the prevalence of the prefix “Dr.” before the names of most of those in South American public life. This does not mean that physicians are intruding in politics, but that all lawyers have the degree of “doctor of law,” which is a degree-in-course conferred by the university law schools, corresponding to our bachelor or master of laws. A glance at the wealth of portraiture on Argentine stamps will show that nearly all their national heroes are either General or Doctor; of the former, especially San Martin (the Washington of Argentina), Rivadavia (whose portrait recurs so often), Belgrano, Saavedra, Avellaneda, Urquiza, and William Brown (an English soldier of fortune who commanded the

infant navy in the revolution against Spain); and of those in civil life, Presidents Sarmiento, Celman, and Mitre.

The first stamp was issued in 1858, after the various provinces of the Rio de la Plata had been gathered into what was termed the Argentine Confederation. It consisted of three values, with a roughly drawn representation of the arms of the Confederation. Then followed, in 1862, the first stamps of the republic, with the arms in reduced size in a laureated central frame, oval in shape. In 1864 was inaugurated the long series after series of portraits, and hardly any other country can present such an imposing array, without the slightest taint of speculation attaching to any of these issues. (How many American philatelists are acquainted with even the names of these national heroes?) Surcharges are few, and shown by their history to have been necessary. The first two issues afford joy to the specialist, though they are still readily obtainable for reasonable prices, thanks to the large remainders which came into the hands of dealers when they were withdrawn from issue. However, apart from their historical interest, in itself no small consideration for their study, the portrait series in general is not philatelically of unusual value or attention.

The last series of portraits, prior to the recent interesting commemorative set, was issued in 1892, the designs being plainer and the portraits somewhat renovated and changed, though their subjects are still familiar to us—i. e., on the low values Rivadavia, the great constructive statesman who founded the university, hospitals, and asylums, introduced ecclesiastical and military reform, and infused into legislation a modern, progressive spirit. On the middle values Belgrano appears—a boyish looking man, distinguished for his diplomacy in troubled times; and on the stamps of over a peso figures San Martin—to whom our sympathy goes out as a genuine victim of the proverbial ingratitude of republics—who, after surpassing Napoleon's crossing of the Alps by leading a small army over the Andes in the dead of winter and surprising the Spaniards peacefully encamped in Chile, came into collision with the ambition of Bolivar. Simon Bolivar (accented on the second syllable, not the first) is the type of the swashbuckler general. He had the official title, among others, conferred

on him of "Liberator and Father of his Country, and Terror of Despots!" San Martin, with all of Bolivar's virtues, such as brilliant courage and capacity for sustained effort, had but few of his defects, and refused to accept any grandiose titles save the one of "Founder of Peruvian Liberty." He was unique and truly statesmanlike in his demand for a constitutional monarchy after the expulsion of the Spaniards, claiming that a republic would be anarchy; and time has exactly borne him out. The contrast between the two great leaders comes out best in the famous conference in 1822 at Guayaquil (Ecuador), where San Martin, after freeing Chile, had gone to seek reinforcements for the same task in Peru. But Bolivar declined to send his army to Peru unless he should command in person. The Peruvians, however, refused to accept San Martin's resignation as their commander, and so the scheme fell through. Not knowing himself what the term meant, Bolivar thought that he "saw through" San Martin's modesty. Sadly saying "There is no room for both Bolivar and myself in Peru," San Martin issued a farewell address which has been justly compared to Washington's, and retired to voluntary exile in France, where he lived long enough to witness the dawning prosperity of the countries he had freed. In the Buenos Ayres cathedral I stood by his magnificent tomb—and wondered whether his memory stood in need of it.

And so, as is fitting, San Martin's is the last portrait on the nineteenth century stamps. No less handsome an issue, however, is the one immediately following, which substitutes for portraits of celebrities the Goddess of Liberty, seated with a shield, on which is figured the celebrated cap of liberty. As for commemoratives, Argentina has ever been chary with them. One, quite naturally, was a Columbus Celebration issue (1892), while another, no less pretty a stamp, has, however, less reason for its existence. It commemorates the laying of the first stone of the new (1902) harbor works at Rosario, and was issued throughout the republic during the one day only, being available solely for inland postage. After a cursory inspection of these same harbor works, however, I ceased to wonder at the fuss made over them, for I doubt if there is anything of the kind so extensive in this country.



At Rosario, by the way, the leading philatelic publication of the republic was being issued and was prospering exceedingly at the time of my visit. In the file of the magazine which the editor presented me I find an interesting article on the 1891 and 1899 stamps, the former being a set issued at a time when the country was passing through a period of unusual difficulties, chiefly financial. It seems that the banks in the interior offered little security and the public generally did not confide in them for its exchange transactions, not only because of their high charges, but also because it had no confidence that the operation would successfully result in payment to the addressee. Under such circumstances the system was adopted of remitting the actual cash by means of the postoffice, in packages with the value declared, and for the payment of the postage and fee the 5 and 20 peso stamps were used, according to the value of the sums remitted. In this way there were used in the mails during the year and half of their circulation 2,168 stamps of the 20 peso value, and somewhat more of the lower value. As to the 16c orange of the 1899 issue—not only should it not have been included in the set at all (as it was not necessary to cover any rate) but it was issued later than the other values and retired almost immediately as soon as its uselessness was realized. This, no doubt, accounts for its rarity today in comparison with the rest of this cheap set, Scott pricing it (only twelve years after its issuance) at \$1.75 used, whereas the other centavo values are none of them worth more than twelve cents. Another factor contributing to its comparative rarity was its restricted issue and sale, as it circulated but a short time and was on sale only at the Buenos Ayres postoffice.

If we may return for a moment to the 1892 issue,—another philatelic friend in Buenos Ayres, Senor Alfredo Baudouin, has made a special study of them as well as myself. His researches have dealt with the water-marks more particularly, and according to him three issues exist, each varying from the others in the execution of the water-mark. The second and third types are the most similar and are recognized chiefly in the lines of the rays of the sun; there are other variations which his careful research has brought to light, but they are too minute save for the keenest specialist. The second type, however, is the only

one which may be found in all values. The first and second types are never found on the same sheet, and this seemed to puzzle Sr. Baudouin; for my part, I should be more surprised if they were to be found on one sheet, for it clearly proves that a new water-mark was prepared for the second lot of paper.

The question of water-mark also enters into the Columbus commemorative stamps, which were all printed on paper showing the first water-mark only. At the time of my visit counterfeits of this handsome pair had just been detected by the postoffice authorities, though why it should have been worth while to take such pains to forge issues of so low a value somewhat puzzled them. It needs, however, a well-trained eye to distinguish the fabrications. Perhaps the water-mark is the best test of genuineness, for it is now axiomatic to state that the water-mark never appears complete upon a counterfeit, but usually only two-thirds of it may be seen. Just why this is the case I for one would be very glad to know.

And here we must leave these very cursory and almost non-philatelic notes of a fascinating country, fascinating not less to the student of stamps and their history than to the traveler who seeks in these little-known neighbors of ours sensations quite foreign to any experienced in an old-world civilization. From Argentina I crossed hundreds of miles of rolling pampas, topped on muleback the summit of the lofty Andes and descended the other side into the narrow, elongated republic of Chile, which will also be our next stop philatelically.

*1912.*

## II. Some Notes on Chile

The wall of the Andes begins at the Caribbean and runs all the way down the western edge of South America until it trails off into the Antarctic like a jagged dragon's tail. It is a very high wall and a very wide one—sometimes scores and sometimes hundreds of miles across, and except in a few places all but impassable. There is the Oroya Railroad in central Peru, highest in the world, which will take you from the drowsy tropical coast at breakfast time and by early afternoon set you on the roof of the divide, shivering and breathing fast, 15,500 feet above the sea. But the only railroad crossing the continent is that which climbs the Argentine mountains partway to the pass of Uspallata and tunnels through many a towering mountain on its way to the Chilean capital. It had not quite been completed when I undertook to cross the Andes, and it meant a whole day in a stage drawn by six mules, under the most primitive conditions imaginable. But what an experience! I had almost launched into an attempt at description when I recall that this is supposed to be a philatelic article; but I cannot forbear to mention one dramatic, totally unexpected incident. The mules had been straining for three or four hours when the leader pointed up the slope.

"Cristo!" he said, and a quarter of a mile ahead we saw a gigantic figure standing out against the grey sky. It was the famous statue which Argentina and Chile set there when they signed their peace agreement after the war scare over a boundary dispute nine or ten years ago. It stands on the very summit of the pass over which in 1817 the great San Martin marched his men into Chile to break the power of Spain. It is a statue of Christ, standing beside a huge cross, and on the pedestal two figures in bas relief sitting back to back point out over the tumbled sea of peaks and valleys to east and to west.

To the countries which set this inspiring symbol there, it means, or is meant to mean, an everlasting peace; and to us too it meant peace and that the hardest part of the

journey was over, so we got out and stretched our limbs on the foot of the pedestal on the summit of the divide. One foot was in Chile, the other in Argentina!

It is bromidic to say that the Chileans are the Yankees of South America. Much French, German, and English blood injected during the last century has made the Chileno brusque, businesslike, hustling. It is curious that Chile is the only one of these republics which is German, rather than French, English, American, or Spanish, in tradition—literary, political, military, etc. All the others are more or less French. Most of their armies, for instance, are organized on the French basis, an organization started by Peru, when, after the defeat by Chile, she applied to France to send her a military commission to reorganize her offensive and defensive resources. So well have these officers succeeded that Peru is today one of the strongest of the republics.

But this characteristic, whether it comes from Germany or England, Chile seems to have carried, in a measure, into its stamp collecting. Curiously enough, too, her collectors are all out of proportion to the small number of dealers. No doubt many of them, especially the foreign collectors, purchase their stamps from Buenos Ayres or even from London. Chilean stamps are naturally in the greatest demand, and next come the not less interesting issues of Chile's old enemy and rival, Peru.

Chile, having entered upon its philatelic career on July 1, 1853, was the first South American republic to issue postage stamps, since Brazil was at the time an empire. I do not know exactly why a description of this 1853 issue is called for here, but it would hardly do, even in these cursory notes, to neglect this first issue, which I have long studied and considered as the most interesting single issue ever put forth by a stamp issuing country. So also have thought some of the many writers who have so thoroughly written up this issue that nothing more, apparently, remains to be said, unless it be minor results of my own independent study. For more important data, I would refer students to Mr. Howes, writing in *Mekeel's Weekly*, for February 25, 1905, Mr. Phillips in *Gibbons' Weekly* for April 16, 1910, and J. R. Burton's history of the stamps of Chile which ran in the 1909 volume of the *Philatelic Journal of Great*

*Britain.* However, neglecting all these if they are not accessible, the would-be specialist in Chile will find the most essential desideratum to be Gibbons' catalogue, revised as it is in regard to this country by the most capable hands; and thus equipped, may set out to conquer on his own account.

It is unnecessary to describe the designs of any of the nineteenth century issues, for during half a century of philatelic history there were but a half-dozen varieties of design. Another unique point—during these fifty years the design has invariably centered around the features, idealized of course, of one man, Columbus, whose name in Spanish appears, curiously, on the first issue in larger letters than the name of the country below. Mr. Howes points out that the bust upon them was for many years the subject of an amusing controversy as to its identity; yet all this time it was boldly proclaiming itself as "Colon." One might suppose that among the multitude of collectors who flourished before the end of the dispute in 1871, there would be some who knew enough of history or Spanish to be aware that the great discoverer was known to Spain as Cristobal Colon!

Two dies were engraved on steel by Messrs. Perkins, Bacon & Co., the famous engravers of British colonials, a 5c and a 10c, the first printing of the stamps being 300,000 of the 5c and 200,160 of the 10c. The sheets were not perforated; indeed, one of the features of Chilean stamps is their freedom from perforation complications. The bulk of even the small number that were printed has evidently been lost to philately, as shown by their scarcity; in fact, unused they are quite within the first class of rarities. They are generally found cancelled (says Mr. Burton) with the postmark of four concentric rings surrounding six or seven straight lines, which quite likely was the work of the obliterateurs sent from England; also occasionally with large letters forming parts of the names of Santiago and Valparaiso. The patient investigator may find the cognomen of other cities; I have only run across what I judge to be Aconcagua, but at Santiago was shown a couple of others.

Each plate was made up of twenty horizontal rows of twelve each—the same arrangement as for the early English stamps, which suited well enough the irregular

British currency but was not so well adapted to decimal coinage. Mention of this issue would not be complete without the line of instructions in the margin on each of the four sides. A translation of this curious admonition is as follows: "Place the stamp exactly above the address and towards the right. In moistening the back tack care not to remove the gum"!

The great bugbear of the early issues, of course, is in the various printings, and here the great advantage comes in of a working knowledge of Spanish, a knowledge ready to be put to the test right on the spot, for not nearly all of the early papers, notices, and decrees have been translated. I found access to the archives easy and extremely profitable. If I seem in this article to have neglected that opportunity and to have brought to light little not already familiar to English-speaking students, be it remembered that I am saving myself for a future article and that these are but cursory notes; "he who runs may read," and if he runs not too speedily, he may yet pick up an item or two of use to him.

In our previous paragraphs, intent on the circumstances of the issuance of the 1853 stamps, we did not pause to consider the printings, and since they were written I have come across a list compiled by Charles J. Phillips which takes most of the wind out of my sails. Those interested in the technicalities of the subject will do well to refer to *Gibbons' Weekly* of April 16, 1910. Suffice it to say here that the postal authorities having underestimated the demand for the stamps, various local printings had to be made in Santiago pending the arrival of another supply from London, and three printings in 1854 were made from the plate of the 5 centavo stamp, the colors being, according to Mr. Phillips, pale reddish-brown, deep reddish-brown, and chestnut brown. To this list I would add a reddish chocolate, a number of which I picked up in Santiago. Some time ago I was on the brink of another discovery—a dark brick color variety; but it seemed too good to be true, and it was. Moral: beware of changelings! I have known, by the way, the color of a stamp to be changed simply from being exposed for a short time to the fumes and vapors always to be found in a laboratory's atmosphere. In the case in question, an application of

peroxide of hydrogen was all that was necessary to make the offending specimen resume its virginal hue.

Of the Perkins-Bacon 10c steel plate, the same gentleman, Mr. Desmadryl, made a small printing in two distinct shades, blue and sky-blue. These stamps are clearly printed but the colors are rather dull. They are very rare unused and are scarce used.

The great change in the next printings is the radical one of lithographing, instead of, as heretofore, engraving. Lithography (if we may put in another "aside") has but one advantage over engraving as a stamp-printing process; it is cheaper, but that is more than offset by three chief defects which come readily to mind—firstly, lithographed stamps are easily counterfeited, a result produced in part, of course, by the fundamental difference in the process which makes an engraving clean-cut and a lithograph "messy" at best; secondly, lithographing-stones wear out too quickly, for an artist will tell you that ordinarily four times as many engravings or etchings may be "pulled" as lithographs; and the third weakness is the number of defective specimens which must inevitably be the result if stamps are lithographed.

The lithographed stamps, even the ordinary ones without flaws, have always been rare in Chile, especially the first of the shades, which are thus grouped by Mr. Phillips: (5c), brown, light brown, pale red-brown, chestnut-brown, dull red-brown. These lithographed stamps can generally be distinguished quite easily from the engraved, if not by the unaided eye then by the use of a good glass. The lines in the background are blurred and indistinct and the whole appearance of the stamp is very flat and smooth.

Three more local printings were made, the last two by the postoffice, and two new supplies arrived from London, in 1855 and 1862. Thus ends the summary of the early printings, but we must not omit to add as a reminder that the Perkins-Bacon printings were on paper heavily blued, and the water-mark differentiates between them. Before leaving the Perkins-Bacon stamps it will be well to say, too, that the stamps met with on ribbed paper or on paper water-marked with part of the Chilean arms are supposed to be proofs, no genuinely used specimens having, so far as I know, yet been found.

At the end of 1866 the government abandoned both their own printing department and their old contractors, Perkins-Bacon & Co., and obtained a supply from the American Bank Note Co., the new contract being probably the first stamp-agreement ever entered into by this benefactor of South American states. The rest of the postage-stamp history of Chile need not here detain us, for it is an old story and the most that I could contribute to it would be descriptions of minor varieties. Let us rather adapt the saying "Nihil humani est mihi alienum," and, with the principle that nothing pertaining to Chile's postal history is too small or uninteresting for our purpose, pass on to consider briefly what I like to regard as the cousins of stamps, acknowledging gratefully our indebtedness to Mr. Howes for extracts from an unpublished paper of great interest.

I refer first to the large brown 5c stamp with the letters A. R. at the bottom. This was issued in August, 1894, for prepaying the return receipt for registered letters, the receipt not being returned free to the sender as in this country; the letters stand for "Aviso de recepcion." The stamp was current several years, but we have no advice as to the date of its suppression. The other stamp is a modification of the design of the brown stamp, having at the bottom, instead of the letters "A.R.," the inscription in French, "Avis de Paiement"; it was intended exclusively for paying the fee charged for receipts of payment on international money orders, which explains the inscription in French on a stamp of Spanish antecedents. This stamp was chronicled in August, 1897, but according to the best information obtainable was never put in use. Both the above stamps were lithographs of Chilean production.

Then there are the postage dues and the telegraph stamps, the former especially being so interesting that many an article consecrated entirely to the three issues of these stamps appears in the journals of from ten to twenty years ago. The first set of dues was very crude, being a device of the Valparaiso postmaster, and they were made by a hand-stamp something like a postmarking contrivance. I have seen covers with this circular emblem stamped directly upon the envelope, no different from a cancellation, but, due perhaps to the forgetfulness of the postmen in handing in the cash received for these unchecked hand-stamps,



they were stamped after a while on sheets of yellow paper, which were then gummed and perforated.

This crude but interesting issue was, of course, merely to fill in and on January 1, 1895, the regular set of dues made its appearance, lithographed in rose on yellow paper, in sheets of 100; there were two printings, the first of one thousand, the second of two thousand sheets,\* which in both cases contained ten rows of ten stamps each. Next year a second printing became necessary, the paper was changed to lemon color and, because of liability of confusion with the 1 centavo, the 1 peso was altered to 100c., which, by the way, is an exceedingly rare stamp. All these stamps are scarce postmarked but are more frequently met with obliterated with the word "Multada," enclosed in a long parallelogram. An entirely new set, the feature of which is the huge numeral in the center, appeared in 1898.

Telegraph stamps play a larger part in Chile's postal history than with most countries, and are by no means scarce. They were abolished by a decree dated October 10, 1903, so that a large quantity of the 1902 issue (uncatalogued, for some reason, by Scott) was left on hand. When, therefore, it became necessary to issue provisionals to supply low value postage stamps in 1904, these telegraph remainders came in very handy. Mr. Howes assures us that the "errors" are fraudulent.

Of not all of these stamps (as it has been quite evident) have I been able to speak from personal observation, and it goes without saying that I did not investigate at first hand what may be called Chile's two postal colonies, Juan Fernandez and Tierra del Fuego; one the rocky island many miles west from Valparaiso which Robinson Crusoe is reputed to have made famous, and the other the bleak expanse at the end of the continent, Chile's title to which is disputed by Argentina. The two are alike also in that their postal status is not above suspicion, and even Mr. Phillips, writing, in the June, 1912, number of the *Monthly Journal*, under the self-confessed influence of a recent acquisition of a "great stock" of Tierra del Fuego labels, only succeeds in convincing us that they are bona-fide local stamps, for Chilean stamps had to appear side by side with

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\* Mr. Burton in *Philatelic Journal of Great Britain* reverses these figures.

the lone Fuegian stamp in order that it might have carrying power outside the territory. They are offered for sale at 50 cents, and, whatever their status, they should be worth that amount.

Notwithstanding a feeling, which is more than suspicion, that these notes are hardly worth while, despite their brave beginning and expectations, we will see next month what we can discover among the wilds of Bolivia, aided not only by loose-leaf blank albums and a working library, but by well-thumbed notebooks of a voyage which will last many years in memory.

*1912.*

## THE STORY OF TRINIDAD

Both the philatelic and political history of the "principality" of Trinidad may be easily told, and if it seems to be here unduly prolix, it is because adequate attention has seldom been paid to a tale which would be ridiculous, a fit setting for a roaring opera-bouffe, were it not too pathetic. Wherever I have, in fact, followed up this curious, almost unbelievable story, pathos has been the dominant emotion; we who know better, we who are fortunately more prosaic, may sneer at the unrealized and unrealizable dream of Prince James I., but to him it was a very real dream, in which he staked not alone money but life, and the final, inevitable outcome of which spelled ruin and tragedy.

But before going on immediately to the story of this tragi-comedy, logical order demands first to know just what and where Trinidad is, and just why an independent government there was doomed to failure from the start. We must not confuse our Trinidad with the British West Indian colony of the same name, which it resembles in name only.

Trinidad, a tropical island about five miles in length by two wide, is to be found 700 miles nearly due eastward from the Brazilian part of Bahia. Several of the navigators who have set foot there have left on record their impressions, which are anything but flattering. Mr. Knight, who first landed there in 1881, says: "Our adventures of various sorts, the perils of landing, the attacks made on us by the multitudes of hideous land-crabs and ferocious sea-birds, our difficult climb over the volcanic mountains, and finally our anything but regretful departure from one of the most uncanny and dispiriting spots on earth, are fully set forth in my earlier book *"The Cruise of the Falcon."* During the eighties and early 'nineties, however, the land-

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With acknowledgments to E. F. Knight (*The Cruise of the "Alerte,"* London, 1891), and to Richard Harding Davis (*Real Soldiers of Fortune,* New York, 1906), from both of which books material has been taken, in the case of the latter with permission of Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons.

crabs and sea-birds of Trinidad must have become almost familiarized with the sight of man, for the report of a vast treasure supposed to have been buried there about ninety years ago induced no less than five different bands of adventurers in the course of twelve years to fit out expensive vessels for the purpose of seeking their fortunes among the volcanic ash.

Of these expeditions, Mr. Knight, himself, believing thoroughly in the truth of the report, organized the most important and the most persevering, for, chartering a large yacht, he set sail, with a trusty crew and some of his intrepid friends, in August, 1889, for Treasure Island. This they sighted on November 20th. The search for the treasure was not abandoned till the middle of February, and if this party, admirably equipped in every way, could not succeed in finding it, it is safe to assume either that insurmountable natural difficulties intervened, or that the treasure had been made away with beforehand. (Do not be sceptical and remark that it might never have been there at all! That is a hypothesis, of course, but all the evidence points indisputably to the fact that Trinidad was once the hiding place of an immense treasure, plundered from Peruvian mines and cathedrals.)

Going back, then, to the day when the island was sighted, Mr. Knight tells us that "the scenery was indescribably savage and grand, and its effect was heightened by the roaring of the surf on the beach and the echoes of it in the ravines, as well as by the shrill and melancholy cries of thousands of sea-birds. . . . My companions had expected, from what I had told them, to find this islet a strange, uncanny place, barren, torn by volcanic action and generally forbidding, and now they gazed at the shore with amazement, and confessed that my description of its scenery was anything but exaggerated. It would be impossible to convey in words a just idea of the mystery of Trinidad. The very coloring seems unearthly—in places dismal black, and in others the fire-consumed crags are of strange, metallic hues, vermillion red and copper yellow. When one lands on its shores—if one can—this uncanny impression is enhanced. It bears all the appearance of being an accursed spot, whereupon no creatures can live save the hideous land-crabs and foul and cruel sea-birds."

Add to this striking impression of Prince James's domain the fact that "one of the most unpleasant peculiarities of this island is, that it is nowhere solid; it is rotten throughout, its substance has been disintegrated by volcanic fires and by the action of water, so that it is everywhere tumbling to pieces," and we have a combination of circumstances which leads one to surmise sometimes that the promoter of the enterprise for an independent government on this uninhabitable islet could hardly have been in the full possession of his senses.

Intermingled with many a picturesque description of the grand but terrible scenery of the island, the rest of Mr. Knight's book is concerned with the search for the hidden treasure, and how the party toiled, week after week, with their hopes of reward receding as time went on, how they overturned tons of earth and blasted innumerable huge rocks, their nights rendered almost sleepless by the incessant attacks of the savage land-crabs and the heat of the days almost unbearable, is a story of devotion to an ideal, even if a mercenary one, which carries the reader irresistibly with it and makes him feel as if he were himself a member of the intrepid party. It is sad to think that all the energy of these men had been spent in vain. They well deserved to succeed, and all the more so because they bore their disappointment with such philosophical cheeriness.

So far the first and only ruler of Treasure Island was the author of the book from which I have so freely quoted. Mr. Knight quitted the islet without bethinking himself of the possibilities which later came to the "prince's" fertile brain, for Knight was mercenary enough to think no more of Trinidad after it had been proved impossible to coax from its reluctant soil its vast treasure. James Harden-Hickey was cast in different, nobler mold. He had in view the benefits to mankind of the utopian government which he would set up on this promising land.

Prince James, indeed, was one of the most picturesque, gallant, and pathetic adventurers of our day. James A. Harden-Hickey, Prince James I. of Trinidad, Baron of the Holy Roman Empire, was born in 1854, and was educated in France, where, in the irreligious days of the Second Empire, his championship of the Catholic Church brought him his papal title. His brief acquaintance with his "do-

main" occurred about a year after the departure of the unsuccessful treasure-hunting expedition, when the British steamer on which he was making a voyage around the world touched at the lonely island to replenish its water-casks. Whether the baron's mad idea was premeditated or not, there is no means of saying; but, no doubt with the impression that the treasure was still to be found by the right party, he went ashore with the boat, and, as a piece of no man's land, claimed it in his own name.

For the next two years nothing was heard of the newly-made prince. The great sovereigns of the world little dreamed that a new ruler was shortly to take his place among them, till one day, in 1893, he announced himself in a proclamation to the powers as Prince James I. of the independent principality of Trinidad. Somehow, remarks Mr. Davis, it failed to create a world crisis. Yet the baron continued none the less earnestly to play the part of king. A friend of his French student days, Count de la Boissière, was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs and established a Chancellery in Thirty-sixth Street, New York. The "prospectus" of the island, written in French, by the prince and signed by "Le Grand Chancelier," announced that the new state would be governed for the time being by a military dictatorship, that the royal standard was a yellow triangle on a red ground, and that the arms of the principality were "d'Or chapé de Gueules." It pointed out naively that those who first settled on the island (the same "accursed spot, whereupon no creatures can live"! ) would be naturally the oldest inhabitants and hence would form the aristocracy. For itself the state reserved a monopoly of the guano, of the turtles, and of the buried treasure. And both to discover the treasure and to encourage settlers to dig and cultivate the soil, a percentage of the treasure was promised to the colonist who found it. To reward his subjects for prominence in literature, the arts, and the sciences, his Majesty even established an order of chivalry! For himself, Prince James commissioned a firm of jewelers to construct a royal crown.

For some time the affairs of the new kingdom, according to Mr. Davis, progressed favorably. An agent was even established on the island and the construction of very necessary docks was begun.

And then came the end, the sudden, bitter end. In July, 1895, while constructing a cable to Brazil, Great Britain, previously indifferent to its existence, found the principality of Trinidad—a sovereign state, be it remembered—lying in the direct line she wished to follow, and, as a cable station, seized it. Count de la Boissière, faithful to his post, was equal to the crisis. As Minister of Foreign Affairs, he addressed a circular note to all the powers of Europe, and to our State Department a vehement protest. It was received by Richard Olney, Secretary of State. This great statesman, saying that he was unable to read the handwriting, turned it over as a “crank” letter to the Washington correspondents; you can imagine what they did with it. But in spite of the ridicule, to the man himself and to the friend who had stuck by him it all was terribly real.

Prince James did not long survive the blow, for, self-slain, the end came to him in 1898. The Chancellery, however, still stands; the Count de la Boissière is regent for the prince’s son should he ever wish to claim his crown. But England, whom we all thought so generous, has rung down the curtain on the tragedy.

The philatelic chapter of the tale is more briefly told. The non-philatelic Mr. Davis disposes of it in short order: “The prince issued a set of postage stamps on which was a picture of the island. They were of various colors and denominations, and among stamp collectors enjoyed a certain sale. Today, as I found when I tried to procure one to use in this book, they are worth many times their face value.”

Their value, which the novelist exaggerates, is now, of course, not as stamps so much as curiosities. From the first, the issue, in spite of all the efforts of the faithful Chancellor, was regarded with suspicion. The stamps were issued in October, 1894. Like their brethren of similar doubtful status, they are handsomely printed, as the reproduction will show; they are perforated about 11. The values are as follows, the center being in all cases black:

5 centimes green.	75 centimes mauve.
10 centimes brown.	1 franc red.
25 centimes blue.	5 francs grey.
50 centimes orange.	



At the time of their issue, the set was quoted at from \$1.50 to \$2, or about face value, but, these being the days of the activity of the Society for the Suppression of Speculative Stamps, "considerable doubts were soon cast upon their authenticity," in spite of a letter from Count de la Boissière, appearing in the *Monthly Journal* for April, 1895: ". . . As regards the postage stamps, they have not been introduced to satisfy the curiosity of collectors, but for use where their like are usually employed. The financial personal condition of the prince, however, removes every suspicion that his enterprise be destined to cover some speculation not owned to." Major Evans wondered how "Prince James I. and his predecessors (if any) could have got on so long without them."

It is impossible that any of these stamps can ever have franked a letter. They cannot have even the status of local stamps, for there was no postoffice in Trinidad.

And so Harden-Hickey's philatelic history is on a par with the rest of his career. Had the enterprise succeeded, these same stamps would today command a handsome premium over their face value; but so often one of the penalties of failure is ridicule, and it holds true in philately.

1912.



# THE PREMIER PHILATELIC LIBRARY

Of the making of books about books there is apparently no end; the profession of the bibliographer is taking its place with the others, and is surely as "learned" as some of its fellows. Some of our universities even have Library Schools and in the library of today no one not a graduate of one of them may hope to rise from being a mere cataloguer. And yet this same cataloguing is no small task, and success at it no small achievement. Witness, for instance, the stupendous labor so intelligently performed by that best-known and most esteemed of English philatelic literature enthusiasts, Mr. E. D. Bacon, who has recently published a catalogue of the Earl of Crawford's philatelic library.\*

Our first thought, perhaps, at running through the pages is not so much admiration at the wonderful collection described, but rather a certain amazed awe at the amount of work which the compiler has taken upon himself. And this is as it should be, for, though we take it that Mr. Bacon has been in Lord Crawford's employment during the task involved, still it is evident that he has contributed to it the enthusiasm as well as the energy which is associated with his reputation. Nor has the owner of the library been any less liberal, for it is only his due to say that he originally commissioned the work to be compiled and printed for private circulation only, offering later the right to publish a catalogue of their own to the society, which could use the original private volume as the guide, and no doubt the plates as well, obviating much of the expense. The circulation of the present work will be little more general than that of the first edition, for only 300 copies were printed and of these 100 were reserved for members.

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\* Catalogue of the Philatelic Library of the Earl of Crawford, K. T., President of the Royal Philatelic Society, London. By E. D. Bacon, F. R. P. S., etc. Paper, totally uncut, large 4to. London: The Philatelic Literature Society, 1911.

The first part of the catalogue is headed "Separate Works," while the second part is confined to "Periodicals." An appendix gives the list of journals arranged under the countries in which they were published in chronological sequence. That the number of papers which stand to a country's credit (or discredit) is not to be taken as a measure of its philatelic importance, is proved, for instance, by the cases of the United States and France, which have, respectively, roughly 880 and 130 journals listed. England is sponsor for approximately 325. Practically every country which has issued stamps also has published one or more stamp journals which are represented in this library,—from Curacao to San Marino.

We of the land where the philatelic "magazine" is put forth so irresponsibly are interested in knowing that a great portion of this immense collection, if not indeed its foundations, were secured from this country. In 1903, acting for Lord Crawford, Stanley Gibbons, Ltd., bought (for \$10,000 it was said somewhere) the Tiffany library. Until it was merged with the English collection, this library, and that owned by Judge Frankel, were the largest of their kind extant, and it was estimated that the Tiffany accumulation was kept up to date to such an extent that it included 97 per cent. of all the philatelic literature ever published. Volumes could be written about John Kerr Tiffany, of St. Louis, who died April 3, 1897; that the American Philatelic Society was not slow in recognizing his attainments is proved by his presidency of that society for the ten years prior to his death. The times were filled with conflict and struggle, but it was largely by his dignity, his keen intellect, his effective and scholarly pen and speech, that the society so successfully weathered all difficulties. It was in the evening of his life that it was our good fortune to know him. As when, the day's work done and the worries of its earlier hours laid aside, we live over in thought the events of the day that is gone, the misunderstandings lose their bitterness. Here was a man, a busy lawyer, whose limitless energy and devotion built up a great, diversified society; but who did not swerve from duty as he understood it to follow the easy popularity which might well have been his. The burdens that he bore and the labors that he accomplished rested in the last analysis on a substratum of

self-denying service. To be sure, he might have crowned all this service by bequeathing the great philatelic library which we still lack, but after some years this invaluable collection passed out of the country into the hands of one so much better able to care for it, and, no doubt, to appreciate it, that any criticism would react on those with the bad taste to voice it.

The collector of philatelic literature must have everything, unless he limits himself, as well he may, to merely a working collection; and it is an excellent thing that a few complete, or nearly complete, collections of this kind should be made. But it would be infinitely better if an adequate index to these accumulations could be compiled so as to enable the student to find without difficulty all that has been published upon the subject he wants to work at. All success, then, to the herculean task which the American Philatelic Society has imposed upon Mr. W. R. Ricketts. We hope that the mass of matter to be dealt with may not grow more quickly than the index itself, and we are beginning to regard the ideal index as one of those works that will be found in the same library (ideal, no doubt) as the ideal catalogue and the ideal album.

Doubtless the Earl of Crawford paid a number of what the newspapers call fancy prices for some of the rarest items in his collection. To what are we coming, some of my readers may ask, when tremendous prices are paid for mere pamphlets—pamphlets, too, not dealing with anything sensible, but with such things as postage stamps? Well really, gentlemen, I cannot tell you, but it may be that we are coming to our senses! It is simple logic. Philately is no longer a hobby, it is a science; as science, it must have a literature; it is inevitable, then, that parts of that literature will be more sought after than others. Still, there are many people who regard books with the same eye; people to whom the name of Major Evans signifies no more than that of Ella Wheeler Wilcox; "books is books," is their firm conviction. Perhaps, after the wonderful Hoe sale, with its million dollars realized for the first few sessions, we needed some reminder that there are rare philatelic books as well as rare *incunabula* and Gutenberg Bibles. To those of us who dabble more or less in the production of what we delude ourselves to be philatelic literature,

something of a library is indispensable. In our collecting we cannot all hope to be Crawfords, but the publication of the list of his titles (with, of course, many valuable details concerning them), will more than ever focus attention on the desirability, even the necessity, of a good working library to the real student of stamps.

*1911.*

## THE DALTON LOCAL

"Of course the Dalton local on buff paper has long been one of the greatest of American rarities. But four copies, to my knowledge, are known to exist; there is one in the collection of the Prince of Wales, one in a French senator's album, and another somewhere in Russia."

"And the fourth stamp?" I put in.

"You are looking at it now," my friend said after a proper pause for effect.

With some perplexity I looked up at the man who had so unassumingly announced his kinship with England's heir, in some doubt whether to seem amazed or amused. Then I bent down over the page, but I am no true philatelist (as I believe they call themselves). All I could see was a postmaster's stamp with the date "Nov. 24, 1847," scrawled across it in yellow ink, the cover which bore it being in rather a remarkable state of preservation.

Being a middle-aged lawyer of only average ability, my friend is not a man of great means. He has few acquaintances, and I presume he would call his hobbies his best friends. First it was stamps, of which his original collection had been sold fully fifteen years ago; then it was photography, but that soon subsided; next he pestered busy people for autograph letters, and his walls are still lined with frames containing short, ill-natured notes; then the stamp fever came back with renewed force a few years ago, and now it is nothing but "provisional surcharge," "unpaid letter used as postage," till I am anxious to take him south for a complete cure. I cannot tell just why I like him, for he has no positive traits; he is simply a blameless, kindly, contented gentleman, perhaps a trifle self-centered, yet one whose life is ordered according to the precepts of many admired philosophers.

I lit my pipe again and glanced around Olin's familiar but always curious study. The room is furnished with no precision or propriety, the furniture, such as it is, having

drifted in as needed; here is a low couch, there an oak bookcase with a curious assortment, Blackstone next to Kingsley and Leslie Stephen; a portrait or two, one that of the dean of Olin's law-school, whose hopes for his brilliant future have slowly faded as time has gone on. There is no plan of decoration; all a delightful miscellany.

Outside, all was unutterably still that night; for we were at the very end of the little town, and we could feel the deep tranquillity of the country-side nestling down into itself. I was in the mood for a story; under our eyes was an excellent subject: the history of how one of the four most valuable stamps in existence came into the hands of this country attorney.

"It's an inheritance," Olin began, "the only thing of any value which my father left me twenty years ago. I suppose you don't remember my father; as a lawyer he was no more successful than I have been, but he did work harder, so much so in fact that it was nervous prostration that carried him off. When I came to probate the will, I found my inheritance small enough,—the house and horse (both I immediately sold), Blackstone, Carter's *Federal Courts*, Cooley on Legislative Power, Reed's *Conduct of Law Suits*, and another book worth more than any legal library that I ever saw," and he pointed to the precious album.

"Well, the first case that father ever handled came to him simply because he was the only lawyer in the family. My great-aunt had died, she was a rich lady, and there must have been great excitement in the Olin family when the news came, for who would get the estate? Father immediately telegraphed the executor that he would like to probate the will, and took the next train for Dalton. But the trip did no good, for on his arrival he found that the will had been mailed, sealed and unopened, a few hours after the testatrix's death. It had probably, the executor thought, reached Milford by this time. So back my father went, but the document had not yet arrived. This was in the forties, you see, and from Virginia to New York State there were many chances for delay. So father was not especially worried.

"But when day after day went by and no will came, you can imagine how my father felt. According to the custom

of the Olin family—which, as you know, was another of my inheritances—he began to take life very easily, never going down to the office till after the postman had called, and always stopping at the postoffice, too, on his way downtown.

“So a month passed; that precious letter was at the most a fortnight overdue, and something must be done. So father scraped up fifty dollars and again went south, this time taking me with him for company. I was glad enough, of course, of the chance to get away from school, and then, too, I felt the responsibility of being for once my father’s guardian, for, young as I was, I could see that he might break down any day under the strain of watching and waiting. He had contracted debt after debt simply on the strength of the old lady’s inheritance. I was conscious that ruin might follow if the will should not turn up.

“But that trip, too, did no good. The executor remembered distinctly having mailed the will, and that was all the satisfaction we got. Gradually father became reconciled to the loss; but even up to the time of his death, it would now and then come up, and he and mother would sit by the reading-lamp for hours at a time, trying to puzzle it out. Harry, it was pitiful; and I had to sit by and do nothing.”

Olin’s eyes wandered down to the open album stretched out on his desk, and were fixed thoughtfully, reminiscently, on the precious stamp before him.

“Well, I have no doubt but that the perplexing matter really hastened his death. It was about a year afterwards that he did not come down when breakfast was ready, and mother said she would not disturb such a quiet sleep for all the clients in the world, let alone the farmer or two that formed father’s patronage then. So we waited breakfast, but when mother finally went up, she found that she could not awaken him.

“In time I succeeded to the practice, of course; out of friendship my father’s partner even took me into the firm. But that little lift did not last long and I was soon left to struggle along in my own way. I sold my first stamp collection to pay my tailor, but the parting came pretty hard, and it wasn’t long before I was getting together another.

“I was firmly settled in the rut, when one day I heard that while cleaning out some boxes in the postoffice base-

ment, a fellow-collector had struck a windfall. As fast as the car could take me I was on the spot, and what a find that was! A young postoffice clerk named Ransome was busy sorting out envelopes and postal cards, none of them less than fifty years old. Breathlessly I asked for first choice on what he could not use, and stood watching eagerly while he delved into the huge chest.

"'Hello,' he said, pausing while he held up a long, yellow envelope to the light; "'Amos Barton Olin, Esq., Counsellor-at-law, Milford, New York,"—that's your name, isn't it?"

"'Why, yes,' I said; 'that's my name right enough, but that can't be for me. Look at the age of the thing.'

"Then it suddenly came over me that I was a junior, that my father's name had been Amos, too, and that it was undoubtedly meant for him. So I explained it to Ransome and put the bundle in my pocket without more thought. The find, however, was not so wonderful after all, and after giving Ransome a dollar for a few covers, I walked back uptown.

"When I was at my desk again I drew out the lost letter and broke the legal seal. It was dated 'Dalton, Va.,' and across the top of the paper was printed 'Estate of Amelia Deering.' My great-aunt! There was a thick enclosure, too, and I drew out the foolscap with a heavy heart. I glanced through the document; learned that my aunt had died in the lively hope of the life eternal; that \$1,000 was to go to her neighbor and executor; and that she gave, devised and bequeathed to her affectionate nephew Amos B. Olin all her real estate in the township of Dalton, valued at upwards of \$18,000.

"I gasped. The old dreams of my youth all came back pell-mell crowding upon my dazed memory: eighteen thousand dollars—a fortune to me. Ah, but the will was void now, for well I remembered that the Virginia law constitutes fifty years as the time during which the terms of a will are valid,—and I could still read, on the heavy red seal, the date of fifty-five years ago.

"I began to wish now that the will had never come to light: 'when ignorance is bliss,'—you know. I was turning the envelope over absent-mindedly, when my eye suddenly caught sight of the stamp."



"And it was this one?" I put in.

Olin nodded.

"And yet I have never sold it," he added. "I can't say why; the secretary to Senator de Maistre has more than once offered 10,000 francs for it. Well, they can sell it if they like, after I am gone. But not before."

*1905.*

12 APR 1955

