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WORLD RULERS WHO ARE OR HAVE BEEN PHILATELISTS

Center: President Roosevelt. Reading clockwise from top center: Carol II and Marie of Roumania; George V, Edward VIII and George VI of Great Britain; Wilhelmina of Holland, Alexander III of Russia, Alfonso XIII of Spain, Porfirio Diaz of Mexico, Victor Emmanuel III of Italy and Manuel of Portugal.

ALVIN F. HARLOW

PAPER CHASE

THE AMENITIES OF STAMP COLLECTING

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	THE INEVITABLE HOBBY	1
II	THE YOUNG LADIES BEGAN IT	11
III	THEM WAS THE DAYS	26
IV	FROM THE GENERAL TO THE PARTICULAR	50
V	THE BIOLOGY OF A STAMP	68
VI	"COLLECT A MILLION STAMPS AND—"	88
VII	NASSAU STREET	98
VIII	RARAE AVES OF THE STREET	116
IX	NOTABILITIES, HUMAN AND INANIMATE	134
X	BEDTIME STORIES	162
XI	GOVERNMENTAL FIVE-AND-TENS	180
XII	TREASONS, STRATAGEMS AND SPOILS	206
XIII	"—NOR CUSTOM STALE HER INFINITE VARIETY"	224
XIV	LETTERS FROM THE GROUND FLOOR	248
XV	THE PAGEANTRY OF THE POST	270
XVI	LUCIFERS AND LIVER REGULATORS	288
XVII	THE BYWAYS AND HEDGES	302
XVIII	IS IT WORTH WHILE?	325
	ACKNOWLEDGMENT	341
	INDEX	343

ILLUSTRATIONS

World rulers who are or have been philatelists *Frontis.*

PAGE

What often happened to your letters in pre-envelope days 22

Rowland Hill and the first postage stamp 23

An American postman of 1865 33

J. Walter Scott and his store in 1878 38

Crystal Palace, Winfield Scott and Elihu Burritt Envelopes 39

An American Post Office of 1860 54

A $20,000 page. The August issue of 1861 55

United States revenue inverted centers 70

Inverted centers of the world 71

Numerous concerns sell stamps by the pound 94

Post office at Albano, Papal States, 1850 95

Modern post office at Vatican City 95

Old Dutch Church Post Office, New York City 102

Our first two stamps, the 5 and 10 cent of 1847 103

Dealers' advertising frames in Nassau Street 118

World's highest and lowest post offices: summit of the Jungfrau and Sea Floor off Bahamas 119

Great collectors 134

The seven United States inverted centers 135

Senator Mead and his stamp collection 150

Rare stamps stored in specially built safes 151

Envelopes of Western expresses 190

PAGE

A Gold-Rush mining town post office 191

Transferring mail on Union Pacific in 1876 191

The smallest post office, Searsburg, Vermont 214

Early R.F.D. wagon used in Mississippi 214

Oddities in envelope corner cards 215

Dockwra's Postmarks 225

Curious home-made cancellations 227

Grotesque home-made cancellations 233

Cancellations on New York ship mail, 1871-76 237

Congressman franking laundry home to be washed 251

Jackson, Franklin, Hancock and Washington franks 262

President Grant frank 263

Samples of specialized stamp collections 278

Hand-painted covers autographed by world rulers 279

Order book of Butler & Carpenter 294

A match stamp page from Holcombe album 295

Envelope from Lundy Island with curious local stamps 302

Balloon and zinc ball letters, Paris, 1871 303

Graf Zeppelin 'Round-the-World envelope 303

Civil War patriotic envelopes 310

Rare air-mail letters 311

Stamps in sheets bought as speculation 326

Expert checking perforations on a stamp 326

Scenes at annual spring stamp fair in London 327

Children's stamp bourse, Paris, 1875 329

THE INEVITABLE HOBBY

CHAPTER ONE

THREE of us, including a young author who had just written a best-selling novel, were talking together not so long ago. The third man drew a folder of paper matches from his pocket to light a cigarette. The author's eyes shone at sight of it and he uttered a glad cry: "Gosh, there's a new one! May I have it, please? I'll give you another one for it!" Believe it or not, the man who had written a novel which delighted tens of thousands of readers was himself a collector of books—paper match books. . . .

There are very few persons incapable of becoming interested in hobbies. I have known men who in their youth were total strangers to them but who became intrigued by one in middle or older life and went perfectly, gloriously nutty over it. As for collecting, there is no telling how or when it began. Perhaps old man Neanderthal had a ledge full of skulls or lethal clubs or some fine pelts which he liked to drape over a rock, one by one, and bore a new acquaintance with: "Now, this big wolf I killed with my bare hands right up the gulch yender to your left. It was a cold, frosty morning—" and so on and on.

Our American Indians' collections of enemy scalps, their strings of teeth and quills and bear claws, were all for van-

ity's sake—pride in prowess and personal adornment. To collect things for their own sake required the objective touch of civilization. Wealthy Romans of the empire period picked up gems or vases or sculpture in a desultory way—collecting beauty and costliness—and an occasional fine library. Yet we do not find in Classic times the urge to collect because of oddity, rarity, or historic significance, nor yet the compulsion to assemble everything belonging to a certain category. That was another step, one which developed centuries later, and is only seen at its best today in the accumulation of old books, coins and stamps.

The editor of *Young England* remarked in 1862:

> The use and charm of collecting any kind of object is to educate the mind and the eye to careful observation, accurate comparison and just reasoning on the differences and likenesses which they present and to interest the collector in the design or art shewn in the creation or manufacture, and the history of the country which produces or uses the object collected.

So *that's* why people collect match folders and milk-bottle caps!

It is a curious and significant fact that there was little collecting of any sort in America up to 1850 or '60. A gentleman in Connecticut in the later eighteenth century who assembled a modest assortment of "natural specimens" became quite a celebrity thereby, and if present academic customs had prevailed then, he would have been LL.D., D.Sc., a National Academician and a member of a dozen learned societies in no time. Natural specimens—geology, botany, zoology—were about all that anyone could think of as collectors' material then. Over in England, boys went in for that sort of thing. An English school principal

wrote to the papers in 1860, saying that he had just learned that some of his pupils were collecting postage stamps, that he thought it a very educational and meritorious pastime, and wanting to know why there were no dealers issuing printed lists of stamps, as there were of birds' eggs, shells, butterflies and other natural specimens. He was very soon to be gratified.

Up to the middle of the nineteenth century, Americans had been too busy getting a foothold in the wilderness, building a government, establishing commerce and industry and accumulating some necessary personal dollars to think of hobbies. A few small public museums—mostly paintings or badly stuffed birds and animals—were functioning on starveling endowments, but private collections of anything, even of birds' eggs, were almost as scarce as hens' teeth. But when the west, in 1849 and afterwards, began pouring gold and then silver into the national blood stream, some folk began finding a little more leisure on their hands, a little more money to spend on something else than the bare necessities of life. In other words, our standard of living began rising more rapidly, and hobbies began to be born. New-made millionaires were looking around for paintings and not-too-naked statues. Numismatics began to flourish, then stamp collecting.

Today, less than ninety years after the Gold Rush, we are the most indefatigable nation of collectors in the world—because, say our critics, we have the acquisitive tendency most fully developed. We collect everything. Look at this recently published three-hundred-page book on the collection of street-car transfers; discussing with a gravity worthy a scientific treatise such subjects as dating, types, condition, coloring, reversibility, the forming, arrangement, and indexing of the collection, and so on! And

what old timer doesn't remember those first souvenir or picture post cards at the World's Fair at Chicago in 1893, and the resulting fad which raged violently for years?—fat albums with slotted pages for holding the cards, young people soliciting acquaintances in distant parts of the country with whom to exchange cards, and that unofficial lexicographic outrage, "philocarty!" Why, there was even a magazine of Philately and Philocarty.

Glance over a copy of *The Swapper*, published (at least, it was being published not so long ago) out in Missouri: "A Monthly Newspaper," so the masthead informs us, "Devoted to the Interest of Swappers and Hobbiests." (Just raise an eyebrow at the spelling of that final word and let it go.) Here you see the want ads of collectors not only of stamps, coins, Indian relics, dolls and clocks, but of milk-bottle caps, foreign and domestic hotel baggage labels, meteorites, deer horns—but listen: "Will swap butterflies, moths, living cocoons, pupae, moth eggs." One advertiser, verily, wants to buy a petrified man. Another has "button charm, string, 112 feet long, started about 1830. 5,004 buttons, no two alike. Will trade for Indian bead work, sinew sewn or what have you?" Or as another advertiser says gruffly: "Describe. Watcha want. Write." Another wants "a native plant or shrub from every state in the U. S. A.; also foreign countries." Of such are the divertissements which keep us from going crazy in these trying times.

There are inspiration stories in this paper, too; such as the one about the man with a nose for antiques like that of a French pig for truffles, who was prowling in an old grocery store basement when he discovered two barrels of oil-lamp chimneys "beautifully flowered and engraved and of Civil War vintage." He bought them for twenty cents

apiece and promptly sold them to antique fans for $2.50—which should be a lesson to all us prowlers to leave no cellar, attic closet, cupboard, barn, woodshed or deserted house unsearched.

Odd how national customs and habits differ! In France and England in the 1870's many children were enthusiastic stamp collectors. In France, even the little girls went in for it. In this country, they have never to this day become greatly interested, and boys—with the exception of a few well-to-do chaps in the east who went to private academies—did not take it up to any extent until the twentieth century, because not until this century did any except those academy swells have any pocket money to speak of. Being nearer to the land then, youngsters in general had plenty to eat and serviceable clothes to cover them, and even a little cash to devote to amusement, but most children did much less spending on their own then than now.

Without money, for a long time there didn't seem to be much that boys could collect. An occasional small-town or country lad collected birds' eggs—which eventually taught him American ornithology—but most boys just assembled a miscellany of marbles, string, crippled penknives, old keys, ornamental buttons, bits of pencil and chalk, nickel-plated knobs off the parlor stove and unidentifiable fragments which might have been the unearthings of an archaeological expedition on the site of Ur of the Chaldees, the entire assortment being carried in the owner's various pockets wherever he went. But how the picture has changed in recent years! Boys scarcely able to walk without holding on to something are beginning to accumulate stamps. An infant approximately three feet tall whom we saw looking over the limited stock of stamps in a small stationer's shop informed us gravely that "I specialize in British colonials."

Today, stamp collecting, though not yet quite a century old, is the number-one hobby of the globe. Uncounted millions are its devotees. No country is so backward, no isle of the sea so small and remote that it does not have its stamp collectors, and usually its philatelic club. Probably more money is invested in philately, or is spent on it annually than upon all other hobbies combined. Kings, queens, princes, presidents, governors, statesmen, the clergy, the law, medicine, education, the arts, scientists, bankers, big and little business men, housewives, school children—it claims its followers among them all. The Indian rajah in his palace, the pedant in his cloistered study, the priest in his vicarage, the millionaire in his great town or country house, the truck driver or clerk in his cottage or three-room tenement, each pores over his album with the same zest and devotion. To the soldier in barracks, the naval or merchant-marine officer confined to his ship, to any isolated soul it is a godsend, filling otherwise dull and lonely hours with pleasant occupation and study.

The stamp collector's progress from beginner to addict falls, like the melancholy Jacques's chronicle of man, into several stages. First—usually in his teens—he buys a small album and orders various ten-cent assortments—"1,000 all different, catalogue value, $2.37." He haunts the display cases in department or stationery stores and outside the stamp dealers' doors. Presently he begins taking stamp periodicals and joins a club. Within a few years he is not satisfied with a used stamp detached from the envelope, but craves the envelope, too—he calls it a "cover" now. He falls a victim to the first-day fad and has a cover always ready to be mailed from the point of issuance of a new stamp. He has already acquired a specialty of some sort—perhaps two or three of them. When he begins carrying a

small magnifying glass in his pocket with which to scrutinize stamps, his case may be regarded as hopeless.

He now refuses to touch valuable stamps with the fingers because of possible soilure or greasing, but deftly picks them up with a pair of tiny tongs. He has developed an abnormal sensitivity to delicate nuances of color in inks. Looking at a stamp through his glass, he is apt to become highly excited over an infinitesimal break which he discovers in a hair line, invisible to the naked eye, in the lower left-hand corner. Such reactions are found only in a truly chronic case. He soothes himself by carrying around in his pocket (as a rheumatic man used to carry a buckeye) a wallet of particular build in which, under glassine, are two or three cherished covers. The patient can now be kept alive only by occasional injections of new specimens, and frequent hot stove sessions with other sufferers. I am told by those who have sojourned at the Battle Creek Sanitarium that perhaps the favorite subject there for parlor and veranda conversation is the colon. Even so, two or more philatelists cannot be together for two minutes without talking of their malady. But strangely enough, they seem happier than most normal persons, and increasingly happy as their condition grows more pronounced. As that comic character of three decades ago used to chortle, "Gee, ain't it great to be crazy!"

I was a born collector, and I have indulged in various types of such pursuits, beginning with tobacco tags and then stamps in very early youth. I have gone in for old books and first editions in a modest way, I have collected various kinds of prints; and even in middle life, when, as some friends thought, I should have known better, I—most frequently in company with some other mental case—have walked to and fro, to and fro, for hours under a broiling

sun in the rows of a Tennessee river-bottom cornfield—richest of all hunting grounds for such treasure—my eyes searching the soil, inch by inch, for Cherokee arrow heads, celts, skinning knives, shards and discoidal stones. And I must admit that stamp collecting has, from several points of view, superiorities over them all.

To begin with, the stamp is far less destructible than cameos, paintings, prints, first editions, fine bindings. Properly handled, a stamp may almost last forever. Again, it occupies the least space of any collector's item. You could conceivably put a million dollars' worth of rare stamps, if you had all the best rarities, in the space of one book on your library shelf; an important consideration in these days when our living quarters are steadily shrinking in size. Collectors will have to think henceforth in terms of smaller things. I once knew a Pennsylvania lawyer who collected tools of all trades and occupations, especially of colonial and pre-machine-age days—including old agricultural and household implements, animal traps and what not—and even went in especially strong for millstones! He had converted an old stone barn on his country place into a museum, but even it couldn't hold the millstones; so there they were out of doors in rows, a sort of small-scale Stonehenge.

Another value of stamp collecting is its relationship to geography and history, its current gossip of the globe we live on and its political changes. Again, stamps do not deteriorate in value as—and I know this to my sorrow—do old books. There are waves of style in old books. A few years ago Dickens and Thackeray first editions in the monthly parts brought fancy prices. Now they are out of favor and have fallen to a tithe of their former price, the American collector's interest turning to Mark Twain and

other American first editions. The man with a lot of old English stuff on his hands now will find if he tries to sell it that he must take a loss.

But fashions in old stamps are few and unimportant. What was a rare stamp fifty years ago is necessarily a still rarer stamp today and therefore more valuable. True, there are passing fads here, too, such as first-day covers and cachets and one or two others which one might mention if one weren't afraid of being assassinated some dark night, but you don't need to invest in them to have a fine collection. And it is true that the world depression has now hurt prices a bit, as compared with those of the golden 1920's. But if you have not gone wild and bought the fanciest of rarities, regardless of price, a stamp collection is a sound investment, even today. Even the fabulous British Guiana and Mauritius values will come back, some day.

Finally, there is no hobby that I know of which has so many pleasant ramifications as philately. It lays open to the collector a thousand alluring bypaths, and few are the general collectors who do not stray into at least one of them. In fact, collectors are creating new ones every little while. Through philately you find yourslf becoming involved in the history, not only of nations and of mail service, but of telegraphy, transportation, commerce, manufacturing, education, secret societies, the arts, hotel keeping—in short, it is not one but a congeries of hobbies.

We shall not attempt to tell you how to build a stamp collection. The best method we know of is that adopted by a noted British collector, Thomas K. Tapling, who was given a hundred pounds when he was a schoolboy at Harrow, with the stipulation that he was not to blow it in on toffee and ginger beer, and who promptly invested it all in stamps. That was around 1870, when a hundred

pounds would buy most of the varieties then in existence. The result was that, before Tapling died at thirty-six, he had one of the most notable collections in Europe.

The lesson is obvious. You just take the five hundred dollars which someone gives you when you are about fifteen, and invest it judiciously in stamps, and then carry on from there, building something which you can, if necessary, sell in your old age for a small fortune. Many have even begun with only a dime or so and done the same thing. If you are of more mature years when you read this, you take a thousand or two which you had thought of putting into another motor car and buy stamps with it, thus acquiring something which will give you several times as much joy in the years to come, and will be a permanent investment. Two or three thousand invested in an automobile dwindles practically to zero in less than ten years, while money judiciously—mind, I say judiciously—invested in stamps will hold its own or even grow in value.

The buying of these new United States commemorative stamps in full sheets as they come out and salting them down, as some are now doing, isn't at all a new idea. Away back in 1863, when philately was young, a newspaper reported that collectors were "laying up considerable numbers of obsolete and even of *current* stamps. This practice is grounded on the assumption that the *Timbromanie*" (as the French called the fad) "will continue in vogue for several years, and that before it goes out, many stamps now comparatively common may become rare and valuable to collectors."

Several years! Little could they foresee how long-lived the hobby was to be, nor how enormously values would increase!

THE YOUNG LADIES BEGAN IT

CHAPTER TWO

Most philatelists are unaware how near we came to having no stamps at all—and where would we be now without them? Try to fancy the void—a world without stamps! Well, just about the time that postage stamps began to be made, massive brains on both sides of the Atlantic were opining that Government ought to carry all letters free of charge. "Letter postage," cried Lord Ashburton, "is the worst of taxes!" The *American Whig Review* said vehemently in 1848 that:

> A tax upon letters is in effect a tax upon speech. It is worse. It is a fine levied upon the affections. It is an impost upon the love of kindred. It is a penalty on commerce; an amercement upon the diffusion of knowledge and a drag on the progress of civilization. It has been well said by eminent commercial authorities that you might as well tax words spoken upon the stock exchange as the communications of various persons living in Manchester, Liverpool or London. . . . If there be any one subject which ought not to be selected as a subject of taxation, it is that of intercommunication by mail; and if there be any one thing which the government ought, consistently with its

great duties to the public, to do gratuitously, it is the carriage of letters.

And there was much more to the same end. Men of prominence then, as now, seemed to nurse a delusion that Government has some mysterious source of income other than taking it out of the pockets of its citizens. Free postage would be but a small boon for the present-day poor, for almost anyone can find two or three cents for a stamp; but fancy the rich gravy for business, the great mail-order houses, for example, if they could send all their letters, catalogues and packages free of charge. Fortunately, the statesmen of the era decided to handle the thing in the honest way by a direct charge for carriage, and the happiness of coming generations of philatelists was thereby assured.

For long before 1840, postage had been so high that poor folk couldn't afford to send letters at all. In the United States in 1800, to send one sheet of paper three hundred miles cost thirty cents, and in England thirty years later, twelvepence. In any country, if there were two sheets in the letter instead of one, the postage was doubled, regardless of weight. A book manuscript once put into the mail in England was assessed £10 for postage. Even tolerably affluent persons used all sorts of tricks to beat this impost. Newspapers went through the mails, of course, at much lower rates than letters; and by underlining certain words in the newspapers with pencil, messages were conveyed; or a business man's name and address on the wrapper of the paper might be written in more than a hundred ways to convey quotations, buying and selling orders, and other information. Furthermore, postage was collected either from sender or receiver, which necessitated much

trouble in handling and caused the refusal of many letters by addressees.

Rowland Hill, a hitherto somewhat obscure English business man, seeing that the British postal service was terrible and that the Post Office was losing money, announced after long cogitation in 1837 that letters should be sent for a flat rate, that that rate should be a penny an ounce, and it should be paid in advance. The proposals were at first greeted with loud laughter in Parliamentary circles, but Hill built up an organization of supporters, and finally, after three years of battling in Parliament, convinced a majority that penny postage was the solution to all problems of the service. A law providing for it was passed in 1840.

The first approximation of a stamp was an ample and elaborate design covering a part of one side of a letter sheet; a design centering in a hard-faced person intended for Britannia, with the national lion dozing at her feet, while with each hand she launched in diverse directions a couple of naked angels who, despite their total lack of equipment, were presumably carrying letters to all parts of the world, as was proved by elephants, camels, reindeer, American Indians, and other exotics grouped at the sides of the picture. Or, as Barham described it in *The Ingoldsby Legends:*

And with him he brings
A set of those odd-looking envelope things,
Where Britannia (who seems to be crucified) flings
To her right and her left, funny people with wings,
Among elephants, Quakers and Catabaw kings;
And a taper and wax and small Queen's heads in packs,
Which, when notes are too big, you're to stick on their backs.

The thing caused so much ribald comment—Mr. Buckingham, a favorite mime, even sang a comic song about it at Vauxhall Gardens—that it was "killed" after six months, and all the copies on hand unsold were burned—about 60,000 of them! Collectors now awaken in the small hours of the night and moan as they think of that funeral pyre. No government today would be so stupid; but who could have dreamed in 1840 that people would some day collect postage stamps; in fact, that philately, a word as yet uncoined, would become the premier hobby of the world?

In stead of this Mulready letter sheet came the first adhesive stamp. Experiments with such stamps had been made by a private carrier in Paris in the seventeenth century, and several suggestions for such a symbol had been made in England in recent years. Sardinia had, between 1818 and 1836, sold sheets of letter paper with embossed receipts upon them for fifteen, twenty-five and fifty centesimi. But now for the first time a real adhesive stamp was to be used. All sorts of objections against it were urged —among others, that it wouldn't stick; it would come off in the mails—as frequently, in early years, it did! Or, "The postmaster would take the money from the sender, and then fail to put the stamp on the letter." Not for a long time did it occur to anybody that the sender of the letter might just buy the stamp and stick it on the letter himself.

The British Government offered a five-hundred-pounds prize for the best design for a stamp. But though a thousand or more designs were sent in, none of them seemed to suit, and the Post Office created its own design. And after all, it was nothing elaborate; just the still-girlish profile of the young Queen Victoria as its major figure, and around it a simple frame with the word "Postage" and the denomination. It is a curious fact that from that moment

until 1924 the name of Great Britain never appeared on its stamps—nothing but the monarch's portrait, with the words "Postage" or "Postage and Revenue." Even as Tiffany's in New York for decades never displayed its name on its building, so did the old country scorn to advertise. If you didn't recognize a British stamp when you saw it, that just indicated the profundity of your ignorance, that was all.

Another interesting fact is that collecting began almost as soon as stamps began to be issued. But the first collecting of which we have notice was for another purpose than that of today. A reading notice in the London *Times* in 1841 sets it before us:

> A young lady, being desirous of covering her dressing room with cancelled postage stamps, has been so far encouraged in her wish by private friends as to have succeeded in collecting 16,000! These, however, being insufficient, she will be greatly obliged if any good-natured person who may have these (otherwise useless) little articles at their disposal would assist her in her whimsical project. Address to E. D., Mr. Butt's glover, Leadenhall-st., or Mr. Marshall's, jeweller, Hackney.

Why "cancelled"? Unused stamps, properly grouped as to color, would have made a much more beautiful room. True, if she had appealed for co-operation in that line, she might have had something of the experience of Bill Nye, who was once seized with an ambition to collect the autographs of all the bank presidents and cashiers in the United States. Those were the days when national banks were permitted to issue paper money, as they did until recent years, and Nye's suggestion, in a circular letter sent to the bank

officials, was that each write his autograph on a five-dollar bill and send it to him (all bank notes had to be thus signed to be valid); but he reported an almost total lack of interest in his worthy project.

The stamps-for-decoration fad was still raging several years later, and the English magazine, *Leisure Hour*, thus spoke of the lady collectors:

> These antiquaries beg old stamps wherever they go and amass them by hundreds of thousands, for some cherished purpose of their own. . . . Now it is to line a work-box or a trunk, or the interior of a closet or a cabinet; and sometimes their ambition takes a still higher flight than this, and their grand design is to paper a room with the defaced Queen's heads. . . . It is said that a room thus papered, when the affair is managed with skill and the walls cleverly varnished afterwards, has a very agreeable aspect—the walls appearing to retire considerably from their actual position and thus give the effect of larger space in the apartment.

In 1842 *Punch* remarked that:

> A new mania has bitten the industriously idle ladies of England. To enable a large wager to be gained, they have been indefatigable in their endeavors to collect old penny stamps; in fact, they betray more anxiety to treasure up Queen's Heads than Harry the Eighth did to get rid of them.

But in the '40's a new reason arose for collecting stamps. Brazil began issuing them in 1843, various Swiss cantons fell into line between that date and 1850, the United States and Mauritius in 1847, France and Belgium in 1849 and

many more in 1850. Now it became necessary to collect stamps just in order to have all the varieties, and schoolboys began to take it up. Jean Baptiste Philippe Constant Moens of Belgium, later one of the world's great philatelists, said he began it as a boy in 1848—and by 1852, at nineteen, he was a stamp merchant. According to some translators, Balzac referred to stamp collecting in *Le Cousin Pons*, published in 1847. Philip Kent's translation, published in 1880, makes one paragraph read:

> All ye who can no longer drink from that vessel which has in every age been termed the cup of pleasure, apply yourselves to the task of collecting—no matter what; even postage stamps have been collected.

But Balzac's phrase is "on a collectionne des affiches," not "timbres postes." "Affiche" then meant a bill, placard, poster or sticker. Was the novelist really thinking of stamps when he wrote that? France did not begin issuing them until two years later, and if Balzac knew of the elementary collecting which had begun in England, he was well abreast of the times. But probably he did; what else could he have meant? There were no posters worth collecting then.

Dr. C. W. Viner, an early British philatelist who lived to the end of the century, used to say that he first saw a stamp collection in 1854. It consisted of about a hundred stamps, mounted on a large card, the names of the countries in a column at the left. He was told that the arrangement followed that of the collection of a man named Scales, "who," said Dr. Viner, "if he is still living, may boast of being the first known collector in England."

The hobby had its birth in the United States at some time in the 1850's—no one knows just when—again among

young women, who were now, however, collecting for the modern reason. It was noticed by the Boston *Daily Advertiser* in 1860 in a kindly manner which contrasted sharply with the attitude of European editors, who regarded it as beneath contempt. The *Advertiser* spoke of it as a "mania," but conceded that the growing importance of postage made stamp collecting "something more than a mere pastime, and gives to it something of the dignity of a collection of coins or medals." He continues with words which have a familiar sound:

> The stamps of Mauritius and Hawaii, we believe, are accounted among the most rare, and next to these may be named the Russian, for which, acting as an amateur stamp broker, we should readily be authorized to offer half a dozen of the more common Italian, German or French varieties, and perhaps hundreds of English and American.

So! Those first two Mauritius stamps, of whose rare specimens a few collectors today, with glistening eyes and dribbling chops, get only an occasional glimpse—under glass, with an armed husky standing near, ready to shoot if one so much as points an awed finger at the treasure—were already rarities, only a few years after they were printed, one at a time, on a little hand press. The editor concludes:

> This elegant and curious "mania" is now chiefly indulged by young ladies, but we cannot tell how soon it may take possession of the more mature portion of mankind. We have already suggested that it is not beneath the notice of the most dignified literary institutions.

Which final sentence suggests that the editor himself was becoming fascinated. He remarks that some collections now number three hundred varieties!

In England, the editors were less sympathetic. The first philatelic magazine, the *Stamp Collector's Review*, which appeared in Liverpool in 1862 and ran through nineteen numbers, was undiscovered by the lay press; but when the second, a fine little monthly called the *Stamp Collector's Magazine*, appeared in London in 1863, an evening newspaper editor sneeringly remarked that "that weakest and most puerile of all manias, Postage Stamp collecting, has at last found a literary organ."

A French editor became so irritated over *Timbromanie* that he suggested that the collectors might be washing the postmarks off the stamps and selling them again. Charles Lever, the Irish novelist, when he was consul at Spezzia, Italy, in 1864, hinted at the same thing in a satirical skit on stamp collecting written in the name of his fictitious character, Cornelius O'Dowd, for *Blackwood's Magazine:*

> What these people of much leisure and little ingenuity mean by it, I never could make out! Have they discovered any subtle acid, any cunning process by which the stamp of disqualification can be effaced, and are they enabled to cheat the Treasury by reissue?

But of course he was only proposing this in a grumpy, jesting way, as being the only explanation to a sane person for such silliness. Truth to tell, collectors of those days *did* spend many hours in trying to wash off some of the blotchy cancellation which so disfigured their cherished specimens, and often succeeded only in ruining the stamp in the process. As another theory, Lever wonders:

> Is it the intention to establish a cheap portrait-gallery of living princes and rulers? Is it to obtain, at a minimum cost, the correct face and features of the men who sway the destinies of their fellow-man? If so, the coinage, even in its basest form, would be infinitely preferable.

It seemed to him that a collection of the shoes of the rulers in question would be far more logical and interesting; the jack-boot of the Czar Nicholas, for example, with which he kicked one of his marshals, one of the thrifty Duke of Modena's shoes, twice soled and heeled, and so on. But as for stamp collectors, "What curiosity can any reasonable being have to possess the commonplace effigies of the most commonplace-looking people in Europe?" As he was then holding a consular position under one of these commonplace-looking persons, Mr. Lever's nerve was admirable. He couldn't get away with that sort of thing in modern America.

Young women were still numerous among the collectors, for the English *Young Ladies' Journal* said in the same year in answer to several correspondents:

> We cannot encourage "exchanging foreign stamps," for we do not see the smallest good resulting from it. This foreign stamp collecting has been a mania which is at length dying out. Were the stamps works of art, then the collecting them might be justified. Were they, in short, anything but bits of defaced printing, totally worthless, we would try to say something in their favour.

But a few months later (Dec. 14, 1864) the editor was astounded to find the fad still alive:

> We had almost heard nothing of late of the postage stamp collecting mania, till suddenly the formidable announcement is made by an advertisement that an amateur is ready to sell his collection—for what sum, would it be thought?—nothing less than £250!

It has been guessed that the same collection fifty years later would have brought a hundred times as much.

Meanwhile, despite this sniping, the hobby was growing by leaps and bounds. Some of the most famous of British philatelists had their start in the 1850's—E. Stanley Gibbons, for example, later one of the world's most noted dealers, who began in 1854 at the age of fourteen. Two years later he was trading in stamps in a small way in a corner of his father's pharmacy.

It was in 1860, the same year of the Boston *Advertiser's* editorial, that the first lists of stamps for collectors' use were privately circulated in manuscript by a hobbyist, François George Oscar Berger-Levrault—not of royal lineage, as his name might indicate, but a printer of Strasburg—and in the following year this gentleman issued a twelve-page list, printed by autolithography. A few months later Alfred Potiquet of Paris published the first printed catalogue—magnificently entitled *Catalogue des Timbres-poste Créés dans les divers Etats du Globe*—which leaned heavily on Berger-Levrault's lists. The next year, 1862, was a memorable one in philately; things happened rapidly. The first catalogues in English, three of them, appeared, one of which, Mount Brown's, listed twelve hundred varieties of stamps. A young artist named Booty produced the first *illustrated* catalogue—three editions in one year—for which he drew all the pictures and text on the lithograph stone. Mount Brown's catalogue was promptly pirated in America

as the *Stamp Collector's Manual*. We were fighting the Civil War at the time, but some people still seemed to have a few moments to think about stamps. Perhaps the young ladies at home diverted their minds from thoughts of the boys on the battlefield with the fad.

The first stamp album was issued that year by a Frenchman, Justin Lallier, and published in both France and England. Lallier was not a philatelist, which may explain why all the printed spaces on his pages for stamps were of the size and shape of the first British Queen's head. Many collectors were so influenced by this that they took scissors in hand and trimmed their valuable, oddly shaped stamps down to fit those spaces—another vandalism which freezes the present-day collector's blood in his veins. One of Lallier's albums, unused, may still be picked up now and then for twenty-five dollars or thereabouts. Mount Brown issued an album, too, even smaller than Lallier's—its pages measure four and a half by five and a half inches—with alternate pages wholly blank for the stamps and descriptive matter on the pages opposite them.

The year '63 saw the launching in London of the first stamp magazine, as we have already noticed, and it quickly built up a remarkable list of advertisers throughout the United Kingdom, as well as a few in foreign countries, who were dealing in stamps in a small way. One announcement tells us that a collection of three hundred stamps will be raffled for a shilling a chance. Another offers curious testimony to the popularity of philately. The galop was a very popular dance then, and this notice announces "Arthur O'Leary's Stamp Galop—The most Successful Galop of the Season and nightly encored. The Title-page is beautifully embellished in Colours with Postage Stamps of Foreign Nations. Sent free for Twelve Stamps." About the same

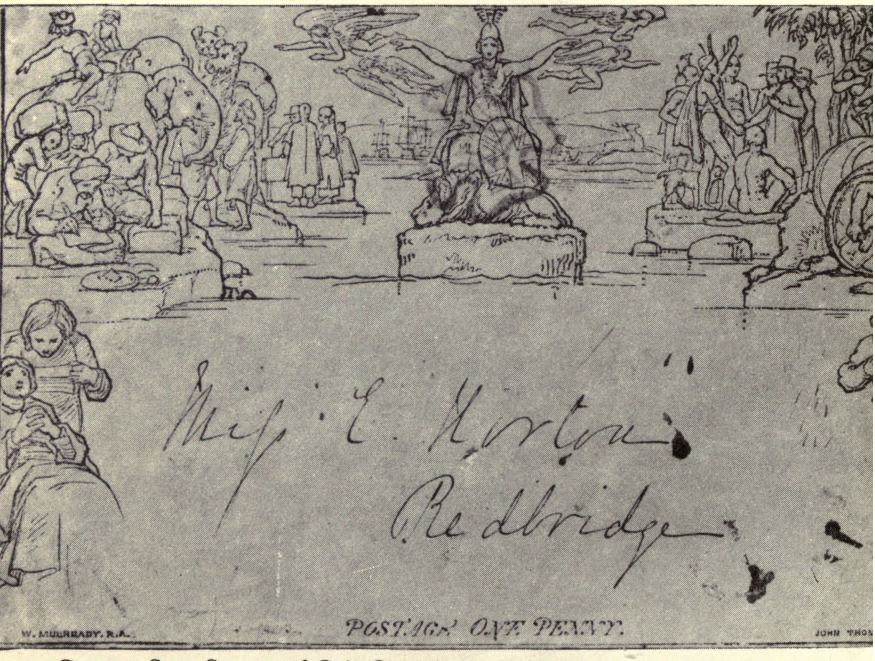


What often happened to your letters in pre-envelope days.





Sir Rowland Hill, originator of penny postage in England, and the rush of mail at the London post office when it went into effect in 1840.



Courtesy Scott Stamp and Coin Co.

The "Mulready envelope," which was the first postage stamp.

time the *Briefmarken Polka für Piano* was published in Leipzig, and other philatelic adventures in harmony followed from time to time, including "The Stamp Collector's Song," published at London in 1886.

An informal open-air postage stamp exchange had begun in London about 1860 in Change Alley, "leading out of Birchin Lane." There in those long English twilights from spring to autumn, one saw every evening "at least fifty boys and some men, too," as a shocked reporter chronicled, buying, selling, but mostly swapping stamps, even as you may see curbstone traders dealing in diamonds today on the sidewalk in Maiden Lane and a certain spot on the Bowery in New York. Rapidly the situation grew even worse; young ladies, "album in hand," were seen there, and—whisper it—actually "one of Her Majesty's Ministers." Here you heard, said the reporter, such jargon as this: "Have you a yellow Saxon?"—"I want a Russian."—"I'll give a red Prussian for a blue Brunswicker."—"Will you exchange a Russian for a black English?"—"I wouldn't give a Russian for twenty English."

After a year or so, the police meddled a bit, on the theory that merchandising was being done without licenses; but the enthusiasts, including the cabinet minister and the ladies, continued to meet in certain alleys off Birchin Lane and do their trading more surreptitiously. It is recorded that "one of the ladies contrived to effect a highly advantageous exchange of a very so-so specimen with a young friend of ours, who salved his greenness with the apologetic remark that he could not drive a hard bargain with a lady." Even several years later the traditional annoyance persisted, as we find in the concluding lines of a poem describing Birchin Lane after four o'clock:

When sudden a gruff voice is heard,
That all the thronging bevy stirred;
I turned, and fix'd my eyes upon
A bobby! crying—"Stamps, move on!"

A shop in Birchin Lane housed an actual dealer in stamps—a woman; and there was another woman in Paris who, with her husband, ran a little news and reading room and who became quite a noted stamp merchant, her shop being the lounging place even of the rich and noble philatelists of the Second Empire.

In Paris by this time collectors had begun to study the watermarks in paper and to measure perforations. The scientific trend was on. Controversy raged there, too, over a one-word name for the hobby. One group insisted upon calling the collector a *Timbrophile*, while another followed Monsieur G. Herpin, who, after much brain-sweat, produced a word compounded from the Greek φίλος ("fond of") and ατέλεια ("exemption from tax"), thus indicating a liking for something free from tax, which is taken to mean a stamp; a far-fetched concoction whose derivatives philately, philatelist and philatelic, with their awkward shiftings of accent back and forth, are irksome to most of our ears to this day. We wish M. Herpin had tried again, or perhaps that the other group had prevailed who preferred *Timbrologie* as a name for the hobby, even though the word to American ears seems to have some connection with the lumber business. The leading French philatelic organization, by the way, is still called the *Société Française de Timbrologie*.

When England first heard the new word, it couldn't even spell it. A London editor informed the world that "A

mania for collecting postage stamps has added a new word to the language, 'philotelist.' "

Well, the rush of men and boys into "philotely" seemed to scare most of the young ladies out, and the males very nearly took complete charge of the hobby, both in England and America, in the '70's and '80's. Women still collected junk stamps by the million for the benefit of mysterious orphans and African savages, but a woman philatelist was rare, indeed.

THEM WAS THE DAYS

CHAPTER THREE

THE EARLIEST American stamp collector of record was William H. Faber, of Charleston, S. C. In a letter written in 1918 to the *Metropolitan Philatelist* of New York, he said that he began collecting in 1855, when he was a boy. John K. Tiffany, who became one of America's greatest collectors and philatelic bibliographers, said that he first became interested in stamps and began picking them up when he was in Europe in 1858. These men must have had a natural instinct for the hobby, for there was no philatelic guidance or inspiration then; no dealers, no price lists, no stamp magazines or literature of any sort.

We find the first mention of an American stamp merchant five years later. In the autumn of 1860 a poorly dressed man was seen standing at the lower end of City Hall Park in New York with about a hundred foreign stamps tacked to a board (time out for teeth-gnashing). Nowadays the story sometimes has it that he fastened them to the board with pins and sold some at one and two cents each; but a collector who remembered his park peddling and bought stamps from him said, fifteen years later, that he used tacks or nails and sold at the flat price of five cents, "having no idea as to the real value of the stamps." But if

gossip be true he came, in after years, to have very definite ideas as to stamp values, for this man is said to have been William P. Brown, who became one of New York's best known stamp dealers.

And yet it might have been another fellow; for Mr. Brown wrote a quarter century later,* "I think I am the earliest stamp dealer *now in business* in the United States. I commenced trading in them somewhere about 1860. John Bailey was the only one I knew of at that time in the business; he is now working for the coal companies at Hoboken, N. J."

There are also rumors of another dealer named Brennan; but nothing definite can be learned about him. Probably there were three or four who drifted into the business that year. Whether it was Brown or Bailey or the shadowy Brennan who first appeared there at the lower end of the park can never be settled now. Anyhow, despite the tack holes in them, their stock sold well, and corner news vendors also began picking up a few used stamps, which they sold at rising prices—five, six and ten cents. At that time, fifty cents was considered a good price for the rarest specimen—if the seller happened to discover that it was rare.

A veteran philatelist, twenty years later, recalled that many American collectors of 1860 were monumentally ignorant of geography and political history; they had no catalogues or other publications to guide them, and the tendency of nations in early days to omit the names of their countries from their stamp designs was very confusing. The collectors couldn't tell Brazil from Peru, they didn't know that Bayern meant Bavaria, the Thurn and Taxis stamps puzzled them and were assigned, now to one German state, now to another, and the first Luxemburg stamps, with

* To the *Western Philatelist* of Chicago, Sept., 1887, p. 193.

nothing to identify them but a portrait of the King of Holland, threw the amateurs on their beam ends.

The outbreak of the Civil War in 1861 inflicted some small detriment upon the stamp business. Some of the peddlers probably went into the Army of the Potomac and watered the cornfields of Virginia with their blood; but one, the indestructible Mr. Brown, was somehow missed by the draft and carried on. The news stands continued to sell a few foreign stamps, among which was an occasional Confederate, which was quickly snapped up by collectors. Boston, too, which claimed some of the earliest of the collectors—as we may guess from the Boston *Advertiser* item of 1860, already quoted—also had dealers; and one of them, G. Dexter, issued the first known American catalogue or price list, a mere single leaf printed on one side, in 1863.

In that same year the first American stamp album appeared—a handsome one of 208 pages bound in brown leather, issued by those veteran publishers, D. Appleton & Company, who were evidently keeping abreast and even a little ahead of the times. William R. Ricketts, noted collector of philatelic literature and bibliographer, has a copy of this album and says that the only other known copy is in the Library of Congress; so it seems that the publishers in their enthusiasm ran ahead of the times a bit, and the book could not have had a very large sale. In fact, it is so nearly forgotten now that Scott's album, issued five years later, has often been spoken of as the first published in America.

Philately continued to grow, despite the bloody conflict which was tearing at the heart of the nation, and in 1864 the first American philatelic periodical of which I have found record, the *Stamp Collector's Review*, began to be published at Albany, N. Y., and, incidentally, was fathered

by S. Allan Taylor, who became one of the most notorious of dealers in counterfeit stamps. It continued for twelve years.

In 1863 one of the great figures in American philately appeared in New York—an eighteen-year-old boy named John Walter Scott, who stepped off a ship from England one hot August day with few assets save a package of stamps in his little trunk. In those days there was no concern on the part of the government lest the immigrant become a public charge—in fact, many immigrants went comfortably right from the ship into our poorhouses—else young Scott might have been shunted back to Albion on the next vessel. He had begun working in a mercantile office in London at the age of fifteen, and the stamps on the firm's foreign correspondence lured him into philately. He and a young friend, Charlie Watson (also laden with stamps) came to America together. Scott finally sold his stamps to a pushcart dealer on the north side of City Hall Park, at Broadway and Chambers Street—again reported to have been Mr. Brown—for ten dollars.

He sought but failed to find work—perhaps the patriotic New Yorkers didn't like his British accent—and talked despondently to the stamp dealer—Mr. Brown again—of enlisting; for men were much needed to replace those recently slaughtered at Chancellorsville and Gettysburg. Brown had evidently done pretty well with his outdoor business by this time and must have taken a remarkable liking to the English boy, for he offered to lend him a hundred dollars' worth of stamps to sell—at some other spot, of course. Scott made about thirty dollars a month by this open-air vending, his sister helping him with stock. In a letter to her he says that he is selling the "black English" for twelve cents each, "a very good profit."

Nevertheless, stamps didn't promise to make a fortune for him, and in 1864 or early in '65, Scott drifted out to Idaho, a new Eldorado, with a party of prospectors. He is said to have been interested in a small boom-town hotel, but in May, 1865, the whole town burned, as mining camps usually did sooner or later, and after lingering a while in hope of better things, he started in July afoot for California —a daring venture in those days when painted "hostyles" lurked behind every bush and rock; yet by November, John Walter reached Sacramento with his hair on, and there did the best he could.

It was in 1865 that two coin and stamp journals were founded in Chicago, and the United States Stamp Company of Lowell, Mass., issued a price list. With the coming of peace there was a rapid gain in the stamp business in the North; the South was too hard run, too impoverished by the war, too absorbed in trying to make ends meet, to give much time to hobbies. Nevertheless, by 1874 the editor of the New Orleans *Picayune* was so pestered by boys coming in and asking for a few old stamps that he darkly predicted that some day a boy or two would disappear and never be heard of again. A pioneer philatelic association organized in Wytheville, Va., in 1878 got itself into the news frequently.

In the North, in the last four years of the '60's, a dozen new stamp periodicals sprang into being. Scott had returned via water and Panama to New York in '66, and once more tried the stamp business, this time under a roof in Liberty Street. Beginning in June, 1867, he circulated a monthly price list—one leaf printed on one side only; and in December, 1868, he launched the *American Journal of Philately*, which claimed to be sponsored by the New York

Philatelic Society, organized by "eight collectors of foreign postage stamps," allegedly on March 21, 1867.

But Scott had a captious critic, a stamp dealer of Boston named Ferdinand Marie Trifet—many persons still living will remember him as a publisher of cheap music, classical and otherwise—who had issued a leaflet price list in 1866 and founded a journal, the *American Stamp Mercury*, a year later. Perhaps what first set M. Trifet's teeth on edge was that word "philately" which Scott tossed about so freely. To Trifet it was as the legendary red cloth to the bull. In July, 1868, his *Mercury* raged at the "self-sufficient wisdom" of "a few egotists in Europe and a very few more in America" who had decided that this should henceforth be the name of "the science of stamp collecting." After tearing the word to bits, the editor concluded:

> The word Timbrophily has hitherto been found in every way suitable without taxing either the patience of collectors or the brains (if they have any) of the pedantic egotists who coined the lovely phrase "Philately."

The *Mercury* continued to speak of Timbrophilists and Timbrophilic news, and even produced the words "Timbrography," which meant writing about stamps, and "Timbropolism," for the business of selling stamps; which proved that M. Trifet could coin even worse words than M. Herpin. But all his brain-sweat was in vain.

Trifet accused Scott of copying prices from his list and of being fundamentally ignorant of stamps. Stamp magazines exchanged with each other then, and Trifet admitted receiving Numbers Two and Three of the *American Journal of Philately* "which pretends to be a stamp journal run by a pretended stamp society" but hadn't seen Number

One and didn't believe there was any. When Scott later sent him a copy of Number One, Trifet denounced it as a fake, printed for the purpose. He said that the New York Philatelic Society—the "Moonshine Stamp Society" as he liked to call it—consisted of two boys, Scott and his friend Watson—who was still around, selling stamps—and an imaginary clergyman who, according to Scott, promptly sailed for Buenos Aires and so passed out of the picture. Said he of Scott:

> He asserts that a personal friend of our own was refused admission into the Moonshine Philatelic Society on the ground of respectability. . . . Now in the first place, we have not a friend in New York or elsewhere but who is perfectly well aware that the existence of the "Society" is a simple and silly fiction, innocent enough in its way, its design being only another of the loud-mouthed and gaseous pretenses of which the columns of the Journal furnish so many striking examples. . . . The "Society" . . . is simply a pretense —no meetings are held and the so-called Society consists of three persons."

Dr. J. Brace Chittenden, who went into the matter pretty thoroughly and wrote of it in the *Collector's Club Philatelist* for April, 1924, is inclined to agree that this first New York collectors' club was more or less imaginary—although its several officers and directors had been set forth more than once in the *American Journal of Philately*. Chittenden believed that Charlie Watson was chiefly responsible for the hoax, abetted by the third man, John J. Casey, for both of these later proved to be deficient in business honor. Scott probably agreed—though with mis-



AN AMERICAN POSTMAN OF 1865

givings—that the fiction was "innocent enough in its way," but when Watson and Casey in later days strayed from the path of virtue, he broke with them.

Scott, however, believed in a little puffery. He claimed a circulation of two thousand for the *Journal*, and a sale within a few months of fifteen thousand for his album, the first in America, issued in 1868; both claims ridiculed by Trifet and, as a matter of fact, they do have a slight odor of inflation. The *Mercury* said that the *Journal* had "reduced lying to a science." Scott fired back at it as hotly as he could: "We feel as if we were throwing away a valuable page of our Journal in criticising the September number of the above paper"; and of its editor, "We look upon his language as a disgrace to the philatelic press, and if he continues to write in that style, we shall have to pass his remarks in silent contempt."

The last notice in the *Journal* of the transactions, real or fictitious, of the New York Philatelic Society, appears in May, 1869, when it is said that Messers Dinwiddie and Scott tendered their resignations, "because of numerous business engagements." Thereafter, New York had no stamp club, true or imaginary, for another five years.

But American philately was now swinging into its stride. Stamp magazines, mail-order dealers and counterfeiters were springing up like weeds in a wet summer. Poets took pens in hand and dashed off some of the worst doggerel that ever sullied paper. One effusion, "The Stamp Collector," began thus:

> Deem not his mission all in vane (sic)
> Who with his album in his hand
> In fancy travels o'er the main,
> Collecting stamps from every land.

It went on and on, with no improvement. It is not recorded that Lord Tennyson was inspired by the hobby, but an amateur bard, perhaps with the spell of the laureate's "Oriana" upon him, seized his quill and struck out eight stanzas like this:

> What now is asked is all the rage?
> What thus excites the present age?
> What actuates the youthful sage?
> Timbromania.

Trunks and attics were being searched for old letters—the inexplicable thing is that they haven't all been ransacked yet—and the magazines were telling readers how to steam or soak stamps off the envelopes (lay the back of the paper on wet woolen cloth, was a favorite method), for no one had yet thought of saving the whole cover; but collectors were warned that the Russian stamps wouldn't stand soaking, because "they are printed in water colors."

At the Academy of Music in New York on May 2d, 1868, the collectors scattered through the audience were delighted when in the first act of Offenbach's new opera, *La Belle Hélène*, a story of ancient Troy, Calchas, the high priest of Jupiter, receiving a letter brought by a dove from Venus, carefully peeled off the stamp before reading it, explaining to Paris, who stood by, that he was saving it for the little princess Hermione, "who has a collection." But this whimsy was trumped by a seedy character who went into a shop in Louisville and offered a tattered oriental stamp for sale, claiming that it was the identical one which had carried St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians.

The gorgeous bi-colored stamps which the United States issued in 1869 were a great stimulant to collectors. In 1871 the New York *Sun* made a startling discovery and an-

nounced it in a headline, "A NEW MANIA," declaring that there were ten thousand stamp collectors in New York City (which then included Manhattan only); a palpable overstatement.

The lads who began collecting in the '50's and '60's were the ones who reaped the real financial rewards, if and when they chose to do so. An English barrister with one of those double-barreled names so much affected in Britain, Mr. W. Hughes-Hughes, ceased collecting in 1874 when, according to his carefully kept accounts, he had spent only sixty-nine pounds on his stamps, and sold them twenty-two years later for three thousand pounds! Another man in England spent three-hundred-sixty pounds up to 1871 and sold his collection in 1898 to Stanley Gibbons, Ltd., for four thousand pounds. Ah, them was the days! Don't expect things like that to happen again.

But prices for rarities were rising to unheard-of heights even by 1870. Editor-dealer-collector Scott wrote in '71 that the highest price he remembered receiving for a stamp was seventy-five dollars, though he had some in his collection which he wouldn't sell, no, not for a hundred and fifty dollars! But in the following year he had heard of a sale for a hundred dollars and had seen a stamp in a London window priced at fifty pounds. Luxury was coming to philately; for in that year a Leipzig publisher issued an album de luxe—edition limited to twenty copies—priced at a hundred and fifty thalers or about $112.50. The New York *Times* editor paused momentarily in his fight against the Tweed Ring to say that "To some stamps a value has been extended which seems preposterous." To which Scott retorted that he expected to see the day when a single stamp would sell for a thousand dollars. That figure having been passed, he again predicted in 1895 that he would see a single stamp

sold for five thousand dollars. He lived to see certain rarities sell for several times that much.

Nevertheless, prices for many stamps now considered rare were so modest then that they take our breath away. For example you could buy the three-pfennige Saxony 1850 unused from Scott in 1869 for half a dollar; today, the catalogue prices for it are $400 unused and $300 used. Here are a few other comparisons between the Scott catalogue of '69 and the "asking" prices today—though it must be admitted that dealers don't always insist upon catalogue prices to the penny at the present moment.

	1869	*Today*
New Brunswick, 1851, 1s violet, used.....	$5	$300
Nova Scotia, 1857, 1s violet, used.....	$7	$275
unused.....	$12	$750
Canada, 1851, 12d violet-black, used.....	$3	$1,500
unused...	No price	$3,500
Mauritius, 1847, 1d orange used.....	$5	$15,000
unused...	No price	$20,000
2d blue used.....	$4	$15,000
unused...	No price	$17,000

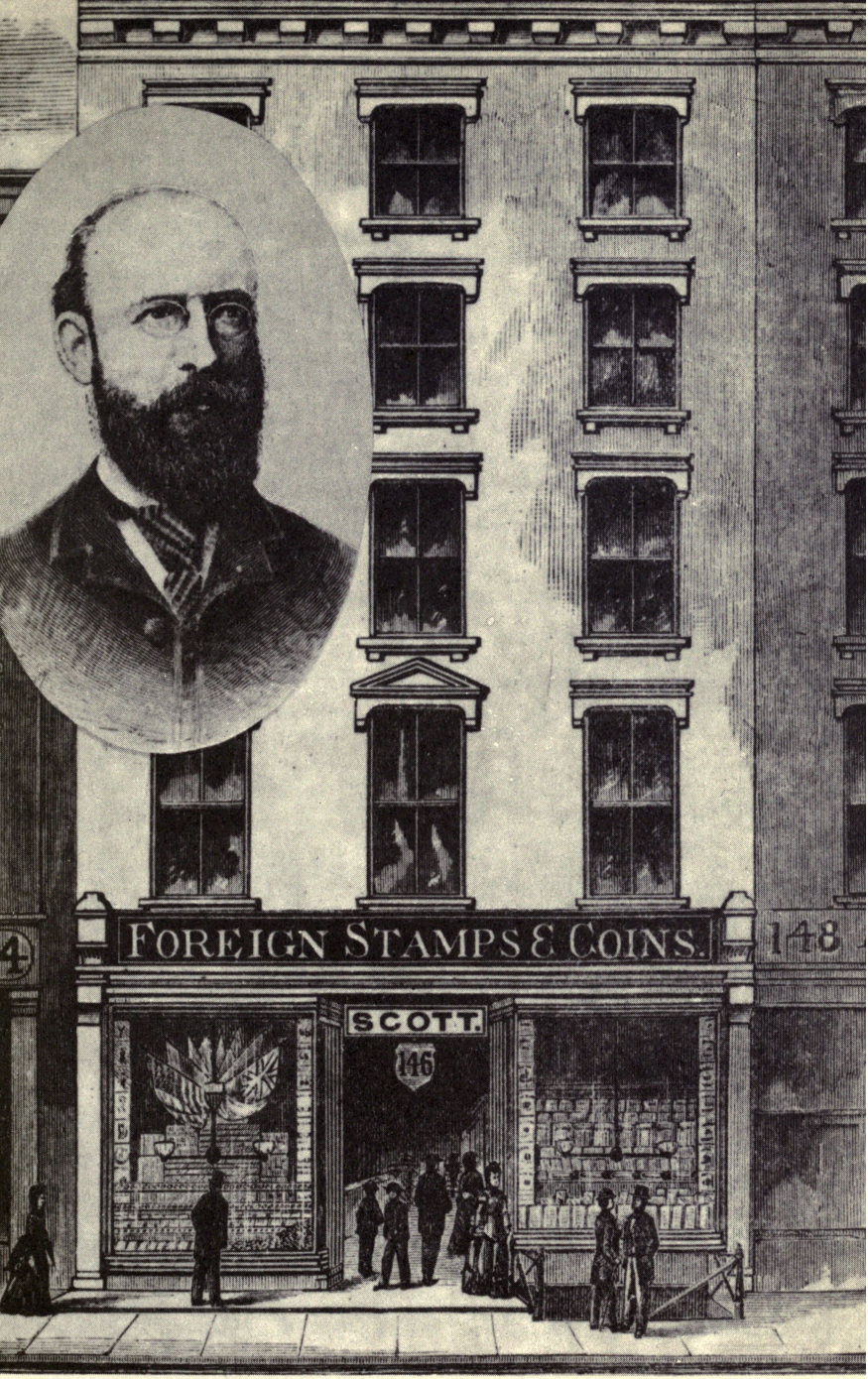
To show the lack of precise knowledge of those days, Scott dates the Mauritius rarities as 1852, but as he specifies that they are the POST OFFICE stamps, he evidently means the 1847's, as they are the only ones so characterized. It was only a few years later that J. B. Moens of Belgium was holding these two Mauritius stamps at $1,250. One may logically doubt that Scott really had the genuine

stamps in 1869. Counterfeits were numerous, dealers were careless, many were in the freshman class as regards exact knowledge of stamps, and in their eagerness to sell, would take a chance.

The itch to publish was never more amazingly displayed than in philately. During the decade from 1870 to 1879, at least 108 stamp publications, weekly and monthly, were founded, and only seven of them lasted as long as two years. But this was scarcely the beginning. During the 1880's, no less than 248 new ones appeared, and with an equal high percentage of anemia and mortality. Among their names were such oddities as *Hermes*, *One Dime*, *Tiny Collector*, *Tiny Philatelist* and *Philatelic Squeal*. That their names and vital statistics have been preserved is largely due to the care of John K. Tiffany, St. Louis attorney and noted collector, who was as much interested in philatelic bibliography as in stamps themselves. In 1875 he published *The Philatelic Library*, which listed 1,461 publications of all sorts, including catalogues and price lists—and the first publishing had been done less than a decade and a half before!

Tiffany's remarkable collection of philatelic literature, in 1901, after his death, was sold to the Earl of Crawford, who was already building a collection of his own, and who therefore, when he died, left the most colossal corpus of such material in existence. Of the philatelic periodicals, Crawford wrote in the great bibliography which he compiled:

> I know of no branch of writing in which there exists so great a number of actual rarities. Little journals exist by the score whose lives did not go beyond a week, and whose existence is known only by single



John Walter Scott and his stamp store about 1878



From the Collection of Edward S. Knapp

The first exposition to advertise itself on an envelope was that at New York, 1853 (top). The first known political propaganda envelope was that of Gen. Winfield Scott when campaigning

> copies. They are found in Manuscript, in Hectograph, in Lithography and typewritten and in printed form of the roughest description, with illustrations in the text very nearly approaching in ugliness to some of the stamps they are anxious to describe.

A majority of these journals in the first decade were published by dealers, and were little more than periodical price lists. News was scarce. Some space was very happily devoted to lambasting each other—always great fun for an editor. They jeered at each other's spelling, typographical errors and errors of fact, all numerous. If one editor-dealer got a supply of some new stamp which another hadn't succeeded in getting, the second man more or less delicately hinted that the other's stuff was counterfeit. Frequently the man who yelled "Counterfeit!" the loudest was himself handing out forgeries with both hands. Libel? Shucks! Neither editors nor laymen wasted much time in libel suits in those days. They just barked "Liar!" or broke a chair over the other's head, and it was a more forthright and honest way of settling the matter than is the present endless devil's dance of litigation, with its attendant curses of perjury, enrichment of lawyers and intimidation of all of us until we dare not even voice provable truth about a whitewashed crook for fear of a libel suit.

The magazines in most cases claimed complete separation from the proprietor's stamp business—as the *Mercury* did of Trifet's—nevertheless, complimentary allusions kept creeping in, right under the editor's nose, such as:

> A more prompt, honest, well-informed and reliable stamp dealer than Abner Squizzle is not to be found. Collectors or those who have stamps to sell will do well to give him a trial.—*Plunkville* (*Ind.*) *Bugle.*

Editors often being youths with faces only slightly fuzzed, their magazines were refreshing examples of innocence. One of them remarked that he "had been a stamp collector since its earliest days to the present time and had continued in the interim!" On another page he mentioned the "Kingdom of Natal" and the "Empire of Newfoundland."

Many journals of the '80's and '90's were published in obscure hamlets where the chance of getting fresh news was almost nil. Even the best of them clipped lavishly from other publications, and the "original" stuff gratuitously contributed was often pretty hackneyed. The story of Sir Rowland Hill and the beginning of cheap postage was probably rewritten a thousand times. One Southern journal, in desperation, ran one of Will N. Harben's north Georgia hill-billy novels as a serial, while another ran what a competitor called "a trashy detective story." How literary standards have changed since then! Do Lowell, Howells and Aldrich stir uneasily in their graves when the *Atlantic Monthly* publishes detective stories?

"As soon as we receive proper support," wrote one editor severely, "we will enlarge." That was putting it right up to them. Among some hundreds of such periodicals, the smallest we have seen is Volume One, Number One (maybe all that ever appeared) of *The Stamp Exchange*, a monthly published at Columbus, Indiana, in 1897. It is a four-page leaflet on gray paper, the pages being five by six inches over all and with wide margins. The subscription rate is announced as ten cents per year, advertising rate five cents per inch, or about twenty cents per page—and there was a whole page of advertising. Another half page was given over to the weights of United States coins. One wonders whether the editor and publisher, Will E. Marsh,

is still alive. It might easily be possible, for we would guess his age at the time to have been not more than sixteen.

The *American Journal of Philately* said in 1870 that there were only seven real stamp dealers in the United States. (Did this include Trifet?) Some started on a capital of fifty to seventy-five cents, doing business by mail, buying from hand to mouth, selling fakes when they couldn't get real stamps or sometimes by preference. Some started with perhaps as much as fifteen dollars, rented a back room in some shabby old building and started business with a second-hand chair and table. Some were errand boys or clerks, who used their employers' post-office boxes for receipt of their mail. "Some of these steal all the money sent." One large dealer received a letter from a boy in 1870, expressing surprise and gratification at receiving all the stamps he ordered, "for most dealers steal the boys' money." "In the God-forgotten and Heaven-forsaken city of New York," said the voice of the *Mercury* from Boston, "as everybody knows, the whole of the juvenile dealers make it their business to steal their stock from their more successful brethren." The fly-by-night dealers were just as crooked in buying stamps from the layman as in selling them. Some of the better magazines frequently published black lists of "gentlemen who forget to pay for stamps."

A customer who sent an order for about a dollar and a half to the Triumph Stamp Company of Erie, Pennsylvania, specifying that he wanted *genuine* stamps, received in return, so he reported, "nothing but the meanest counterfeits." When he complained, the "company" wrote with refreshing naïveté, "We do not guarantee our stamps all genuine, we buy many of our stamps from American dealers as *genuine* stamps, if they are not, we are not to be blamed, as we are not very skillful judges, all the stamps

which we purchase of Foreign Post Offices, we do *warrant* genuine." The *American Journal of Philately* commented that it was "doubtful if the Triumph Stamp Company consists of more than one small office boy."

On May 28, 1870, J. W. Scott staged the first stamp auction sale in history at Clinton Hall, formerly the ill-omened Astor Place Opera House—Disaster Place, it came to be called after the riot there in 1849, when twenty-two were killed and many injured. In 1872 Scott even went over to England and introduced the auction at Sotheby's old stand in Wellington Street. Thereafter, auctions became more and more frequent on both sides of the water. Many of them, though puny affairs by comparison with some of the great ones of later years, were considered eminently successful: when "the fine collection of Mr. Pullen," for example, sold in 1878 for six hundred dollars. The first really big sale in America was that of the collection of F. de Coppet by J. W. Scott and Company in 1893, which brought in about $29,000. It was there that Scott's prediction of the "thousand-dollar stamp" was realized, when Charles B. Corwin of New York paid that much for a two-cent British Guiana 1850. Incidentally, Corwin sold that stamp four years later for seventeen hundred dollars.

New zest was thrown into philately when the United States began issuing post cards in 1873. They had been conceived in Austria four years before, and rapidly became popular in Europe. A pity some of our present-day writers don't ponder their incidental history more carefully! Bertita Harding, in *Golden Fleece*, her delightful life sketch of the Empress Elizabeth of Austria and her husband, Franz Joseph, in describing the guerrilla warfare between Elizabeth and her mother-in-law, early in 1855, says, "To pen

even a post card which was addressed to an enemy amounted to an ordeal." It would, indeed—when post cards weren't to be invented for another fourteen years! A year later, she had Duke Karl Theodor of Wittelsbach writing news "in short jottings, sometimes even on picture post cards," to his family at home. Suffering Clio! When the first picture post cards weren't seen until at least thirty-five years later!

Well, when post cards were proposed in America during Grant's presidency, Democratic politicians denounced them as "the vain and trifling whim of a corrupt and extravagant Administration vainly seeking for some plaything to amuse the people with, while it steals away their liberties." Fears were expressed that the cards would be used for "blackmailing and venting personal spleen, as has been the case to some extent in England." Some persons designed their own private cards, of which hundreds were confiscated and sent to the Dead Letter Office. Many of the early post cards, notably those of Guatemala and Newfoundland, were gorgeous affairs, with deep rococo borders on the address side and much other beautiful engraving. Collectors found much pleasure in these new items, and some began specializing in post cards. A new piano composition, "The Post Card Galop," testified to their popularity.

Philately became more and more integrated with American life. There was an article on postage stamps in the American Cyclopaedia in 1875, and in 1880 the word "philately" found its way into Webster's Dictionary "Supplement of New Words." In that same year a complete assortment of the stamps and stamped envelopes of the United States in use at the time, and some older ones (reprints?), was placed in the foundation in Central Park,

New York, for the ancient Egyptian obelisk erected by Thothmes III in Heliopolis, 1600 B.C., presented by the Khedive to New York City in 1877, F.O.B. Heliopolis, so that William H. Vanderbilt finally had to put up a hundred thousand dollars—though why so much, we don't know—to bring it across the ocean and set it up. And when the decorously garbed Statue of Liberty (ever since a "must" for the hinterland tourist) was erected in New York Harbor in 1883, it was noised about that its sculptor, Bartholdi, was a philatelist; whence New York surmised that the book which the well-draped libertarian female is nursing on one arm is a stamp album.

In 1884 ladies in America were covering cups, plates and saucers with used stamps in artistic patterns (fifteen years later it was cigar bands), "the lavender penny and green halfpenny stamps of England working in well with the United States red," and covering them with copal varnish, which would stand washing in soap and water, though of course—was the warning—not in hot water. (They had no Valspar then—*Advt.*) Parlor table tops were also covered with the stamps in circles, stars, diamonds, interlaced triangles and Greek key borderings. "If the table be round, an envelope in the center, stamped and addressed to the owner of the table, is appropriate."

Composers continued their tributes to the hobby. The "Philatelical Waltzes," published in Chicago, were followed a few years later by the "Postage Polka," emanating from Montreal. In 1879 collectors were reading *John Caldigate*, one of Anthony Trollope's later novels, which was a philatelic mystery story. The hero, having made his pile in the Australian gold diggings, returned to England and married. But some bad eggs who had known him Down Under also came back and tried to blackmail him, producing a

letter purporting to have been mailed by him from Sydney to another wife in New South Wales. A little postal clerk turns amateur detective, however, proves by this and that that the postmark is faked, remembers that the New South Wales stamps are manufactured in England, and by the little letters in the four corners of the stamp proves that it did not come into use until two years after the letter was supposed to have been mailed. But Trollope, unfortunately for his story, was not a philatelist, and critics quickly pointed out that only the British stamps had the letters in the four corners; those of New South Wales had none.

On October 17, 1874, eight men—real flesh-and-blood men this time, mostly from Brooklyn—actually met in New York and organized the National Philatelic Society. Why "National" can only be explained by the same liking for ostentation which led a boys' stamp club of 1880 to call themselves The Amateur Virtuosos. The highfalutin name indicates that John J. Casey was prominent in the councils of the society. In fact, by 1877 he was in the saddle as President, while R. R. Bogert was secretary. But Casey still had his weakness for counterfeits, and by 1879 the Society had forced him out, and his influence was ended. Philately was struggling hard to free itself of undesirable elements, and from that time forward, its progress was slowly but steadily upward.

The racketeering in surcharges, remainders and reprints by certain governments, often through the manipulation of contractors, was increasing, but all the better philatelists set their faces firmly against it. Counterfeiters decreased in number but became more skillful as the warfare on them increased. Philately had not yet become an exact science, and price lists in the '80's were still speckled with errors. Small, unscrupulous dealers still functioned, though fewer

in number. Even as late as 1892 Durbin & Hanes reported that they had bought out a "large company" which had been running page ads in several stamp journals, but whose entire stock was kept in a cigar box under the owner's bed; and to consummate the deal cost Durbin & Hanes a cool Three Dollars. Some magazines as late as 1900 printed lists of "dead beats, frauds and cheats," both among dealers and customers.

In 1877 the largest stamp collection in America was that of "a St. Louis gentleman . . . with another profession to claim the great part of his time," as the St. Louis *Times* delicately remarked, perhaps withholding his name for fear of bringing him into ridicule and weakening the belief of clients in his sanity and ability as an attorney—for the gentleman was John K. Tiffany. The *Times* said that his collection numbered thirteen thousand varieties; that the most paid for any stamp in it was twenty-five dollars; "but he has been offered as high as $100 for a single five-cent stamp."

When in 1886 the first really national collectors' organization was formed, the American Philatelic Association, Tiffany was unanimously regarded as the logical choice for president. Rudolphus R. Bogert, prominent New York dealer, was elected vice-president, and S. B. Bradt, secretary. A little later it was found advisable to change the name of the organization to American Philatelic Society; in fact, they should have known better at the very start, because of the initials. There was another, a notorious anti-Catholic (today it would be called Fascist) organization functioning then, known as the American Protective Association, and at the mere sound of the letters "A.P.A." an Irishman would hit the first person within reach.

When the second annual convention of the Association

met at Chicago in August, 1887—it is interesting to note that the delegates "represented nearly all the learned professions, with a strong dash of insurance men thrown in"—the Chicago *Morning News* mirrored public opinion by being a bit facetious at their expense:

> Most of the Delegates to the Convention are young men, some of them under the age of whiskers. Their faces are cut from the patterns of professional people, and their skins are tanned in the lawyer's or doctor's office or at the clerk's desk. President J. K. Tiffany is a smooth-faced, brown-mustached, lawyer-like gentleman and a good talker. Secretary Bradt is tall and slender and bites a stripling black mustache. E. B. Sterling, besides having the finest collection of United States document stamps in the country, has an aggregation of blue-black beard that is as rare as some of his stamps. It has pre-empted all the territory between his shirt collar and cheek bones, and throws a shadow of transparent pallor over the upper portion of his face. The peculiar craze that makes the Convention possible is not stamped in colors on the Delegates' faces or even sunk in their features by dies. They look like other reasonable people who would not give face value for the one and two-penny Mauritius stamps that hundreds of wealthy stamp collectors are running around to give $4,000 for.
>
> A rare stamp to a philatelist is like the winner of a Derby to a horseman, a new star to an astronomer, or a ten-dollar bill to a reporter.
>
> Mr. Sterling brought a portion of his collection of Government document stamps to the Convention and exhibited them. Mr. Sterling was formerly a bank

teller, but he abandoned his business, with all its possibilities and Canada only a few hundred miles away, to buy and sell stamps.

It should be explained to the present generation that we had no extradition arrangements with Canada then, and the frequent abscondings of our bank officials to the hospitality of the Dominion supplied a favorite subject for newspaper jesting. The reporter ended by saying that the delegates spent a good portion of their time in looking over the collections of other members "and worrying over specimens they did not possess and could not buy."

Some other Chicago papers were more respectful; the *Times*, for example, which spoke of "This unacknowledged but painstaking profession," and the *Inter-Ocean*, which declared that "The subject matter that so deeply interests these gentlemen is of greater practical importance than the general public has ever realized."

The Association held its first exhibition in Boston on August 13, 1888 (evidently there were no superstitious chaps among the philatelists of the Grover Cleveland period), and its second in the Eden Musee in New York in April, 1889. Mention of it was sandwiched in among those of the Musee's more popular attractions:

> *EDEN MUSEE*, WAX TABLEAUX, JUST ADDED "THE LYON'S BRIDE." ERDELYI NACZI'S GYPSY BAND. POSTAGE STAMP COLLECTION. 25C. DAY AND NIGHT. THE RUSSIANS, AJEEB, THE MYSTIFYING CHESS AUTOMATON. ART GALLERY FILLED WITH PAINTINGS.

Among the exhibitors were A. H. E. Burger, still one of the pillars of Nassau Street in 1939, R. R. Bogert, Henry C. Needham, John W. Scott (himself), E. R. Ackerman

and other notables of the day. Thereafter, the Association—later Society—grew rapidly in strength and influence.

But in the middle '90's, when the panic of '93 had given a setback to business, when one of the largest philatelic concerns, the C. H. Mekeel Stamp and Publishing Company, had failed, when a philatelic pawnshop, an ugly omen, had been established in New York, when reprints and remainders were flooding the market, to the disgust of the more ethical collectors and dealers, when the old-line general collectors were becoming irritated by specialization and the growing tendency of nations to issue commemoratives and pictorials—by the dozen then, not by the million, as now—notes of pessimism crept into editorial and organization councils, and some began wondering whether philately hadn't seen its best days and fallen into the seventh age of man, the Sere and Yellow. It had lasted some forty years, they pointed out, and that was as much as could be expected of any fad. But these gloomy crystal-gazings apparently fell upon deaf ears, for by 1905 it was guessed that there must be half a million stamp collectors in the United States; undoubtedly an overestimate, though there could be no denying the fact that their number had grown and was continuing to grow enormously.

FROM THE GENERAL TO THE PARTICULAR

CHAPTER FOUR

FOR TWO or three decades after stamp collecting began, it was naturally supposed that a real he-collector would stop at nothing. The world was his field and all was fish that came to his net. When Oscar Berger-Levrault, publisher of the first stamp list, ceased collecting in 1870—because the Franco-Prussian War had forced him to remove his printing and engraving business, with its four hundred employees, from Strasburg to Nancy, and he was too distracted with getting a start in a new place to bother with a hobby—he sold his collection, which numbered 10,400 varieties. In September, 1861, he had had only 673 stamps. But he remarked in after years that in 1870 he lacked only about fifty of having everything extant. That in thirty years from the appearance of the first stamp, more than ten thousand varieties had appeared, was an ominous sign; it indicated that the philatelist of the future who tried to collect all countries was going to have an increasingly colossal chore on his hands. Perhaps that was why some men such as Mr. W. Hughes-Hughes, the English barrister already mentioned, ceased collecting about that time.

Furthermore, it must be remembered that their conception of the word "variety" at that date was much narrower

than that of today, when slight flaws and differences in the same type and same issue of stamps, scratches, evidences of plate-repair work and so on serve to give the majority of stamps in a single sheet an individuality of their own and are therefore considered collectible. Faint nuances in the shades of ink used at different printings on the same stamp, the growing importance of sheet margins, with their several markings, these add varieties of which Berger-Levrault and his contemporaries never dreamed. But for decades there were men who struggled to achieve the impossible, and a few who came near enough to be classed among the immortals of philately.

A casual sort of Birchin Lane gathering of collectors and traders had begun in Paris in the 1860's. For a time it met in the gardens of the Tuileries, but too many outsiders hung around and got in the way. Finally a nook behind some Punch and Judy marionette stands at the corner of the Avenues Gabriel and Marigny, opposite the President's palace in the Champs Élysées, was discovered, and there the Bourse transferred itself early in the '70's. Ever since, it has met there on Thursday afternoons (a school holiday in France) and all day Sunday—save when the tax collector suddenly appears, and then it vanishes like blown steam; for those who sell there have for years sold without a license. On June 1st, 1939, however, the law divided the gathering into two groups; one, the pure amateurs, mostly children who do nothing but buy or trade stamps with each other, the other the dealers, who must now pay a two-hundred-fifty-franc (about $6.62) license. As the year's sales of all the sidewalk dealers, so they say, amount to no more than ten thousand dollars, the license fee is regarded as ruinous, and there is talk of taking the exchange indoors.

But war has come along since then, and Mars and the tax combined may wreck the old mart for good.

Among early frequenters of the Bourse was an Italo-Austrian youth named Phillippe Ferrari or Ferrary, who had money to buy anything he wanted; a slender lad with Teutonic blue eyes, but with traces of his Mediterranean ancestry in his countenance. He first appeared in the stamp shops of Paris before 1870, accompanied by his mother, the widowed Duchess de Galliera. The founder of the fortune had been a Genoese banker who wrought so well among the lira that when he died he left to his son a goodly segment of the city of Genoa, not to mention stocks and bonds and gold and frankincense and myrrh. His son, possessor of so much wealth, became, in the normal course of things, Duke of Galliera and Prince of Lucedio, just as our American millionaires become Doctors of Laws. There is a pretty story to the effect that he had a secret "library" to which no one was admitted, and to which during his lifetime not even his wife, a beautiful Austrian, had a key. After his death, she found on the shelves of that room some three hundred volumes, each fastened with a golden lock, and the leaves of those books were thousand-franc notes—three million francs in all; from which it would appear that there were only ten leaves to each volume—which seems to us a rather prodigal waste of golden locks and fine bindings and shelf space. It made a good story in the days when governments were creditable and corporations sound, but it leaves us cold now.

Anyhow, the Duke and Prince had what it takes, and when he died his widow, perhaps not liking the assorted odors of Genoa and seeking a better *ton*, went right up to Paris and bought the mansion in the Rue de Varenne which had been built in 1721 for the Maréchal de Mont-

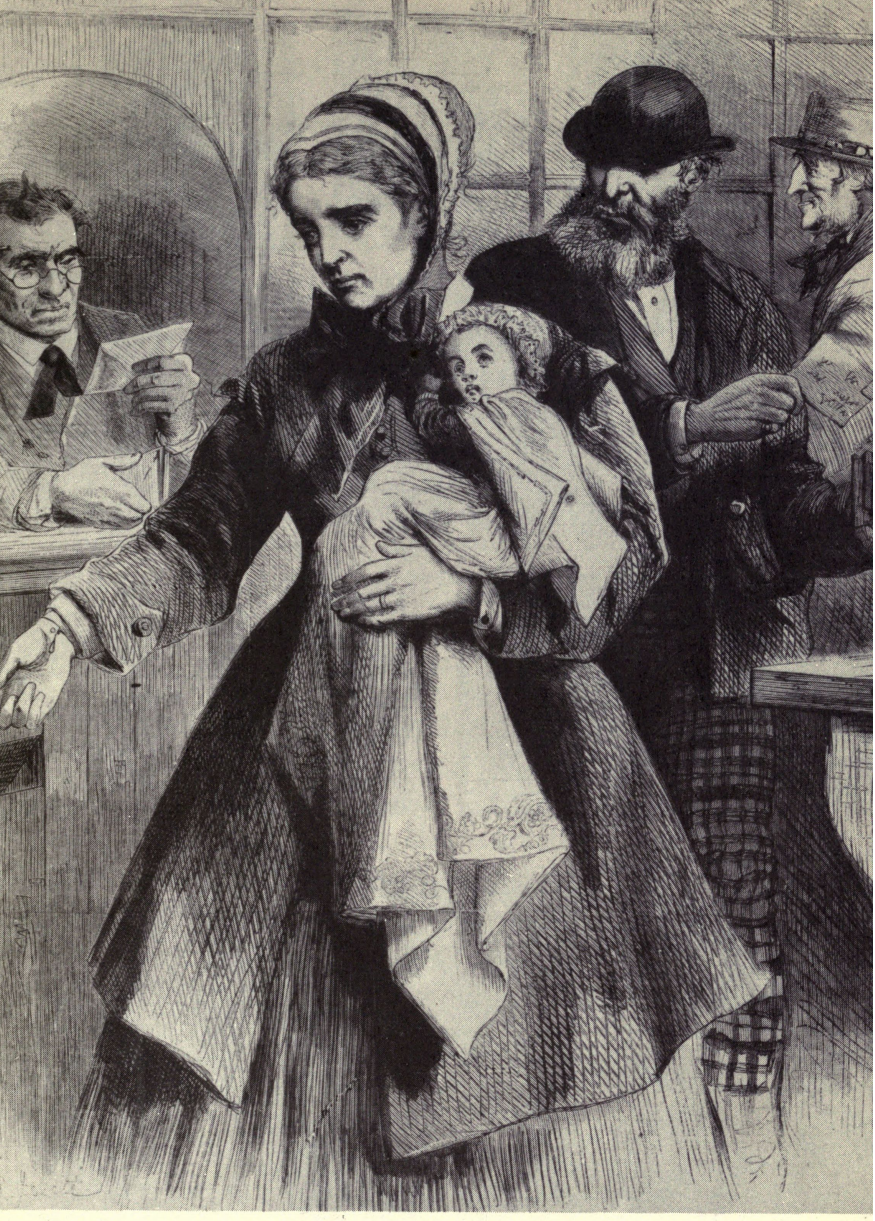
morency—not that cousin of Happy Hooligan's that we used to see in the Opper cartoons—another one. When the Duchess died, not long afterward, she left the mansion to her native Austria, but her young son Phillippe was to have the use of one wing for life. After her death, the youth became the adopted son of Ritter E. la Renotiere von Kriegsfeld, a distinguished Austrian officer. Some years later the young heir decided that he would henceforth be known as Phillippe la Renotiere, but after a few years more he resumed his paternal surname, hooking it to his adopted name with the German "von," so that he emerged with the curiously jumbled cognomen, Phillippe la Renotiere von Ferrary. In writing letters and checks for Anglo-Saxon correspondents, he frequently spelled his first name "Philip," after their manner.

His unlimited means soon made him the world's number-one menace to all other collectors who craved rarities, but there is much generosity and amiability mellowing the rivalry of philatelists, and Ferrary was not hated as poisonously as one might expect. He was aided in his collecting by the fact that, beginning in the latter 1870's, some of the great British general collectors began selling their stamps, partly because some of them were growing old, but probably in part because some of them began to have a feeling of discouragement at the thought of ever catching up with the swelling flood of new issues, surcharges and varieties, some of which were being deliberately promoted by certain small governments. It is noticeable that some of these men, after selling their general collections, began again, specializing in one or two countries.

In 1878, Sir Daniel Cooper sold his collection to Judge Philbrick—"Mr. Philbrick, Q. C.," as he was usually called over there—for £3,000; and only two or three years later,

Philbrick sold out to Ferrary for £8,000, then a record price. Laymen, especially in America, began to be aghast at the madness of these hobbyists. "A Frenchman has paid an Englishman $40,000 for his collection of old postage stamps," wrote a New York editor, speaking of the Philbrick-Ferrary deal. "The Fool Killer ought to stand in the middle of the English Channel and kick both ways." But the Fool Killer did nothing about it, and in 1882, Dr. W. E. Image, another eminent British collector, sold his stamps to Thomas K. Tapling for £3,000, giving Mr. Tapling for the time being probably the world's greatest collection—though before Tapling died in 1891, Ferrary had surpassed him. Tapling left his collection to the British Museum, which put many fine stamps beyond any collector's reach for all time. By 1897 it was estimated that Ferrary had spent $1,250,000 on his collection, and he had become the Colossus, the Rockefeller, the Prester John of philately. For forty years he had the pick of all the great collections that came on the market, and he never failed to take it. When a good stamp fell into his collection, it was spoken of as having gone to the graveyard, for he intended leaving the whole thing to the Imperial Post Museum at Berlin.

Ferrary became embittered at France and was naturalized as a Swiss subject in 1908. When war broke out in 1914, he was in Holland. He returned to France early in 1916, but soon went thence to Switzerland. When he tried to return to Paris, the French authorities would not permit it, well knowing his Austrian sympathies and his grudge at France. Within a few months he was dead. As to the clause in his will bequeathing the collection to the museum in Berlin, the French Government—with the charming disregard of personal wishes and rights peculiar to countries in a state of war—just laughed that off and seized the col-



An American post office of 1860.



From the Collection of Philip H. Ward, Jr.

A $20,000 page—The United States "August issue," 1861, all unused: one of only about eight complete sets known. The 12-cent alone is catalogued at $7,000.

lection. Stanley Gibbons, Ltd., of London, offered France twelve million francs for it, but all offers were refused, and the collection was sold at auction in fourteen sales distributed over the period from 1921 to 1925. Thus the greatest mass of stamps in the universe, including most of the major rarities and an enormous number of duplicates, was broken up, undoubtedly to the great benefit of philately, and passed into many hands. A number of the rarities were bought by Arthur Hind, a rich manufacturer of Utica, N. Y., who had to a certain extent succeeded Tiffany as America's greatest general collector.

But neither Ferrary nor Hind endeavored to keep fully abreast of the avalanche of commemorative and pictorial stamps which rushed forth in their latter years, and even Hind was to some extent a specialist. He had what has been called the world's greatest collection of United States and Confederate stamps, but there were other countries which he neglected. A few general collectors, such as Lord Camoys of Henley and Thomas Clark of Edinburgh held out in Britain until well into the twentieth century. F. W. Ayer, a young man of Bangor, Maine, started building a great collection at lightning speed towards the close of the nineteenth century, but his father threatened to disinherit him if he didn't stop wasting so much money, whereupon he closed out large blocks of his finest stamps to the Gibbons Company of London, and his collection declined even more rapidly than it had grown.

A writer in the *American Journal of Philately* in 1869-70, signing himself "Cosmopolitan," was a pioneer in the idea of specialization. He suggested the gathering of Presidential and Congressional franked covers, and a few months later urged that collectors go in for United States Revenues, then still untouched. His hint as to franks unfortunately

went unheeded for many years, but revenues were taken up seriously not so long after that.

Very early in the history of philately, the physical peculiarities of and variations in stamps began to be studied, and as time went on, came to be regarded by a few as legitimate varieties. "Dr. Magnus" (Dr. J. A. Legrand, noted French pundit) was writing on watermarks in stamp paper as early as 1865. Perforations, the thicknesses of paper, cracked plates and variations in the stamps of a sheet were observed by some collectors in the '70's, but the man who collected them as varieties usually had to endure some jeering and was regarded as a crank. European collectors were pursuing these little oddities with much zest, but what could you expect of an effete continent like that? A writer in the *Philatelic Monthly* in 1880, more advanced than many of his fellows, recommended that "the American school of philatelists" collect the distinct varieties of perforation, such as perforated, rouletted and imperforate, and instances where there is a marked difference in the size of perforations, as in the Austrian stamps, but go no farther. Next, he suggested collecting stamps both watermarked and unwatermarked, only the extreme variations in paper, such as very thick or very thin, "and distinct varieties of colors, dies and types." This, he thought, would be "extensive enough to suit the majority of collectors, and still would not be as perplexing and multitudinous as the European school," whose attention to minute details was "carrying the thing too far."

Naturally, his advice was susceptible to a wide latitude in interpretation. And of course collectors nowadays are carrying such things farther than any expert of 1880 ever dreamed of as a possibility; which doesn't mean that any

new collector need feel that he must go in for such particularity in order to have a lot of fun out of philately.

Collectors thought more and more seriously of paper and perforations after 1880, and also began to accumulate whole sheets. The rapid multiplication of collectible items bred a growing tendency to specialize during the next two decades. Many went in strongly for American stamps—among them Hiram E. Deats of Flemington, New Jersey, whose specialties at one time and another were American postage and revenues, and the provisional stamps issued by certain postmasters in 1845-46, before our national adhesive stamps were issued, and by many Southern postmasters in 1861, before the Confederate Government could get its own new stamps off the presses.

George H. Watson, a New York broker, was making a specialty of post cards in the '90's, of which he was said to have one of the finest collections in existence. W. Sellschopp of San Francisco even concentrated on African post cards! And in New York City there was a post-card society. Charles B. Corwin was one of the earliest in America to take up perforations and watermarks in a big way. Mr. Corwin, incidentally, was the leading spirit in the organization in 1896 of the Collectors Club of New York, the greatest philatelic society in this hemisphere, which has members from coast to coast, and even in foreign countries. Gilbert E. Jones, one of the owners of the New York *Times*, was a specialist in unperforated stamps, particularly in pairs, of which he was said to have twelve hundred varieties!

Before the end of the century, the idea of collecting used stamps on the entire envelope had arrived. John F. Seybold, a business man of Syracuse, N. Y., has been given credit for introducing it. He began collecting before 1870,

and quite early in his career developed a fancy for the whole envelope. Dealers laughed at his eccentricity for years—principally because they had so few entire covers to offer him—but by 1890 they were beginning to respect the notion, for others had taken it up. The stamped envelope aided in this trend. At first and for many years collectors just saved a square corner cut out of such envelopes. Some dealers in 1877 were paying fifteen cents per hundred for the one- and two-centers cut square, and fifty cents per hundred for the three-centers. But in 1885 it was remarked in the *Philatelic World* that "The collection of envelope stamps seems to be going out of fashion. . . . Many are taking them out of their collections and getting rid of them at any price. They either do not collect them at all, or insist on having the entire envelope."

Thereafter, collectors began to see the historical and human interest in the whole envelope. The trouble was that at the beginning, we were too young a nation, the stamp was still too new a thing, collectors were still too amateurish to be aware of connotations. But by 1900, the peeling of stamps of any consequence off the envelopes had practically ceased to be done by any real collector; and by that time, some had begun to be interested in letters of the ante-stamp era; quaint things of all sizes and all sorts of papers, with the name of the sending office, the amount of postage and the words "Paid" or "Collect" hand-stamped or scrawled here and there around the address by the postmasters, sometimes one or another of these things omitted, sometimes other data added, all a haphazard, delightful jumble to puzzle over, and some mysteries of which haven't been solved to this day.

Furthermore, the collecting of the entire cover aided in the preservation of the stamp. In the nineteenth century,

before tweezers or glassine had been thought of, stamps were carried in wallets, pocket notebooks and envelopes, mounted, dismounted and remounted in albums and bandied about by sweaty or greasy fingers until many fine old stamps were ruined or greatly reduced in value. Modern philately is much better equipped; tweezers take the place of oily epidermis, while the invention of glassine or cellophane has been a godsend. Loose stamps and whole covers are now carried about in transparent envelopes, and many a rarity retires for the rest of its days to the security of such a casing, seldom or never thereafter to be touched by human hands. Whole album leaves in some of the finer collections are immured in such coverings and their serenity never disturbed.

Surcharges, the overprinting of stamps with different values, colony names, and so forth, became numerous between 1880 and 1890—so numerous, especially in the French colonies, that there were complaints that the French were racketeering in them at the expense of philatelists. Old conservatives like J. W. Scott and others refused to recognize a surcharge as a variety or collectible. Scott read a paper denouncing them before the Brooklyn Philatelic Club in 1896 and worked up so much feeling that the Anti-Surcharge Association was formed, with ninety-four charter members, which roster increased within six months to 235. The "radical" group, which included men like John N. Luff, later a great historian of United States stamps, R. R. Bogert, Henry Calman and others, refused to enter the society, as did others who had fine collections of surcharges.

Scott and others of the old school disapproved for many years of the collection of perforations, watermarks, paper variations and other vain gewgaws, and were advocates of

space-filling: that is, if you couldn't get a genuine stamp and a good stamp of a certain kind, you should fill its space in your album with a proof of it, a reprint (even a counterfeit, some said, though letting it be known as such), or with the best specimen you could get, whether it be ragged, torn, dirty, greasy or canceled almost into indistinguishability. But the present-day collector says: "A real stamp and a reasonably good stamp, or none."

Buying of stamps in sheets inevitably led to consciousness of the printers' markings on the margins—the little arrowhead which marks the middle of the sheet, for example. The first thing the old conservatives knew, younger and more rabid fans were accumulating "arrow pairs" of the new and recent stamps. One finds sneers at this fad in the magazines of 1889. Just a passing fancy, it was thought; but ask any dyed-in-the-wool collector about it today!

Producers of stamps number on the margin each plate from which sheets of stamps are printed as long as it is serviceable; then a new one, with the next consecutive number, is put into service. There naturally arose in the middle '80's a hankering for a specimen of each plate number, whence arose the collection of plate-number strips or blocks. Mr. Deats remembers that he began gathering them in 1887, when he was fifteen. The postmaster in his home town would just tear off the whole strip of stamps from the edge of the sheet where the number appeared and save it for him; and young Hiram Deats was one boy who could afford to indulge in such a hobby. When the Bureau of Engraving and Printing was set up in 1893 and took over the making of our stamps from the private bank-note companies, it began numbering its stamp plates from 1, and that gave added stimulus to the plate-number fad. However, after ten years of it, the numbers were piling up so

that there was a slight reaction, a feeling of uneasiness at the thought of trying to cope with the situation. The writer of the Northwestern Notes in the *Weekly Philatelic Era* of 1904 remarks that "The plate number fad is about dead in the Northwest. What's the sense in collecting a lot of paper with a figure on it, which never has and never will be intended for postal or philatelical purposes? There are enough varieties without this senseless craze." Which proves that no man, living or dead, ever has been or ever will be able to predict trends in human fancy and conduct; and yet certain nervy chaps go right on doing it and even get paid for it—H. G. Wells, for example.

The plating of stamps was another epidemic which appeared among advanced collectors in Europe in the latter part of the century and presently spread to this country. To understand it, one must be aware that it is impossible for human beings to make any two things precisely alike. Every stamp on a sheet, whether there be one hundred or two hundred of them, will have its variations, though they may be almost indescribably slight nowadays, from every other stamp. In earlier decades, the variations were often more considerable. The problem is to identify every stamp on the sheet, its location, if possible to get a specimen of it; in other words, to reconstruct the sheet. The difficulty of doing this with some old stamp issued back there in the 1840's or '50's may be faintly imagined by the uninitiated. And yet the heart of the beginner need not fail nor his brain reel at the thought. You should see some essays at reconstructing plates of the Great Britain "Penny Black" of 1840, the Adam of all stamps, which we observed in an exhibition the other day, the work of three boys, Andrew, Billy and Jack Heinemann of New York, aged ten, thirteen and fifteen respectively. There were many pairs, a block of

four and a number of covers—and some of the sheets were not far from completion. What those boys can do, any adult with brains enough to balance a checkbook can do, provided he has the inclination, perseverance and a little money.

Plating had begun in America even in the '80's, for it was before 1885 that E. Harrison Sanford, a noted collector of the period, was trying to plate the rare Brattleboro postmaster provisional stamp—one of the most difficult jobs of all, though the original sheet contained only ten stamps. The first Brattleboro that Sanford bought cost him fifty dollars, and he bought every copy that came on the market, nearly always at a higher price, until he had six. The last one cost him a hundred and twenty-five. He decided that his own buying was raising the price, and so ceased his attempt. That stamp today is quoted in the catalogues at $2,250 if on the original cover, or $1,250 off it!

Those who know say that the greatest of the platers were Leslie Hausberg, a Briton, Charles Lathrop Pack and Dr. Carroll Chase, Americans. All began before 1900 and continued until well into the present century. All showed the tendency of the times by specializing in their collections. Hausberg sold his collection of Victoria, the southern Australian colony, to King George V for something like ten thousand pounds. Pack, remembered by the lay public as a great forest conservationist, was said to have the finest collection of British North American ever brought together. He also collected Cape of Good Hope, some of the Australian colonies and South American countries. George V once wrote him a four-page letter, all in his own hand, enclosing some of his early Victoria stamps and asking Mr. Pack's help in plating them.

As to Dr. Carroll Chase, a Brooklyn physician, a story

told by Walter S. Scott, son of J. W. Scott and himself one of the eminent figures in philately these many years past, will be significant. Mr. Scott says that thirty-five or forty years ago he lunched one day with George R. Tuttle, a prominent New York stamp dealer, and Tuttle remarked in the course of the meal, "That man Chase is crazy; just plumb crazy."

"What are the symptoms?" asked Scott.

"Why, he's buying these three-cent U. S. 1851's at thirty cents a hundred," replied Tuttle, "and sitting up until two or three o'clock in the morning, studying them." The sequel, Mr. Scott says, that what with plating, finding variations and getting its full biological history, Chase made a hundred thousand dollars off that one stamp. He's been retired and living in Paris these several years past, and no doubt that humble, ugly little three-center contributed in no small degree to his present comfort—which should be *verbum sap* to the present-day collector or the layman who is looking for a hobby that won't be a total loss.

By 1890 some authorities were declaring that "specialization is necessary to the life of philately." But by 1900 others were wailing that it was killing philately; all this talk about thick and thin papers, watermarks, perforations, surcharges, cracked plates and such was scaring possible neophytes away. Score another error for the conservatives and pessimists. Specialties have proved to be the backbone of stamp collecting.

It is entertaining, too, to find a collector writing to a stamp magazine in 1875 to propound the staggering question, "What shall we do when our collections are complete?" Fancy that! A quarter century later the tune was different. So many new issues—they seemed many then!—were pouring out, so many varieties were being found in a

single plate, so many errors and other rarities were becoming almost unattainable save by a few, that some Cassandras were now wailing that it would be impossible ever to complete their collections. To such pessimists *Mekeel's Stamp Collector* very wisely retorted in 1905:

> The word "completeness" ought to be expunged for all time from the philatelic vocabulary. Of course the general collector cannot hope to attain completeness. Who wants to? Who would think of it at all, as a thing to be desired, if the stamp press did not continually bewail and moan over the fact that completeness is now impossible. Of course it is impossible! Why waste further words on the matter?

Why, indeed! One of Mr. Deats' favorite sayings is "The fun is in the chase; not in the attainment." What would there be left for the hobbyist to do if he completed his collection? Life would become purposeless. Though it may never occur to him, "Excelsior" is always his motto. There is always something farther ahead, some Ultima Thule, some purple islet of perfection never to be reached, but which to strive for is the chief joy of life. To prove our point, take the sad case of a British philatelist, Mann, who bought the great collection of European stamps made by M. P. Castle, which, combined with what he had already, made his collection so nearly complete that he could add little or nothing to it, and so lost interest in Europe and sold everything to Stanley Gibbons, Ltd., in 1906 for £30,000. He found some compensating balm thereafter, however, in making new, great collections of the British colonies and other countries.

Arthur Hind—whom we shall speak of again later—and J. Insley Blair were two of the last great general collectors

on the continent. Both died not so long ago. Their leading contemporaries all restricted their collections in some way or other. There was E. R. Ackerman, for example, New Jersey congressman—usually spoken of as Senator Ackerman, because he had also served in the New Jersey State Senate—who collected only the countries he had visited; but before he became too old to travel, these numbered more than one hundred! He never got around to Australia, so that entire continent, several of the isles of the sea and a little backwoods state here and there did not appear among his stamps. Harold D. Watson, New York attorney, claims to be a general collector with certain minor exceptions. He began collecting in 1879, and though for a few decades, he says, he tolerated and included new political units as they appeared, when it comes to Fiume, Eritrea, Cyrenaica, North Ingermanland, Tannou Touva, Azerbajian, Hellandgone and these other little upstart Pinocchios of the present turbulent century, he just ignores them.

In the past three decades, one frequently finds collections bounded by the year 1900. The late Charles Curie, one of America's great, would have only nineteenth-century stamps of all countries. William E. Hawkins, also dead, went a step farther and demanded nothing but nineteenth-century unused. On the other side of the line is Mrs. Caroline Prentiss Cromwell, who has admittedly the finest twentieth-century collection—all stages, used and unused, sheets, blocks, errors and varieties—in existence. But even she, disconcerted by the swelling tide of made-to-sell stamps now sweeping over the world, has ceased buying the new issues during the past two or three years.

William Thorne of New York, a semi-invalid, had a fine general collection in the '80's and '90's, but thinking himself wearied with the strain of pursuing rarities, he sold out.

Finding, however, that his health declined thereafter, he began again, and this time would have nothing but blocks of four. Many speak of him as the originator of this type of collecting. It was, moreover, the belief of those who knew him best that his interest in stamps prolonged his life by many years. After him, George H. Worthington, Ohio traction magnate, who specialized in several countries, was most noted for his blocks of four and unused specimens. Of the Crocker brothers of San Francisco, kinsmen of one of the Pacific Railroad builders, Henry J. built great collections of Hawaii and Japan. The latter was lost in the mighty earthquake and fire of 1906, but the Hawaiis had been taken to London for an exhibition and so escaped. William H. Crocker was strong on America and Australia. H. J. Duveen had the most nearly complete collection of British Guiana in existence, but even lacked the 1856 rarity, the unique error which has become the Koh-i-Noor of philately. Henry G. Mandel, long connected with the American Bank Note Company, had, as a natural result, a remarkable collection of proofs.

In an article, "Collecting the Unfashionable," John N. Luff in 1898 called attention to "regions unexplored" by American collectors in South America, Africa, Asia and the Pacific—and some thereafter followed his advice. But there were other and even more thrilling *terrae incognitae* nearer home which he failed to mention; the Indian Territory, for example, that strangest political unit in our history, of which Dr. Chase made such a remarkable collection, including many covers of the pre-stamp era; and the Texas Republic, which Christian Dull of Pennsylvania and Harry M. Konwiser of New York have gone into in a searching way.

And thus the special gradually but steadily took the place

of the general. Today it has reached a point which to the fathers of philately would have seemed worse than fantastic. There are those who collect only air-mail stamps, and dealers who handle nothing else; some who center on Zeppelin-carried covers; others who go in for the thousand and one ramifications of the postmark and cancellation category, which we shall survey in a later chapter. The new commemorative and pictorial stamps, irritating as they are to old-line philatelists, have opened up a vast new field of ideas, both to beginner and seasoned collector. Today the only general collectors are the kids just emerging from rompers, to whom a stamp from any part of the world is a treasure—though even they now begin specializing at a comparatively early age. The best authorities say that there is not a serious adult philatelist today who is trying for a real general collection, omitting nothing. That has become a Jovian feat which no one in his right mind cares to attempt.

THE BIOLOGY OF A STAMP

CHAPTER FIVE

THE FIRM of Perkins, Bacon & Petch of London printed England's and the world's first adhesive stamps. Curiously enough, the concern was founded by a Boston Yankee, Jacob Perkins, who went over to England in 1819 to compete for the bank-note contract of the Bank of England. He first took in two partners named Fairman and Heath, and by 1840 had added Bacon and Petch. Perkins's daughter, by the way, married Bacon. After 1852 the firm was Perkins, Bacon & Company, and there it is to this day. Their original bid on the stamp job, made in December, 1839, quoted eightpence per thousand, provided the paper was furnished them. It finally came down to 7½d, including gumming and plates, which was possible because so many more letters were mailed than anybody had expected. Next it was reduced to 6½d and then to 4½d, which price continued until the contract expired in 1880. During the first fifteen years alone, the firm supplied three billion stamps to the government.

But worthy competition arose in the United States and American firms even found jobs in the British colonies. When the American Bank Note Company engraved the Nova Scotia stamp of 1860, bearing the profile of Queen

Victoria, some English editors generously admitted it to be the world's most beautiful stamp, and one even called it "the Queen of stamps." The condition is reversed now, and the old engravers across the water are doing on the whole rather better work than our Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

Of course every stamp design must go through a long process of preliminary sketches which are criticized by this, that and the other governmental official until finally something is agreed upon and a finished drawing and die made; then there are proofs taken in various colors, perhaps a change or two made in the die, perhaps the whole die thrown out and a new one made, in some cases the whole idea finally rejected and the job begun all over again with new sketches. All these sketches and proofs are an important part of the life history of the stamp, and the collection of them, when possible, is an interesting and important branch of philately. The Earl of Crawford had by 1900 formed a magnificent collection of this sort, tracing almost every American stamp design to its ante-natal stage, sometimes even to the first rough pencil sketch. Thereafter he showed every stage in its development; he followed it through its period of use, showing the varying shades of the different printings, the obliterations and changes, the reissues, reprintings and forgeries. He had equally fine collections of the sort for Great Britain and Italy.

The engravers and printers in those private establishments in early days thought nothing of striking off a few proofs in the various colors for themselves, just as keepsakes. As collectors became more interested in such items, the employees of the engraving companies were easily persuaded to run off from the government dies entrusted to them a few proofs for collector acquaintances. The govern-

ments became more rigid in their demands that their dies be protected, and the giving away of proofs in foreign shops became rare by 1900. Of course the United States Bureau of Engraving and Printing forbids the private taking of proofs, and how so many get into collectors' hands is a dark mystery. When an old English engraver, Herbert Bourne, died in 1907, collectors found with anguish that, faithful to the government's wishes, he had destroyed most of his old proofs and essays; but Fred J. Melville, noted philatelic publicist, was able to lay hands upon some thirty or forty that were left.

The story of the mechanics of our first stamp issue was told to a reporter in 1897 by W. T. Silby, then 84 years of age, who had been, in Polk's Administration, the special agent of the Post Office Department sent to New York to superintend the issuing of our first two stamps. Cave Johnson was then Postmaster-General, and Rawdon, Wright, Hatch & Edson was the firm that produced those stamps of 1847. The first order was for sixty-five thousand dollars' worth of the fives and tens. After the printing, the plates were enclosed in large envelopes, sealed with R., W., H. & E.'s seal on one end, and Silby's on the other, and the envelopes deposited in the New York Custom House. Before leaving the city, Silby left four thousand dollars' worth of the stamps with the New York Post Office; stopped in Philadelphia and left three thousand dollars' worth with the postmaster there, and took the rest to Washington. Within a short time, the issue was so nearly exhausted that a much larger printing was ordered.

There were comparatively few changes made in the first two decades of our stamps. Now and then a postmaster-general would come in who wanted to see a new design produced during his incumbency, but this didn't happen



From Philadelphia collections, courtesy Philip H. Ward, Jr.

United States revenue inverted centers, including the unique 25 cent unused, and (bottom center) the only known unused copy of the $2.50, for which $5,000 was paid, from



From the Collection of Philip H. Ward, Jr.

Inverted center stamps of the world, including the Argentine 10 pesos, the Bolivian air mail, the Canal Zone 1 centesimo

often, and one idea always held; the stamps always presented portraits of deceased statesmen, with Washington's greatly predominating, and always on the three-center which carried the ordinary letter. Then in 1869 came that revolutionary series with pony-express riders, locomotives and other novelties, some of them in two colors. It delighted the stamp collectors, but upset many conservatives and all Democratic editors terribly. One thing not generally known is that it was first intended to use a picture of the surrender of Burgoyne at Saratoga on the bi-colored thirty-cent stamp, but fear of hurting British sensibilities arose, and at the last moment this was eliminated and the hasty concoction of eagle, shield and flags—which was so derided by certain critics and which, when one color was inverted, made a frightful mess—was substituted. The uproar over that series was a lesson to the Post Office Department, and it didn't stray from the beaten path again for twenty-four years.

Rawdon, Wright, Hatch & Edson held the stamp contract for ten years, and then the Continental Bank Note Company took over in 1857. From that time until 1893 the Continental, National and American Bank Note Companies took the contract away from each other every few years. The American finally absorbed the Continental and held the job for the last fourteen, nearly fifteen, years before the United States Bureau of Engraving and Printing undertook the work, and has continued to do it ever since.

Meanwhile, the printing of stamped envelopes was being done by other companies, and a curious story of trade rivalry in 1874 is one of the incidents of this history. The Reay Company's contract expired that year, and when bids were received, the Department awarded the new contract to the lowest bidder, the Plympton Manufacturing Com-

pany of Hartford, Connecticut. Plymptons had never before made stamped envelopes, and to prevent them from carrying out the contract within the time specified, the Reay concern hastily hired all the best die sinkers in the country, with the specification that they were to do nothing for a month. The Plympton Company found second-rate engravers to do the work and explained the situation to the government. The latter agreed to accept such dies as they could make until better ones could be procured; and thus was born the "Booby Head" envelope and other curiosities of 1874. When Plymptons could employ the better workmen again, many of the poor envelopes were called in and destroyed.

The Bureau of Engraving and Printing came near losing the stamp contract on two occasions. Costs rose constantly during the first ten years of its monopoly, and the Post Office began to wonder whether the work couldn't be done more economically by private hands. Bids were requested in 1903, but only two bidders responded—the Bureau and the American Bank Note Company. The Bureau, taking advantage, as some government agencies are doing now, of its exemption from necessity for showing a profit or even keeping out of the red, bid lower than the Bank Note Company by several thousand dollars, admitting that this meant working at a loss, which must be made up by the Treasury Department; but it was pointed out that it would be better to keep the work in the Bureau even at a loss than to discharge five hundred employees—not that the politicians were worrying about the welfare of the employees so greatly, but because such action would make such glorious campaign material for the opposition, the Democrats.

That flurry blew over, but again in 1906 bids were asked,

and this time the American Bank Note Company actually underbid the Bureau. Headlines in the newspapers read, "Uncle Sam Loses Stamp Contract." But not so fast; again Postmaster-General Cortelyou gave the work to the Bureau, despite the fact that the private concern's figure meant a saving to the government of seventeen thousand dollars annually.

These bids were based on a new and startling idea; that of engraving the names of twenty-six of the largest cities in the country on the stamps issued to them, and surcharging the names of the other six thousand post offices in the country on their stamps as they were ordered. By this means, it was said, the large cities would receive credit which they were not now getting for business done. The public was reminded that Liberia engraved the names of its five principal towns on its stamps. But Mexico had tried the same idea and given it up. The New York *Sun*, however, very quickly saw "A Bonanza for Uncle Sam"; there would be ninety thousand new varieties of stamps, and though the face value of the whole series would be only $9.27, for a collector to buy all the post offices would cost him $55,620! Many collectors saw ruin staring them in the face.

The precanceling of stamps with the name of the city had been authorized twenty years before, with the overprinting done by local printing houses. The "1907 issue" of cities never materialized, but not until 1916, when the Bureau began precanceling with city names, was the idea finally dropped. In 1929 it was revived again in a different form, when the Department ordered stamps to be surcharged with state names, as one means of combating theft. Kansas and Nebraska were the first states experimented upon, and as expected, every collector wanted a

complete set of all denominations with those words "Kansas" and "Nebraska" overprinted on them. The scheme never went any farther than those two states.

The person who likes to prowl through old printing may have a pleasant hour now and then in reading the ferocious criticisms of some of our stamp issues of the past, as uttered alternately by philatelists and lay editors. When John Wanamaker became Postmaster-General under President Benjamin Harrison, he went in for economy; used a cheaper paper, mostly wood pulp, which tore readily, especially as the perforation was below standard. Other animadversions were flung about at the annual meeting of the A. P. A. in 1890, and Mr. Wanamaker's ears must have burned unpleasantly. The two-center was said to appear in all shades, from light pink to ox-blood; one collector said he had counted twenty-five shades. Moreover, it and all the others faded readily. The *American Journal of Philately* said, "The heads on the one- and two-cent stamps are those of boobies, and not of statesmen of the United States, as they purport to be."

Wanamaker might have been trying with that poor ink to combat the washing off of cancellations, which had been going on ever since the year One, and was especially pestiferous in the case of the revenue stamps. There was constant talk in postal and revenue offices of trying to find "fugitive colors"; colors which would dissolve easily—and yet, darn it, not too easily! Pale, anemic colors were proposed but seldom tried, and the problem remains not quite solved to this day, though one device and another, such as meter stamping, precancellation, care in handling larger denominations, and so on, have greatly reduced its prevalence.

The series of 1902, on the other hand, was fairly well

liked by collectors, but newspapers and art pundits roasted it so hotly that the Post Office became ashamed of it. The design of the two-cent was declared "inartistic and clumsy." The New York *Times* reported on Feb. 21, 1903, that "Yielding to popular clamor, the Government is to retire the issue of two-cent stamps, though the Post Office Department still insists, in the face of overwhelming evidence, that the portrait thereon is that of Washington and not of Mr. Dooley, as the best authorities have decided." It was also complained that the picture gave Washington a toper's red nose. Franklin's portrait on the one-cent stamp reminded the *Times* editor of those heel-less stockings which amateur knitters used to turn out long ago. Furthermore, it was "supported on either side by two nude male figures, probably 'writhing on amarinthine asphodel'—caryatids which support nothing unless it be the absurdity of the design. In miniature they suggest 'worms for bait.'" The writhing, under these strictures, of Mr. R. Ostrander Smith, the artist who designed the stamp, must have rivaled that of the nude males.

In that same year, a post card with full-face view of President McKinley was issued by error from rejected plates. Only about five hundred of these precondemned cards got outside of the Bureau building, and they were all printed with the address of a New York contracting firm. Perhaps three hundred of them went through the mails, and copies of them are therefore rare. On July 1, 1902, the familiar card with the profile of McKinley replaced this one.

Mention of R. O. Smith reminds us that same remarkable collections have been made of the source material of our stamps. No nineteenth-century collections in this country, of course, compare with that of the Earl of Crawford,

who cornered very nearly everything relating to our stamp biology of that century. But the Earl did not live long enough to make a collection of our twentieth-century stamp sources, and some notable efforts have been made in this direction, despite the rule of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing that everything of that sort must remain in its vaults forever.

Many of the items are easily procurable by the beginner; as for example, a photograph of the St. Gaudens statue of Lincoln in Chicago, partly reproduced on the Lincoln commemorative stamp of 1909, one of the John Ericsson Memorial at Washington for that stamp of 1926, another of the youthful Washington statue at Braddock, Pennsylvania, for the commemorative of the memorable battle of 1755. For the Jamestown issue of 1907, you just have photographic copies made of the John Smith and Pocahontas copperplate engravings in Smith's book, which were reproduced on the stamp. Most of the portraits of famous men and women which have been appearing on our stamps in recent years may be found somewhere in the form of photographs or engravings in old books, and they may be searched out and copies made of them to mount along with the stamp. There are other photographs to gather, too. In the hero-pair designs of 1935-37 you will notice that on the Houston-Austin stamp, in addition to the portraits, you must have a straight front view of the Alamo; on the Lee-Jackson, the south front view of Stratford Hall, the old home of the Lees; on the Washington-Greene, Mount Vernon; on the Andrew Jackson-Scott, the Hermitage, and so on.

Photographs of famous paintings which appear on stamps may be had, too, if you will seek for them; of Trumbull's picture of the surrender of Burgoyne for the Saratoga

stamp, McRae's of Washington at Valley Forge, and even the several paintings used in our great Columbian series of '93 may be found if you are persistent enough. Some others are not so easy. The Trans-Mississippi series of 1898 had some interesting history. Lamprecht's painting, "Marquette on the Mississippi" was an early selection for one of the series, but for a long time the original painting couldn't be found. It was finally located in Marquette College, Milwaukee, and used on the one-cent stamp. For the two-cent a photograph called "Farming in North Dakota" was selected, a scene on the Amenia and Sharon Land Company's farm at Amenia, N. D. Some easterners in government employ objected that no farm owner in the world owned such a collection of farm machinery; they had no conception of the magnitude of prairie farming. That land company bought a vast quantity of the two-cent stamps of that issue, and for years thereafter, every letter leaving their office had one of those stamps on one upper corner and on the other a reproduction of the original view, which also appeared on their letterhead. The manager told George B. Sloane (who was looking these things up for his column in *Stamps*) that another concern had once written to him, asking how they might go about influencing Washington to use a picture from *their* business on a stamp.

"Hardships of Emigration" on the ten-cent stamp of the same series might prove difficult to locate. It was reproduced from a painting lent by the artist, A. G. Heaton, and when Mr. Sloane tried to locate it in 1936, Heaton's son couldn't tell him where the painting was; it had been sold after his father's death and disappeared from his ken. For the one-dollar, "Western Cattle in a Storm," we cadged an

etching by an English artist, MacWhirter, who called his picture "The Vanguard."

Sloane also dug up an interesting bit about the Panama-Pacific one-center, which bore a fine portrait of the explorer, Vasco Núñez de Balboa. The Balboa Motion Picture Company were a prominent outfit operating in California at the time, and they adopted this stamp as their own. Like the land company, they bought an enormous number, enough to last long after the Post Office had ceased issuing them, and all correspondence leaving the Balboa office thereafter bore that stamp; but the sad sequel is that the company collapsed before its stock of commemorative stamps was used up.

A publicity man for the New York Central Railroad succeeded in wangling a picture of the Empire State Express into the two-cent stamp of the Pan-American series of 1901—but from what photograph? For a long time the real original couldn't be found. King and Johl, in their *United States Postage Stamps of the Twentieth Century*, used a photograph closely resembling the picture on the stamp, it being generally believed that the Bureau artists had just doctored the design a bit. But the seasoned railroad bugs kept muttering that the real picture hadn't been found yet; that in the King-Johl picture the engine was a 4-4-2 job, the combination car was all wrong, the train was too nearly head-on. Finally Allen M. Thatcher jubilantly reported in *Stamps* in 1937 that he had found the true original in the collection of railroad photographs of C. B. Chaney of New York, and that it had been made by a photographer in Syracuse. Perhaps he would like to sell a few more prints.

The experts had reason to suspect that the train picture might have been altered, for the Bureau artists frequently

do this. Compare the photograph for the Arbor Day stamp of 1932, for which the little son and daughter of the Director of the Bureau posed, with the stamp, and you will find that the children have been moved considerably closer to the young tree than they were in the photograph. A still more pointed example is that of the Washington Inaugural commemorative scene of 1939, taken from a small painting by Alonzo Chappell owned by Oscar T. Barck of Brooklyn. On the stamp they have added a small table and the balcony railing which were not in the painting, though the railing belonged there; the New York Historical Society has a section of it on which Washington's hand may have rested momentarily when he bowed to the crowd.

But as for getting the really doggy items of such a collection, the original sketches and drawings, both accepted and rejected—and there are many rejects—the die proofs and so on, this writer has no suggestions to make. If you can't acquire the originals, you might try getting photographs of them, though to many, these are not entirely satisfying. The collections of Max G. Johl and Beverly S. King, both dispersed by auction in New York in recent years, were long the chief repositories of these rare originals. There were many water-color drawings of stamp designs; in some cases the whole series, rejected and accepted, for a single stamp, then the proofs of the partly finished and the completed die. One learns from these collections that in 1908 Whitney Warren, later the architect of the rebuilt Louvain Library, made eight drawings—all later in King's possession—for a special-delivery stamp, before he succeeded in getting one accepted. But what of that? No less an artist than Louis Comfort Tiffany designed some envelope dies in the early '80's, and some of his drawings were rejected, too. On one the letter "G" wasn't quite com-

pleted, so that the word appeared as POSTACE. Several thousand of the envelopes were made before the bad letter was discovered, but all of them were destroyed, it is said, save four of the one-cent and seven of each of the sizes in the two-cent.

By the same token, for the Panama-Pacific series of 1912-13, a two-center labeled "Gatun Locks" was engraved and twenty-five million stamps printed before it was discovered that the picture didn't represent the Gatun Locks at all; one of those magnificent little errors which nobody but a high government employee could commit and continue to hold his job. The stamps were all destroyed save three or four proofs, and the wash drawing of the locks, with the autographed OK of the Postmaster-General, bobbed up in King's collection some years later.

Now as to those Gatun Locks proofs; there were only three known when it was discovered a few years ago that another was in the possession of a former engraver in the Bureau. A collector, prowling about a certain city, ringing doorbells and asking astonished burghers if they had any old letters for him to mull through, ran across his home. The man's wife called the collector back a day or two later by telephone, evidently with the thought of selling him that proof; but after an hour of painful wavering, the couple decided against it. Collectors are still keeping an eye on him, however, and if or when . . .

From these collections we learn that up to 1900 the Government had no stamp designer of its own, but at that time "borrowed" for several years an artist, R. Ostrander Smith, from the American Bank Note Company. Smith's first work for the Bureau was the designing of the series boosting the Pan-American Exposition of 1901. One photograph in the King collection showed Smith himself pos-

ing on a bicycle for a special-delivery stamp design. King also had some two dozen pencil sketches and wash drawings for stamps, mostly for the frames surrounding the vignettes in the 1901 and 1902 series, all drawn by Smith and many of them signed by him. For that maligned series of 1902, poor Smith thought he was doing a clever and appropriate thing (and so he was!) in weaving into the frame around each head something pertinent to the man portrayed; fasces for Webster, sailors for Farragut, a head of Justice for Marshall, two figures holding electric lights—those "nude, writhing males" so excoriated by a Democratic editor—for Franklin.

Speaking of tampering with original photographs or paintings, one of the sweetest bits of "improvement" that we know of is that pretty bunch of flowers added to the Whistler portrait of his mother on the Mother's Day stamps. By the way, our genial Postmaster-General, leading man in that famous philatelic skit, "Farley's Follies, or the Scandals of 1934," who knew nothing of philately or postal service when he took over his present job, has now become a collector, and has what are probably the two most valuable sketches in existence—rough pencil suggestions by President F. D. Roosevelt for the Byrd Antarctic stamp and the Mother's Day stamp—in which the Whistler portrait is said to be outlined with great aptitude for so hasty an essay by an amateur.

We learned from King and Johl that the postmaster at Randolph Field, Texas, made the drawing which, with some slight changes, was used for the 1932 Olympic Games stamp; that a Morse Telegraph commemorative was designed in 1919, but never issued; that a Peace Centenary stamp, with America and Britain clasping hands thereon, was designed in 1914 and the master dies made; but the

breaking out of the World War would, it was thought, have made the issuing of a peace stamp too grimly comic, so the project went no farther. Egged on by certain publicity-seeking editors, the Department did issue a Peace stamp in 1918, showing Columbia huddled among the flags of the World War allies, but did it lackadaisically, printing only a few, and telling postmasters to sell them only to customers who asked for them; and so that stamp is little known now.

In Johl's collection, among other unique things, are the complete histories of the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition and Hudson-Fulton Celebration stamps of 1909; that is, the drawings, from the very first rough sketch—there are five in the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific series, all for one stamp—the die proofs and so on. The Alaska-Yukon-Pacific stamp was first designed with a seal posing on an ice floe, but Seattle folk were afraid other people would get the idea that this was the sort of climate they had in their town, and so the portrait of William H. Seward, the purchaser of Alaska, was substituted for that of the seal; and one sketch still shows the seal, but with Seward's name lettered under it. How interesting it would have been if they had let it go through that way! After all, Mr. Seward's chin did look rather like a seal's.

In the two collections, among so many other intimate things that they cannot be listed here, were no less than a dozen accepted drawings with the autographed approval of the Postmaster-General. Of course these, as well as many of the other items we have mentioned, are supposed to remain forever in the files of the Post Office Department. When you ask a philatelist how they happened to stray out of it, his eyes become expressionless, his face masklike, inscrutable; he tells you he doesn't know. It is like asking a

political question of a stranger in Germany or Russia or Italy. Truth of the matter is that they seem to have crept out in ways that might be described as irregular; as one of Harry Leon Wilson's cowboys once delicately described it, "crooked, but not rough." One has even heard legends of a certain postal official—maybe it should be "officials"; we wouldn't know about that—who, when a philatelic friend, calling at his office, wanted to look at a certain sketch or other item, would send for it, and after a time, at a momentary lull in the conversation, would swing his chair around to the window and murmur, "What a beautiful spring day! And can that be a robin in that tree yonder? First I've seen this year," and when he finally tore his attention away from the glorious out-of-doors and turned back to his desk, the sketch would have disappeared and everybody would have forgotten all about it.

Far be it from us to cavil at such practices. Those sketches and proofs are no longer of any real value to the government, and at least one outsider would rather see these interesting mementoes in private collections, where they may give pleasure and instruction to the owners and to other collectors, than hidden away forever from human eye or ken in the dusty archives of a government bureau, where you might not be permitted to see them, even if you had heard of them.

But after all, there are rules, and now and then the wrath of Uncle Sam is vented upon someone who violates them too flagrantly. Once a considerable batch of sketches and proofs were found to be missing. They were traced through one functionary and another, each of whom had a receipt from the succeeding one—all this was years before—until they reached a person whom we shall call Egbert, just for a change. Well, Egbert couldn't account for them, and

the suspicion was that he had sold them. He insisted that it was only his memory that was at fault; he just couldn't, for the life of him, remember what he had done with that stuff. He cudgeled his brain over the problem, until one night in bed, it came to him in a flash. Why, of course! He remembered perfectly now; they had gone into the corner stone of that new post office in Washington—you know—the one whose façade inscriptions, written by President Eliot of Harvard, were corrected by President Wilson of Princeton and U. S. Of course it was impracticable to tear down the post office to check up on Egbert's story, and officials didn't think it worth while, as they didn't believe it, anyhow.

A more serious affair, and with a curious sequel, came up in 1910. In the previous year the government experimented with a stamp paper containing more rag than usual, in an effort to avoid the shrinkage and consequent bad centering of perforation which had long been a nuisance. The experimental paper had a slight gray-bluish cast, but was found to be unsatisfactory and was quickly abandoned. Nearly a million and a half each of the one- and two-cent stamps were printed on it and distributed, so these are not so rare. Of the three-, four-, five-, eight-, ten-, thirteen-, and fifteen-centers, Department records show printing of only four thousand, and of the six-cent, fifty-two hundred—none of them intended for circulation, but through error, many were sent out to post offices, and others escaped in one way and another; some through the machination of a Department official named Travers. Of the threes and tens, the copies in circulation were found by collectors in New York; the sixes appeared in Chicago, the fifteens in Buffalo, where many were saved, a few of the fives were found around Rockford, Illinois, and ten

sheets of the thirteen-cent were sent to the post office at Saginaw, Michigan, it would seem, nearly three years after their issuance, where most of them were sold before their presence was discovered. The four-cent and eight-cent almost disappeared from human knowledge. Today, the one-cent and two-cent are comparatively cheap; you can buy an unused copy of the three and some other higher values for forty dollars, but if you want one of the four-cent or eight-cent unused, it will cost you $750; and a mint block of four of either of those denominations will set you back by $3,750.

In March, 1910, a scandal broke in Washington when Travers, the Post Office Department official already mentioned, who had been under surveillance by inspectors for some time, was dismissed and indicted on a charge of slipping some of those bluish paper stamps out to a dealer in Philadelphia at high prices, to which the dealer added handsome profits. Blocks of four of the four-, eight- and thirteen-cent were known to have gone into a large private collection at from $140 to $200 per block. It was not claimed that Travers stole the stamps; he scrupulously replaced them with stamps of the regular issue; but he violated the law twice, in dealing personally in unused United States stamps, and in selling them at more than face value. The indictment against him covered only $30 worth of stamps at face value; but it was charged that he had sold them for $1,500. When his trial came on, he pleaded *nolo contendere* and agreed to pay a fifteen-hundred-dollar fine, the exact sum of his illicit gains, other penalties being waived.

And now for the aftermath; in 1937 a Post Office Department official was displaying to a prominent philatelist some of the Department's collection of mint sheets, when

at sight of one, the collector uttered an exclamation and looked more closely. His practiced eye had detected what the Department itself didn't know; that it had complete sets of sheets of those bluish-paper stamps, including the four-cent and eight-cent, which in sheet form were supposed to be gone with the wind. These sheets had recently been found between the pages of an old record book, lightly attached in a spot or two by their own gum. Collectors are now surmising that they may have been put there by the unfortunate Travers three decades and more ago. The sheets are estimated by the wise men of the business to be worth $250,000; and for some time past these enormously valuable rarities have been traveling about the country in that elegant truck with which Mr. Farley is spreading the gospel of philately.

You can't fool the collectors with your stamp designs. Some group or other of enthusiasts will study every one, seeking its origin, questioning its integrity, until at last, if there has been any fakery or any error, somebody will be sure to point it out. Collectors discovered from our Columbian one-cent stamp of 1893 that Columbus, when he sighted land, had a nice, clean shave, but that when he stepped on shore a few hours later (see the two-cent) he had miraculously grown a full beard. When Newfoundland issued a new series in 1897, the ten-cent bore an alleged picture of the *Matthew*, the ship in which John Cabot discovered that island. A wag in *Filatelic Facts and Fallacies* immediately uncovered a very interesting historical incident. As he told it, when Columbus got back home, he found that his flagship, the *Santa Maria*, had developed squeaks and rattles and looked quaint by comparison with the new season's models, so he sold her to a second-hand dealer. The latter took her to England to have her over-

hauled, and there sold her to Cabot, who was looking around for a good second-hand vessel, not too expensive, in which to discover Newfoundland. On reaching Newfoundland, he found the climate so cold and damp that he cruised down to New York for a change, "where a representative of the American Bank Note Company took a snapshot of the *Matthew* with the latest Kodak." In other words, the pictures of Columbus's flagship on our three-cent Columbian green and that of the "*Matthew*" on the one-cent Newfoundland 1897 are taken from one and the same original.

Here one may learn how some of the mock pearls of history are created in the mussel shell of legend or even of jest. That yarn has, through forty years of occasional repetition, taken on, to some minds, the aspect of established truth. A New York collector solemnly repeated it to us one day—minus the kodak—as historical fact.

On one of the Philippines stamps there appears a picture labeled Pagsanjan Falls; but Collector R. S. Lienau had only to take a second look at it before he began comparing it with another picture, and found that the engraving had really been made from a photograph of Vernal Falls in the Yosemite Valley. Was this just an error or—what is more likely—just a substitution because no good photograph of the Philippine waterfall was immediately available?

And while we're on the subject of scenery, it may be mentioned that Nicaragua's calamitous blunder in putting a picture of its volcano, Momotombo, on some of its stamps, really clinched our decision to build the ship canal through Panama instead of Nicaragua. Many Congressmen didn't know that there were volcanoes in Central America until the pro-Panama crowd showed them those stamps.

"COLLECT A MILLION STAMPS AND—"

CHAPTER SIX

At the very beginning of stamp collecting, when a popular way of accounting for the madness was the theory that two chaps were doing it on a wager, to see who could get the most in a given time, another legend arose which endured for decades and aroused much wonder in all quarters, until finally it developed into a reality. This was a yarn that if you would help somebody to collect an enormous number of used stamps—a million was the favorite number—they would get some child or aged person, usually unnamed, into an asylum, or perform some other charitable act. The favorite story was that it would take care of an orphan somehow—get him into an institution or give him an education. Another report was that famine sufferers in India would be aided. The collecting began in England before 1850 (another report says that Spain was similarly affected), when used stamps weren't worth even a penny a dozen; and what marketable or persuasive value a million of them could have, no one could figure out.

In 1873 someone pointed out through the English miscellany, *Notes and Queries*, that stamps were still being collected to make up the million to get that little boy—who by that time must be of full age and wearing whiskers

—into an orphan school. But by that time the story had begun to vary; sometimes the charitable folk were trying to put an elderly woman into an old-people's home, or have an operation performed or something. Some theorists nowadays believe that the early promoters were washing off the postmarks and selling the stamps again as new. But by 1873 the older and rarer stamps were becoming sufficiently valuable to make the stunt more plausible; for in a million stamps which kindly, unsophisticated folk might peel off envelopes new and old, there would inevitably be a few which were worth more than the average; some of them far more.

New variations appeared. In 1875 the world heard that a banker in Paris had told a certain threadbare youth to pour out a million stamps in his presence, and he would get a college education. About the same time a rumor arose in the United States that if you would collect a million stamps, you could "get something" from the government for them. Harold D. Watson, veteran New York collector, recalls that in his schoolboy days, around 1880, the reported price was a thousand dollars. Old John W. Scott has been accused of starting this gossip. Mr. Watson knew a young lady, an assistant in the public library in Brooklyn, who had collected her million, or very nearly, found the thing a fake, and gave her whole lot to him, greatly enriching him. The family of another boy who went to school with him had fallen victims to the delusion, and now the boy was bringing a pound or so of the stamps to school occasionally in a paper bag and selling them for a dime. Young Harold acquired some of them and found them pretty good buys; he is of opinion that the "unpicked mixtures" of that period were far superior to those of today.

In 1877, when some Briton arose, as they are always doing, demanding to know the use of collecting those millions of old stamps, a young lady signing herself "L. M." explained in a letter to a magazine that during the past summer she and others had collected enough stamps to "get two poor girls into a blind asylum." What was done with the stamps? Why, they were tied in packets of a hundred, she explained, and were thus sold by thousands "to decorate the whitewashed walls of houses in Japan." Just why the Japanese should forget their age-long artistry to cover their house walls with defaced postage stamps, and how long any piece of paper could be made to stick to a whitewashed wall, are questions which we wish we could have asked the young lady. "Last June we tied up 27,000 little packets," she said, each containing a hundred; and she asked that the stamps continue to be sent to the Girls' Orphanage (Miss M., 4 Allsop Mews, Dorset Square, N. W.).

But rooms (not whitewashed) in the Occident were actually being papered with stamps. In 1884 it was reported that a Benedictine monk in France had covered the walls of a room in his monastery in highly artistic fashion with 800,000 stamps, creating flowers and vain designs which, in our lay ignorance, we would have thought unsuitable to the rigid severity of a monastery. This is all the more surprising because certain organizations of his church had long since begun the collection of stamps for charitable and missionary purposes. The *Pall Mall Gazette* of London, said in November, 1868:

> Thanks to a public appeal by Pastor Maurach in Livonia, we have at last learned what becomes of the old postage stamps, and to what end the thousands of

aged and youthful collectors are in the habit of plaguing our lives out.

It appears that the Chinese have contracted the habit of covering their umbrellas and rooms of houses with old European stamps, and they buy them by the thousands and millions. The Rhenish Mission, which has a station in China, collects these stamps and sells them at three shillings the thousand.

We wonder if any Occidental traveler of the '60's or '70's ever noticed and set down on paper a memorandum of the fondness of the Mongolian races for this bizarre type of interior decoration? We have been unable to find it.

The collection for beneficent purposes grew in scope. In the 1880's the Christian Brothers came into possession of a piece of land in France, but had no money with which to build on it. With the aid of Catholics the world over, they gathered thirty-five million stamps and erected a school. It was a mystery to philatelists how so much money could be realized from what they considered junk stamps, but the explanation undoubtedly lay in the occasional rarities which came with the rest; and as the older stamps steadily grew in value, the ransacked attics and trunks yielded many stamps that were worth real money.

Some Protestant clergymen in this country, not to be outdone, launched wholesale stamp gatherings for charitable purposes about the same time, especially in the South, much to the disgust of stamp dealers and editors, who roundly denounced the Rev. Joab Cushing and one or two others as fakers, seeking personal profit. It was said that they picked up some nice Confederates and other rarities, and were keenly aware of their value.

This sort of miscellaneous gathering had now begun to

take on the aspect of a wholesale stamp business. J. E. Handshaw, an old-time New York dealer who died a few years ago, and who wrote his autobiography under the title of *Looking Backward; or Fragments from a Checkered Career* (though a more humdrum life can scarcely be imagined, and the book deals almost as much with the Smithtown Branch Methodist Church on Long Island as with philately) tells of seeing a barrel of stamps around 1880, and a year or two later he himself bought a large box containing, he thought, about half a million stamps, from a woman for twenty-five dollars. Probably she, too, had been a victim of that collect-a-million-and-get-a-thousand-dollars-from-the-government delusion. Several years later, Handshaw bought twenty-five barrels of stamps at one time!

In January, 1887, Hugo Kuenstler, a young philatelist working in his father's wholesale-tobacco business office in New York, came upon a huge gunny sack full of stamps in a junk shop and bought it for seven dollars. Thousands of the stamps were done up in neat packages of one hundred, bearing the names of persons who had gathered them, no doubt for some allegedly charitable purpose, though why it had gone awry, the "junkie" of course didn't know. Kuenstler found hundreds of stamps with a catalogue value (1887 value, remember) of a dollar or more, while the ones valued at less were as the sands of the sea. A reporter from the *Collector's Ledger* who visited him two years later, when he had sold or put into his albums many of the better stamps, found that he still had fifty thousand of the three-cent 1861 and '68 mixed; about twenty thousand of the two-cent brown of 1872; many boxes of the 1870 one-cent, two-cents and three-cents grilled and the six-cent carmine; several large envelopes full of the seven-, twelve- and twenty-four-cent 1872. There were sixty-five pounds of the

three-cent 1870-72; about two hundred thousand revenues, mostly second and third issues, and at least fifty thousand of the 1869 issue. Such were the pickings of fifty years ago.

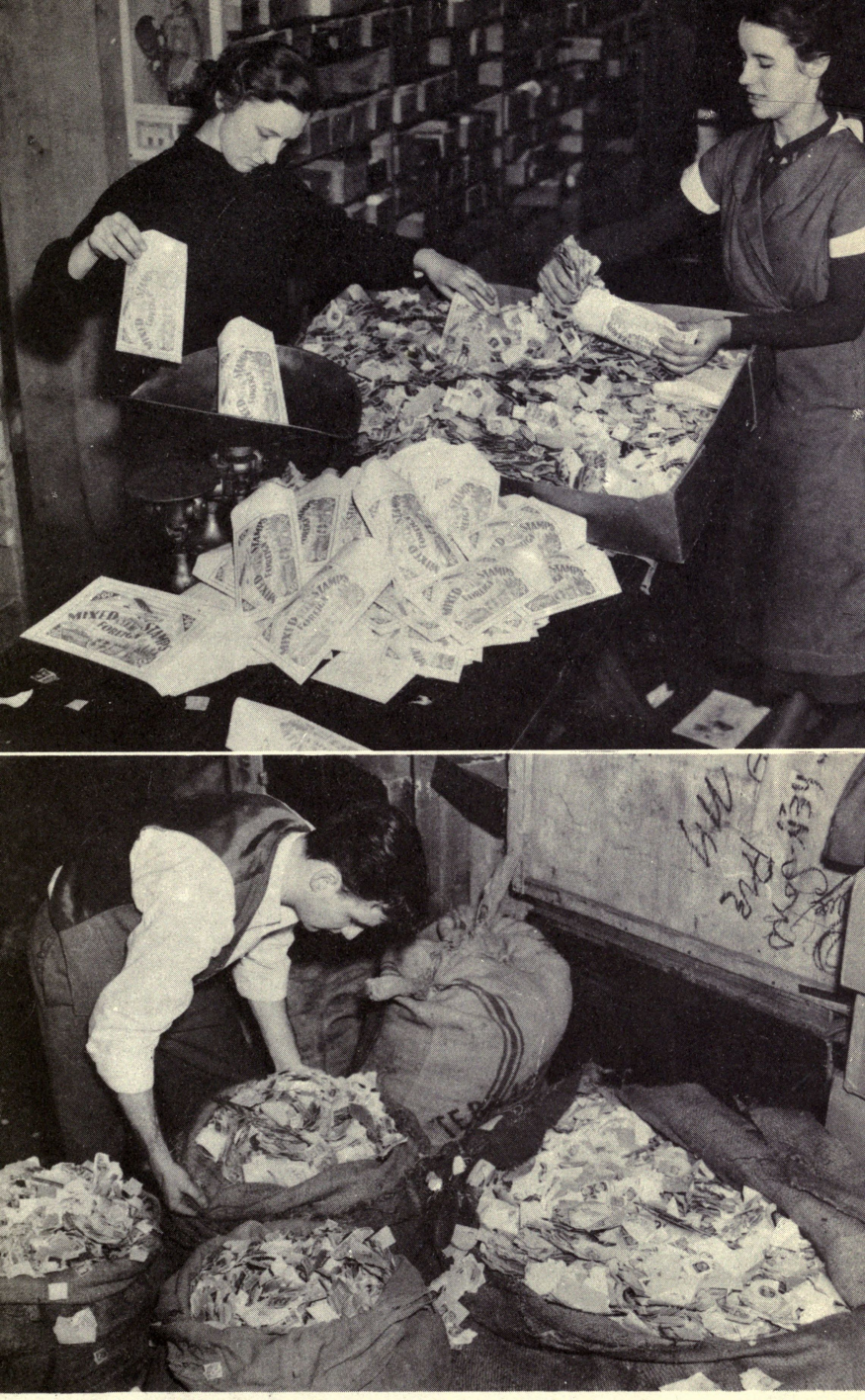
In 1892 some of the young women in Upper Iowa University learned of the plight of an old lady who had been "deserted by friends and relatives." The girls, who had heard of the stamp stunt, but didn't yet know where they could sell the stamps, enlisted the aid of several Iowa newspapers. The Cedar Rapids *Gazette* found that the home for aged women at that place would undertake the care of the lady for the rest of her days for three hundred dollars. Girls and editors got busy, and within a few weeks the Keokuk *Constitution-Democrat* had gathered 34,000 stamps; the Earleville *Phoenix*, 40,000; the Des Moines *News*, 60,000; Walker *News*, 111,000; Cedar Rapids *Gazette*, 560,000; while the college girls themselves had accumulated 310,000 more, making a grand total of 1,115,000. Bids were asked for, and Martin Steffan of Memphis, Mo., tendered the necessary three hundred dollars. By the time the two big sugar barrels full of stamps were turned over to him, 135,000 more had come in, bringing his haul to 1,250,000. Whether he succeeded in getting his money out of the deal is not recorded.

Mr. Steffan charitably paid more than the market price for mixtures. New York dealers around 1900 were paying $58 per million for such mixtures, tying them in packets and selling them for twenty-five cents per thousand. Most of them came on a torn-out or cut-out corner of the envelope, and these, mixed with others completely detached from the cover, were estimated to weigh about four thousand to the pound. The only dealers now who handle such mixtures are specialists in that line, and they are few in number.

One of the most curious bids for mixtures that we have heard of was that of a cloth house in Vienna, which in 1891 offered "parcels of cloth for gentlemen's trousers in exchange for old postage stamps." How the stamps were to be conditioned, graded—if at all—and priced, we cannot now learn.

Elliott Perry, the genial sage of Westfield, N. J., tells of a woman who decided forty years ago to collect a million stamps in her own behalf; that is, get herself into an old folks' home, though she wasn't more than middle-aged. It was back in 1905 when Elliott, then a mere youth, was living in Massachusetts, that he heard of the woman's project and called upon her. The truth was that the good soul was in an unpleasant spot. Her economic prop and meal ticket was in a state prison for a considerable stretch; he had been town treasurer, and got his books all out of balance somehow. So his lorn wife was at home, only a few miles from the grim prison walls, in company with a daughter and an over-fat dog who ate too many peanuts for his own good. The lady heard of the collect-a-million trick, and actually believed that she could thereby place herself in a home where she would never even have to think about anything again. She had gathered hundreds of thousands of stamps before she discovered that the idea was a myth, but by that time she had gotten the habit, so she kept right on, and had over a million when Perry saw her stock, tied in packets of one hundred, with thread, and filling a big, antique chest of drawers which was worth far more than the stamps.

Perry went through several thousands of the stamps, but found little save ones and twos of recent vintage—not even any good Columbians. He did see an 1869 one-center which was the worst off center he ever laid eyes on—off in



Wide World Photos

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Albano, Papal
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w—A rush of
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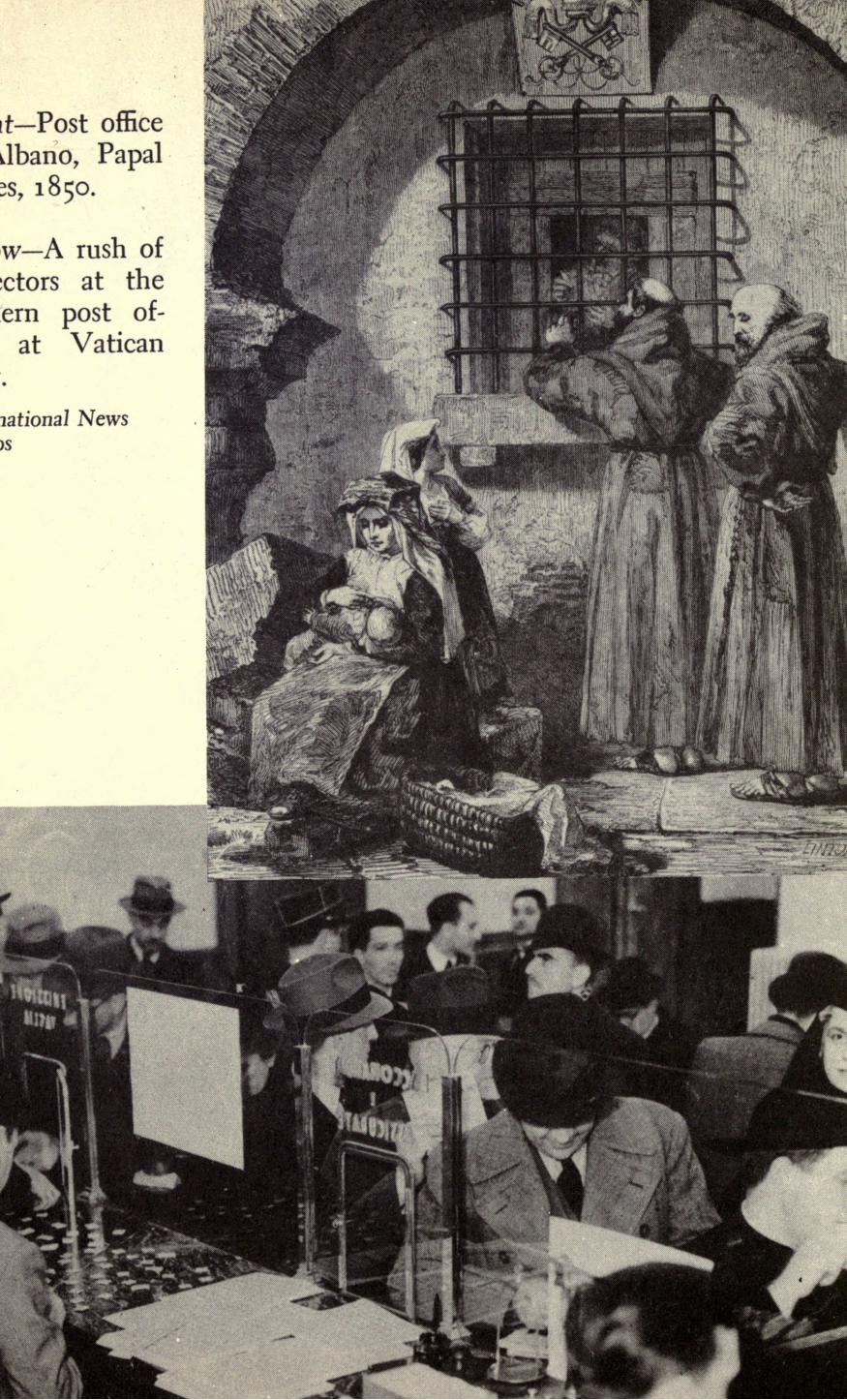


two directions, not more than half the design being on the stamp, and it was canceled with a curious cabled-anchor killer which he has never seen elsewhere. He wished later that he had made a special offer for that stamp, and wonders whether it is in existence now.

How did she obtain so many stamps? Principally from a bluing factory near by which sold the stuff by mail in sheets that could be carried in an envelope. Boys and girls all over New England were selling the bluing for them. The woman had a line into the concern's office; as Perry remembers it, the daughter worked there and got all the stamps off the incoming mail. Whatever became of her collection, deponent doesn't know, but no doubt it was eventually closed out to somebody for a few paltry dollars.

The *Morning Post* of London said on Nov. 3, 1898:

> M. le Chanoine de Roy, the head of the Seminary at Liege, has acquainted me with some of the marvellous results obtained by the collection of old postage stamps. Since the movement was started seven years ago, three hundred million stamps have been collected, which realized fifty thousand francs. With a portion of this the missionaries established and thoroughly organized five Christian villages on the Congo.

The collection was to be continued, he went on, until they had enough to build a cathedral at Leopoldville in the Congo Free State. Thus "collect-a-million" had by shrewd planning been changed from fake or jest to reality, and was assuming gigantic proportions. Thus did "mission mixtures" come into being; but only in very recent years have they been made a business by the church. Parishioners cut or peel stamps by the billion from every envelope in sight

and turn them over to the pastors. The Mission Stamp Bureau of Weston College, a Jesuit institution in Massachusetts, offers by circular a "Mission Mixture (on paper)," describing it as "99% U. S. stamps, of all denominations, including commemoratives (old and new), pre-cancels, air-mails, postage-dues, etc. In singles, pairs, blocks, coils. Minimum of paper. Absolutely unpicked." The prices vary from thirty cents a pound if you buy ten pounds to twenty-seven cents if you take two hundred pounds.

Other Catholic colleges also deal in mixtures, but the most remarkable of these businesses is that carried on at the Capuchin College at Brookland, just outside Washington. A young theological student, a philatelist himself, founded it—without capital—in 1933, to aid in financing missionary work in Puerto Rico. He wrote to many Catholic laymen's organizations, to government officials, churchmen and priests, former students of the college, all over the world, asking for stamps. By the time he had taken orders for the priesthood, the business had grown to such size that he was put in charge of it, and a year or so ago he had twenty-eight young men, all students, working under him, soaking the stamps off the paper, sorting and grading them. This differs from other mission marts in that first grade copies are sold by the piece or the hundred, while seconds and worse are mixed together, United States with foreign, and sold by the pound. The mart has one of the largest stocks of used twentieth-century United States in existence, not to mention much foreign material and many mint copies.

Big banks and business concerns have so often been solicited for stamps taken from their correspondence that many of them now make a business of selling them. Some even grade them according to high and low values; but most large organizations prefer to make a contract by the

year with some wholesaler on a pound basis, the corners of the envelopes being cut out by a boy or girl who does little or nothing else. The money received is by some concerns put into the charity fund from which they are so often called upon to ladle out donations.

Among the non-religious mixture dealers is one in the west which is said to receive stamps sometimes by the carload. It sells not only mission mixtures but government mixtures, bank mixtures and special mixtures. Its advertising chortles jovially of "Our Grand Combination; a selection of all our best mixtures which will provide you with loads of fun for a long time. $48.50 plus postage on 18 pounds." As no one need ever expect to find a rarity in a pound mixture, the fun of sorting one may be said to be comparable to that enjoyed by the old-fashioned child whose mother, to keep it occupied, smeared its finger tips lightly with molasses and then gave it a small feather to play with.

NASSAU STREET

CHAPTER SEVEN

BROAD STREET in New York begins at the harbor and rambles in good old casual Dutch fashion up to and across Wall Street; but after you pass Wall, you suddenly discover that you are no longer on Broad, but on Nassau Street. So then, here is the south end of Nassau, on Wall alongside the United States Sub-Treasury, where once stood Federal Hall, on whose balcony Washington became our first President—a scene pictured not so long ago on one of the most beautiful of our commemorative stamps.

But nobody save a postman can tell you with authority where the other end of Nassau Street is. It finally fades out alongside City Hall Park, where it and Park Row glide into each other at such a sharp angle, with such a glomeration of other little streets and such a typically New Yorkish jumble of house numbering that strangers seeking a particular location are often driven to headache tablets or strong drink. Here in a little triangular island stands Benjamin Franklin in bronze, looking across at City Hall, with hands spread out as if in amazement at the goings-on there. On the scrap of sidewalk in front of him each week day noontide a preacher earnestly exhorts a handful who gather and listen idly, while Franklin, ignoring them, looks over

their heads. In a half hour or so another preacher replaces the first; and later another comes on. Speakers haven't the endurance now that they had seven decades ago, when Disraeli at sixty-eight spoke for three hours and a quarter on one occasion and held his audience all the way.

On the other side of the statue, behind Ben's back, a huddle of labor unionists, having gobbled their lunches, argue through the rest of the noon hour, sometimes falling into two or three squabbling groups, while passers-by stop to listen, not that they are necessarily interested, but just because it offers an opportunity to kill time. Just across Nassau on the corner of Spruce Street—somewhere about there once stood Brom Martling's tavern, the first meeting place of the Tammany Society in 1798—there stands through the noon hour a slender, gentle man in spectacles, with a package on the sidewalk beside him, and holding up a small, red cloth-bound book so that you may see its name, "New Testament," while he says over and over, "No charge. Free of charge." He does not succeed in giving away as many as he could have done forty years ago.

Old Ben took his stand there in 1872 because that little plexus was then known as Printing House Square—and in later years, Newspaper Row. There still stands the old red-brick *Tribune* building with its Victorian clock tower, the gilded dome of the *World*—whose morgue of clippings, the nation's greatest, is still mourned by historians—but the *Sun* building between them is gone; the heroic bronze German medieval figure in doublet and cloak, with trumpet at lips, vanished not so long ago from the top of the New York *Herald* building, the smell of printer's ink has faded from the others and only ghosts of the great days of Newspaper Row remain to haunt rooms now buzzing with other enterprises. But one fancies that old Ben, our colonial post-

master-general, is still content there, because the atmosphere all about him and for five blocks to southward on Nassau Street is reeking and murmurous with stamps, and in vaults near by are still preserved letters which he himself wrote, as well as others from his friends and fellow laborers in the building of the nation.

Business in New York is queerly regional. Most of the old book shops, for example, are on Fourth Avenue and East Fifty-ninth Street. When ladies wish to buy brass andirons, candlesticks, trays and other such junk, they hie them down to Allen Street, on the lower East Side, where the L trains thunder so loudly overhead that customer and dealer must scream in each other's ears or wait until the train has passed. Just why all the waste-paper warehouses should be on Lafayette and South Streets is beyond our poor power to reason out. The stamp business is not quite so intensely concentrated, for there are large concerns scattered here and there is midtown office buildings. But Forty-second Street between Sixth and Seventh Avenues shows a few display frames of stamps at almost every building entrance; and Nassau Street has, for nearly three-quarters of a century, been New York's great center for philatelic merchandising. There, until recently (when the store moved away) you might have seen stamps priced at fifty and one-hundred dollars under the glass top of a counter in a five-and-ten-cent store—a sight probably unique in the world.

There was a time, forty or fifty years back, when East Twenty-third Street became lightly flecked with stamp shops, John W. Scott's among them. One old lady who died not so long ago, and who was an ardent collector in those days, lived in Brooklyn, and when she came over to Manhattan, before there were so many bridges and sub-

ways, crossed by the Twenty-third-Street ferry. She hadn't as much money to spend on her hobby as she would have liked, and to pass those windows and wall frames sometimes proved too much for her spirit and power of resistance; so she was compelled to avoid temptation by detouring through Twenty-second Street. Then the trend changed, and with the curiously gregarious tendency already mentioned, the stamp shops followed each other, one by one, back down town.

Nassau was at first just a lane leading from the outer palisade of New Amsterdam at Mr. De Peyster's farm up to the Commons, now City Hall Park; and it has never grown much wider than that lane. For decades in the present century it was unique in that no wheeled traffic was permitted to move on it during the noon hour; and so from twelve to two P.M. throngs from the neighborhood strolled to and fro in mid-street and gutter as well as on the sidewalk, relaxing in the one place where there was no fear of the modern juggernaut. But the La Guardia administration, supposedly the champion of the poor and motorless, has changed all that, and Nassau is no longer a noon-hour haven of rest.

As you walk north along its first few blocks, between massive skyscrapers reeking with finance and stocks and law, you dip down from Liberty Street into a little hollow crossing your course, where three centuries ago a tiny brook, dry in summer, flowed eastward to the East River; a hollow lush with oak and dogwood and sumach, down which meandered 't Maagde Paetje, "the Maiden's Path," whose course is traced by present-day Maiden Lane, the street of diamonds and gold and silver. Our street began to acquire a few houses late in the seventeenth century, and after the English took over the colony, was informally mentioned as

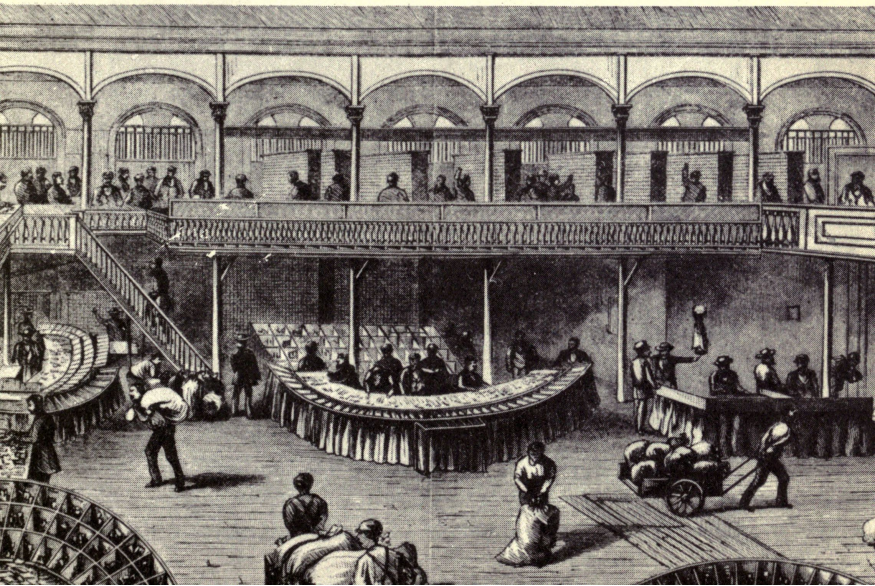
"the street leading by the Pye-Woman's to the Commons." Just around the corner from it in Liberty Street lived young Captain William Kidd, later called a pirate. Known as Kip Street then, the name was changed, later in the century, to Nassau, in honor of "the Dutchman," King William III of England.

From Maiden Lane northward to its end, Nassau Street is, like many other portions of New York, curiously old-fashioned, its atmosphere mellow with age and memories. There may be four or five buildings (none of them sky-scrapers) in that stretch erected since 1900, but no more. On the other hand there are some which could, if they had memories, recall the Civil War and, therefore, the beginning of the stamp business in America. Nay, there are some which go back a century or more. You have only to see their plain, flat, oft-painted brick fronts, with the simple, square-cut windows, to realize it.

Take Number 88, for example, five stories high (though the top one is little more than a half story) and know that the oldest law firm in New York, De Witt, Lockman and De Witt, departed thence in October, 1938, after having occupied those ancient rooms, generation after generation, for one hundred and three years! When Cornelius De Witt first hung out his shingle there in 1835, the year of the Great Fire, Andrew Jackson was President and the telegraph still unheard of. As decades went by and the staff gradually increased, they gradually took over the whole building. That top story, only a little higher than a man's head, was crammed with ancient letters going back to the pre-stamp era, records and documents, of which thousands of course bore old revenue stamps. The numerous stamp dealers in the building across the way at Number 87 used to look over there with dreaming eyes and watering chops



The Old Dutch Church, New York City's post office from 1847 to 1875. Nassau Street at the right.





From the Collection of Philip H. Ward, Jr.

Our first two stamps—The U. S. 5 and 10 cent, 1847. The

and try to picture to themselves the riches that lay immured in that Aladdin's Palace, that Cave of Monte Cristo.

And now comes the sinister part of the story, which Nassau Street—when it can be induced to recall the affair at all—mutters through clenched teeth. When the wealthy attorneys and their clerks, tired of running up and down stairs, decided to seek more elegant quarters, there were these tons of old letters and documents to be discarded. Would they sell the stamps to any collector or dealer? Could all the pleadings of Nassau Street persuade them to let anyone even so much as look at a few of the papers? Positively not! There are some vagaries in human conduct which one just cannot explain. Believe it or not, with the supply of old stamps visibly shrinking before our very eyes, they *burned* all that treasure! There are vague rumors that a few dozen stamps were salvaged through bribery of one of the incinerators, but these are only whispered behind the hand and cannot be confirmed.

No doubt Cornelius De Witt, when he first began practicing, used to step across the street for refreshment now and then to the old Shakespeare Tavern, on the southwest corner of Fulton, and perhaps get a whiff of literary talk from fellows like Irving and Paulding and Halleck, who liked to hobnob there. When the tavern was razed, the "squinting Scotchman," James Gordon Bennett, reared his New York *Herald* building on its site; and on the night of November 6th, 1860, crowds in the streets saw the returns telling of the election of Lincoln, thrown by stereopticon on the side of the building for the first time in history. Nassau was a street of printing and publishing and engraving then. In 1860 the *Sun* was just across the street from the *Herald*, the *Express* was at the corner of Wall, the *Transcript*, *Leader*, *Observer* and *Times* were all at other

numbers on Nassau, the *Illustrated News* just around the corner on Fulton. There were job printers everywhere, a type foundry on the corner of Ann Street a century ago, and in the same building the office of the New York *Mirror*, where in 1844-5 Edgar Allan Poe worked and wrote "The Raven," reading snatches of it to his chums in Barney Welsh's rum-and-beanery, just across Ann Street. And one recalls that F. K. Kimmel, at 59 Nassau, engraved on steel some fine, colored Civil War patriotic envelopes which are the pride of present-day collections.

On the site of the Tavern and of the *Herald's* early home stands one of the more modern buildings of upper Nassau —though it's fifty if it's a day old—the Number 87 already mentioned, a nine-story structure packed from top to bottom with just two sorts of businesses—jewelry and stamps. It doesn't require very spacious quarters to house a pretty considerable business in either line. Here veteran operators with leather guards over their palms start and stop the hydraulic elevators by pulling a cable up or down—we hadn't seen one of the sort in thirty years. The place is an ant hill of busyness. Through almost any opened door you may glimpse a man with a glass at his eye, who may be either probing the integrity of a diamond or diagnosing the debility of a watch or scrutinizing what looks like an infinitesimal speck of dust in the right-hand numeral of the President Taft brown four-center of 1930 which to his omniscient eye marks it as a newly discovered variety; and some collector will gladly buy it as such and exhibit it, and at stamp shows other collectors will peer at it with profound interest and envy.

Up the street at Number 116 is another, a twelve-story building which never houses less than twenty stamp dealers and sometimes twenty-five. Though it is more than forty

years old, it is quite modern in that it has electric elevators; for there are on Nassau not only hydraulic elevators, but elevators starting from the second story or, at least, several steps above the street, elevators which will hold only three or four people, and some buildings with no lifts at all, so that you must toil breathlessly up two or three flights of dusty stairs to reach certain one-room, often one-man businesses, of each of whose existences a clientele seems to be aware. In some buildings you wander through narrow, tortuous halls, twisting this way and that until you lose all sense of direction and have to be shown the way out; and in at least every other room there are stamps (wholesale or retail), jewelry, gauds, engravers, encrusters—you can guess what *they* are. At the doorway of such a building, you sometimes see a sign, "For Rent. One light Room. Suitable for Stamp Dealer." But a few old rookeries have lost their grip. Rows of dark, silent doors line their upper halls, and in the stillness the ancient floors creak eerily under your footfalls, until you are glad to escape down the stairs again to the cheery bustle of the street.

It was natural that the stamp business should start down there in the financial district, where there was more money to spend on hobbies than elsewhere, and that Nassau should become the street of stamps; for near its lower end was then the city post office, and at its upper end lies City Hall Park, where the first stamp peddler stood in 1860, and where in 1875 a new post office was built; a magnificent thing of which the whole city was proud, but which in another three or four decades, when a new main office was built away uptown, became just the City Hall Branch, and in its latter years lost favor and was reviled as an architectural disgrace. It was finally razed in 1939 and its site

thrown back into the park again, thus completing a curious cycle.

What a post office its predecessor was! The Middle Dutch Church, built in 1728, lay in its grave-dotted yard, bordering Nassau from Cedar to Fulton, and was a house of worship for more than a century. During the Revolution it was at one time and another a riding school for British officers and a wretched prison for American patriots. Six decades later the congregation wanted to move uptown; the government bought the building and lot in 1845, remodeled the church inside, built a one-story addition all around, extending to the streets, and there it was, surely the most grotesque post office in the world. The steeple still stood at the west end of it, but the bell—cast in Amsterdam in 1730 and given to the church by Abraham de Peyster—went with the congregation uptown and now, after two more moves, still rings its pleasant call on Sabbath mornings from the tower of the Church of St. Nicholas, at Fifth Avenue and Forty-eighth Street. Some of the bodies were removed from the churchyard when the government came in, and some were not.

Here the New York postmaster provisional stamps were issued, and from the office windows were sold the first national stamps, the five- and ten-cent values of 1847. But by 1868 Postmaster-General Randall was describing it thus in his annual report:

> It is patched and battered, full of dark corners and discomforts. The sunlight can scarcely penetrate its gloomy interior. Gas is burnt there day and night, and men work by it. It is over an old graveyard, and under its rotting floors lie skulls and bones and the damp mold of dead men. On removing the floors for

> repairs a short time ago, these unwelcome sights were exposed to view. The building is unfit for any use whatever, and yet there . . . by gaslight, from night until morning, and from morning until night, three hundred men are at work and inhale a poisoned atmosphere with every breath they draw. . . . An average of nearly thirty men are sick all the time from laboring in that unwholesome place. . . .

A picture in an illustrated weekly of 1869 shows the postmen leaving the office for their rounds, and they are all running! Were they so zealous as all that, was the *élan* of the service so high, or were they just eager to get out of that gaseous charnel house? Speed was not difficult, for their loads were not irksome, their mail bags being about the size of a present-day lady's handbag, or perhaps a brief case.

John Walter Scott had opened a shop at 34 Liberty Street, next door to the church-post office when Randall's report was written—to be exact, in 1866—and within two years he also had a place around at 75-77 Nassau, which presently became his sole establishment; a stamp store on the first floor and a printing office in the basement where he turned out catalogues, albums, portraits of the world's rulers and such good reproductions in color of United States and foreign stamps for his *American Journal of Philately* that some competitors and critics made derogatory insinuations. Another editor, giving his shop a nice puff in 1871, saw buyers "of every age, enthusiastically scanning the stock," "three persons constantly engaged in assorting and counting the stamps, and a cashier behind a wire-protected desk busy taking the fractional currency."

In later years Scott did business in other streets than

Nassau, but he was its philatelic pioneer. With him really began its history as a street of stamps. In 1887 he sold his business to Gus and Henry Calman, who reorganized it as the Scott Stamp and Coin Company. But Mr. Scott couldn't stay out of stamps. He began again on his own in 1889. The Calmans brought suit to stop him, but a high court ruled that a man cannot sign away his right to earn a living at the only sort of work he knows. Scott sold out again to J. E. Handshaw in 1916, and served as librarian of the Collectors Club of New York until his death three years later.

It is significant that in the '90's the New York Notes in the *American Collector* were being signed with the *nom de plume*, "Nassau"; while across the water, the Strand, where dealers congregated until Britons nicknamed it "Stampmonger Lane," was spoken of by Americans as the Nassau Street of London. From those days to these, despite the development of big philatelic concerns uptown, Nassau has remained the traditional Wall Street of philately. Dealers overflow into its neighbor streets—John, Fulton, Cortlandt, Park Row, even Broadway—but it is still the backbone.

But selling stamps in Nassau Street hasn't always been beer and skittles. Edward Stern, a veteran dealer in the street, remembers that when he, a youngster of twenty-three, chose a room in which to begin business in 1903, the landlord strove to dissuade him, because half a dozen others had failed in the stamp business in that same room. Probably it wasn't entirely compassion on the landlord's part; he had just got tired of having tenants fold up on him, leaving a lot of rent unpaid. But Stern persisted, won his lease and gladdened the owner's heart by keeping a few jumps ahead of the sheriff.

One of the street's earliest figures, after Scott, and the one most fondly and humorously remembered, is that of William P. Brown, the City Hall Park pioneer, who was on Nassau or just around the corner from it, for more than half a century. Between his push-cart period and the era when he actually had a roof over his head, he is said to have been a "satcheleer," or itinerant stamp dealer—going about, picking up stamps from banks, business houses and other sources and selling them usually to dealers, though privately when convenient—a type of middleman which still flourishes. Such merchants were and are not only urban but interurban. The journals reported in 1889 that W. B. Hale of Williamsville, Mass., the traveling stamp dealer, was painfully injured by colliding with a team while pedaling his bicycle from Holyoke to Springfield, but recovered.

Brown was established on Nassau as a coin and stamp dealer before 1875, and is further known to collectors today by a "carrier" stamp in the manner of those local express or dispatch concerns which functioned very usefully in the larger cities before the Civil War and before the government had introduced house-to-house delivery. Brown's service was announced on his one-cent stamp, issued in 1876 as "Brown's City Post Stamp Office—Nassau St." and was garnished with a picture of a man pushing a wheelbarrow, presumably the actual manner in which he handled the mail at the start. You could leave a letter at his store and he would take it to the Post Office for a cent, or if you sent out many letters a day, he would pick them up and take them to the Post Office upon arrangement. This branch of his business probably did not last more than a year or two.

The lore about Brown, a character right out of the pages

of Dickens, would make a monograph all by itself. Like many another queer personality, his one hand was stingy and hard, his other open and charitable. In the last two or three decades of his life (he died in 1929), he is remembered as never wearing an overcoat, even on the coldest days, but coming down street with the collar of his seedy old black coat turned up around a shirt collar far from immaculate, his unkempt, yellow-and-white beard blown about by the wind and his old, worn shoes curling up at the toes. He never married, else his wife might have succeeded in keeping his hands and nails more presentable. He must have appeared a curious figure in Europe when he went over there on stamp-buying or selling trips, as he did occasionally.

Some who bought from him recall that he had albums in which his stock was mounted on hinges, often in helter-skelter fashion; a stamp from Abyssinia might be rubbing elbows with ones on either side from Uruguay and Newfoundland. He had a habit of pasting these album pages or approval sheets on his show window, one after another, and as the window was seldom washed, the remaining gum and bits of paper, together with accumulated dust, finally robbed it even of translucency. Perhaps that was what ailed his battered spectacles, too, for he would look over them at the customer and under them at the stamps on the counter. One day a customer, still living, said to him, "Mr. Brown, what do you wear those glasses for? You never look through 'em." Whereupon the old gentleman calmly took them off, laid them on a shelf behind him, and continued the transaction without them. For a long time he had a habit of going fishing on Jamaica Bay on Thursdays, and serving a fish chowder, prepared on the premises, to customers and friends at his shop on Fridays.

But this queer old man was a friend to the friendless—perhaps because of vivid memories of the hardships of his own earlier days. He believed with the Salvation Army that a man may be down but never quite out. The Five Points Mission, in the slums of New York's lower East Side, was his favorite charity, and he is said to have left his entire estate to it when he died.

By the 1880's dealers were coming in whose names are still bywords in the street and among the oldsters of philately—Gremmel, Bogert, Albrecht, Hunter, the Tuttles and others. Henry Gremmel, born in Hanover, Germany, began collecting in 1870 at the age of eight, and kinsmen already in America supplied him with a practically complete collection of United States stamps. In his school, not only many pupils, but the teacher, too, collected stamps. Henry had about three thousand varieties when his album disappeared one day, and to the day of his death he believed that his teacher had stolen it. He finally came to this country as a band musician, got into the stamp business, and by 1889 was one of the fixtures of Nassau Street. R. F. Albrecht was another German immigrant who became one of the street's great dealers and auctioneers. John N. Luff, American stamp historian, and Walter S. Scott started with him as clerks in the '90's. F. W. Hunter, an attorney—and collector on the side—took on more than forty years ago a dark-eyed, scared-looking office boy named Johnny Kleeman, eventually launched a stamp business with John as partner, and Kleeman has been in the street ever since.

Rudolphus R. Bogert has already been mentioned as a pioneer in organizing the American Philatelic Association. He was doing business as a dealer in Whitelaw Reid's new New York *Tribune* building, at the upper end of Nassau, as early as 1882. His store was a semi-basement room,

slightly below the street level. Three years later he took on a sixteen-year-old boy named Arthur Tuttle, whose older brother, George R. Tuttle, was already in the business. Arthur is still selling stamps in Philadelphia; and a big safe which George acquired from Bogert & Durbin—for Bogert later took on a partner—is still on the eighth floor of 116 Nassau Street, where George Tuttle used it. Tuttle died years ago, and the safe is so huge that the building shudders at the thought of moving it either up or down, so they just throw it in gratis with any room on the eighth floor, provided some other stamp dealer isn't already using it. Several have used it since Tuttle's day, and the fact that Bogert & Durbin's name is still painted across its brow doesn't bother anybody.

In 1894 Bogert hired another office boy, a gangling, genial, sandy-haired lad named Percy Doane; and as Bogert's employee and successor, Doane has remained in that same building—though now for many years on an upper floor—from that day to this. His office is one of the sights of New York—a standing refutation of the axiom that order is Heaven's first law. It is a large room, crowded with long tables—at least, it is believed there are tables underneath—and wall cases stacked high with the accumulation of years in what Lady Macbeth would call "most admired disorder." One might readily believe that everything had been shot into the room from a blunderbuss about 1876 and never touched nor dusted since. Behind a counter crossing the room in front of the door sits Mr. Doane—a slender, gentle, humorous man with a scholar's thin face, nose glasses, high standing collar and long strands of hair brushed across his bald crest, beloved joker and raconteur to all the fraternity—attending to present-day business with meticulous care; but for him those mounds

of detritus behind him have acquired a sort of perpetuity, a tomblike sanctity from disturbance.

On hot days you may find the door propped open with a Scott catalogue or a dusty package which was tied up about 1902. A dozen years ago, in a facetious publication of the Hot Stove League, a group of New York stampers, there was a page or two from a philatelic Pepys's Diary, among the incidents of which were, "To Mr. Doane's, where I did open the door and fall over a large package, which did cause me much pain and confusion and necessitated my return to my tavern."

Friends who call upon Doane gaze upon those dusty mounds with longing eyes, for they are confident that thar's gold in them thar hills. Now and then some portion of a stack falls to the floor and he discovers stamps which he may have bought for a song ages ago, but which are worth real money now, and which he didn't know he had. On two or three occasions the building has threatened to raise his rent, whereupon he counters with a threat to move. When word of this *impasse* flashes up and down the street by grapevine telegraph, there is a miniature gold rush; a flock of dealers and collectors begin hanging around the Doane ménage like ghouls, hoping to be among the first to get a crack at the treasure which lies buried there. Then landlord and tenant reach an amicable compromise, and the argonauts ooze away.

The Burger brothers, August and Artur, are two of the noted exhibits of the street. They have been in business, as this is written, fifty-three years, and are now at their fourth location, but always on Nassau, and have never lost their German dialect. Ask them for reminiscences and they tell you solemnly, "We are going to write a book about ourselfs." Placid and courteous, they nevertheless have an

air of neutrality when you look over their stock; if you decide not to buy, they are undisturbed. Not so long ago one collector met another who was looking for a certain rare stamp catalogued at five thousand dollars. He knew that the Burgers had a copy, and sent the other man to them; but when they came to look for it, they couldn't find it. They were unruffled by the circumstance, and promised to search further. Several months later they still hadn't found it, but were still not excited by its absence. There are those who hint that maybe Gus and Artur just didn't want to sell that stamp!

Another customer, a specialist in revenues, went into their shop one day—where he had often been before—and was shown a whole sheet of the Trenton Match Company stamps, issued in 1881, a thing which he hadn't expected to find floating about the market. He expressed his surprise. "How long have you had it?" he asked.

"We haf had it," explained the brother who was displaying it, "since we went in business in 1886."

When the collector recovered from his amazement, he remarked, "Strange that no one has bought it before now."

"I belief you are the first person we ever showed it to," was the startling reply.

The price asked seemed much too high to the collector. "I'd like to have it," he admitted, "but that's too much money for me at present."

"We will keep it for you," was the offer.

"No, don't do that," he protested. "Don't miss a sale on my account. I may not buy it at all."

But some time later another collector said to him, "Say, I saw that sheet of Trenton Match stamps at Burger's yesterday. I wanted it, but they said you had an option on it." The other had to call up the Burgers and tell them

emphatically that he was not in the market before they would release it.

The latest honor that has been bestowed upon Nassau Street—it was bound to come sooner or later—is a somewhat dubious one. A specimen of today's favorite form of literature, a murder-mystery novel with the highly suggestive title, *Cancelled in Red*, has its scene laid in the famous street. The body found in the early paragraphs is that of Max Adrian, stamp dealer, whose counterfeiting, blackmailing, cheating in trade and double-crossing have made him so hated in the philatelic world that it's a wonder somebody didn't do for the dastard long ago. The story follows the accepted modern formula in that one killing isn't enough; another victim—one of those suspected of Adrian's murder, by the way—is knocked off within twenty-four hours. Although the book—published in 1939—is dedicated by the author to a prominent Nassau Street stamp dealer, the street is a bit doubtful as to the propriety, or rather, the advisability of putting such a character as Max Adrian on paper. People might get notions. . . . A review of the book in a stamp journal naïvely begs the reader not to become cynical or prejudiced against dealers in general as a result of reading it, for after all, the reviewer points out, it is only fiction!

RARAE AVES OF THE STREET

CHAPTER EIGHT

THERE were colorful characters which moved through the Nassau Street atmosphere of the past and which have become legendary; Ginnity, the stamp finder of forty years ago, for example. In almost any group of old timers you may hear a new story of him. He was a scout, a prospector with a nose for stamps like a red setter's for quail. Banks, old law offices, old business archives, family attics—his suavity, persistence and elegant "front" won his way into them all. A personable young man in his twenties, he dressed nattily, usually wore a plug hat and carried a cane, an ensemble that opened doors to him which would have been closed against a plainer man. He got into the Philadelphia custom house, an unprecedented feat, and left not a fine revenue or postage stamp in its vaults. Time and again someone has said, "There's that old concern, Doodle & Whiffle; been in business a hundred years; ought to have a world of old stamps in their files"; and when effort was made to pry into those old papers, like as not it would be found that Ginnity had been there thirty or forty years before and cleaned out everything.

Ginnity earned money rapidly, but spent it just as fast. He was a high-pressure rounder, if ever there was one. "A

short life and a merry one" was his sardonic motto. Perhaps he was aware for years of his impending fate, for he died young—some who knew him think at not more than thirty. He came into New York one Saturday evening with some Baltimore postmaster stamps, looked up Gus Calman, then an official of the Scott concern, and sold them to him for eight-hundred dollars with the stipulation that he receive spot cash; he wanted to spend it over the week end. It was long after banking hours, but Calman scurried hither and thither and finally raised the sum. By Monday morning, Ginnity hadn't a dollar of it left.

Perhaps it was his spending needs that made him reckless; perhaps a sort of what-the-hell state of mind was born of the knowledge that he hadn't a long life before him. Anyhow, he began trying tricks which he must have known would be found out. A man from Baltimore went into Bogert & Durbin's office one day and said, "I've come to collect for those stamps your agent bought from me the other day."

"But we have no agent," exclaimed Mr. Bogert in surprise. It was Ginnity, of course.

Not only this, but he began counterfeiting. The story is told of his finding an attorney in Alexandria, Virginia, who had inherited files of letters going back into the 1840's, the carrier and postmaster stamp days. Ginnity selected a number of them and said, "Now, may I take these over to my hotel to study to-night? I'll bring them back and quote you a price to-morrow."

"Certainly," said the unsuspecting lawyer, and away went Ginnity. He had prepared a counterfeit of the stamp of Russell & Company, a local express concern which once operated in New York. Selecting certain letters on which that stamp would look most natural, he stuck the Russells

on and canceled them with pen strokes in the old-fashioned way, thus greatly increasing the value of the letters. Next morning he made the attorney an offer for the letters and it was accepted. Now, said Ginnity, he would appreciate it if the man of law would write a little paper saying that he had sold these letters to Ginnity, that they were genuine and the stamps as is, or words to that effect. Of course the attorney was glad to oblige, and he dashed off the paper, wholly unaware that some more stamps, and forged stamps at that, had been added to the letters overnight. When the counterfeits were detected by expert eyes some time later, the whole story gradually came out.

An old-time New York dealer was telling me this story when another veteran came in.

"I was just telling Mr. Harlow that story about Ginnity and the Alexandria lawyer," said the narrator. "Did he ever work off any of those Russells on you?"

"No," replied the other with a wry grin, "but we bought some of those Turners that he made."

Now, the Turner carrier stamp is so suspicious a character that the cataloguers refuse to mention it, displaying even greater intransigence than an old work on zoology of 1759 which describes and pictures the dragon, but starts off by saying, "The Dragon, as describ'd in the numerous Fables and Stories of several Writers, may be justly questioned whether he exists." Forty years ago the Turner stamp was for a time received in good society; but as nothing could be discovered regarding its ancestry or the history of the company supposed to have issued it, there very justly arose a question whether it had ever existed; and the Scotch verdict, "Not proven," stands against it to this day.

In the days of Bogert & Durbin's ground floor shop in the *Tribune* building, a bright-eyed young Japanese was a


STACH
ROOM 918
Elite
BEAUTY
SHOPPE
MAX'S
No Tip
BARBER
SHOP
One Flight Up
Room 816
FREE
FREE
GEORGE B. SLOANE
116 NASSAU STREET
HIGHEST PRICES
PAID FOR STAMPS
ON OLD LETTERS
FOURTH FLOOR

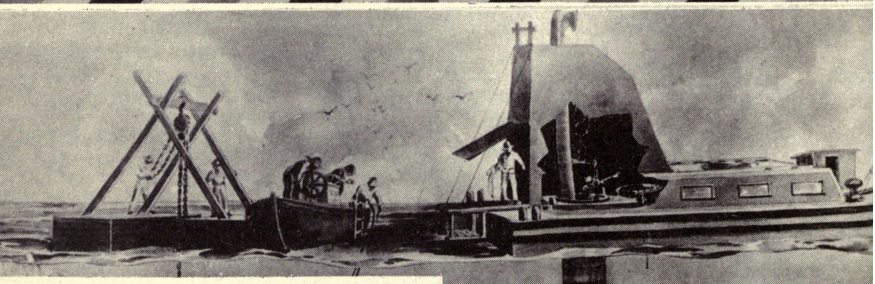
The highest a lowest:

Left—Post off near summit of t Jungfrau, Switz land, 11,342 f above sea level

Swiss P. O. Depart ment

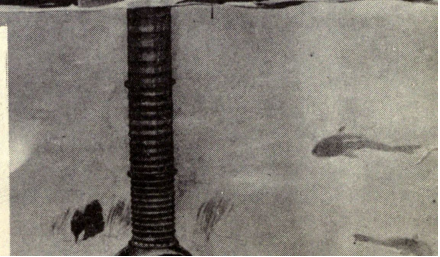






ove—An envelope from the un- sea post office off the Bahamas.

ght—The undersea post office, ich is much deeper in the water an the picture suggests.



customer. One day he told the clerk, Percy Doane, that he was going to a fancy-dress affair as Uncle Sam, and wanted to cover his costume with stamps; used, of course; he couldn't afford so many new ones. Percy tried to imagine that little Oriental countenance with a bunch of white whiskers on the chin as resembling Uncle Sam, but gave it up. He supplied the stamps, however—United States red twos for the stripes on the breeches, and ones, which had been blue ever since 1870, with perhaps a few blue fives, for the coat, on which the customer, with true Mongolian patience, worked out white star designs in pasting the stamps.

Some time later the Japanese came in very happy. His costume had made a great hit at the ball, and he offered to let Bogert & Durbin exhibit it in their window if they liked. They did so, and it quickly attracted the attention of another strange bird, a hard-faced individual destined to become one of the most famous among the queer characters of the Street. Let's call him Kroog; the Street will recall at once his real name. He had a small Tammany sinecure which didn't take too much of his time and very little thought. In a rich dese-dem-and-dose dialect he told the stamp men that he knew places where he could find some old stamps—queer stamps—stamps from away back and from foreign countries, maybe. He produced some nice old United States revenues as a sample. Were they interested?

They were, to the extent of twelve dollars, and Kroog promptly went out and invested the money in potent liquor. That was only one of his flaws as a stamp hound; any sale from five dollars up meant a souse. He became to a considerable extent a successor to Ginnity, with the difference that he never went outside of New York in his

searches, while Ginnity covered a wide extent of country.

After several days he came back and flaunted before young Doane's glistening eyes five 1853 Hawaiians which he had found in a waste-paper warehouse. The dealer, he said, had bought some boxes of old personal letters, which were arranged according to years. These were from the 1853 box. Oh, yes, there were boxes for 1851 and '52, too; but he hadn't looked into those.

"Go right back there," said Doane, his voice trembling, "and go through those '51 and '52 boxes. If there are any Hawaiians in them, you'll be surprised at what we pay you for them. They are known as Missionary stamps, and they're worth real money."

Here is where he made a mistake in tactics. He should have had a pair of handcuffs ready, should have attached himself to Kroog and ordered him to lead on to the warehouse without a moment's delay. Instead, he paid Kroog twenty-five dollars for the stamps just delivered, and let him go. He hadn't yet learned the fellow's bedeviling weakness.

Well, it was the usual story. With that twenty-five dollars in pocket, Kroog was again stricken with a sense of obligation to remove the curse of liquor from America by decreasing the visible supply. When he was finally able to stand on his feet again and made his way to the paper warehouse, those other boxes of envelopes had been sent to a paper mill and chewed into pulp.

Kroog soon learned that there were other dealers in Nassau Street, and began doing business with several of them. On two or three later occasions he brought batches of old stamps to a dealer, only part of a cache, he said, and he would go back immediately and get the rest; but he never did, because he hadn't paid for the first lot, and

somehow, never got around to doing so. He went through the files of the New York Institution for the Blind, picked out a lot of their best stamps, and said he would have to submit these to a dealer before he would know what to pay for them; he would return next day, pay for them and get the rest. He sold the stamps in Nassau Street for a nice figure and never went back for the rest. Smaller sales and larger profits was his system.

But he developed a technic of his own with the "junkies," or Italian old-paper warehousemen; he illustrated it one day to a stamp dealer who went with him to a warehouse to look at some revenue items. The paper man handed him three or four nice old revenue stamps as samples.

"Junk!" sneered Kroog, and before the dealer's horrified eyes—he would gladly have given $10 apiece for the stamps—Kroog tore them across petulantly and threw the fragments from him. "Haven't you got anything better than that?"

The magnificent gesture was worth the money; thereafter the junkie was as clay in Kroog's hands, and he bought the other stamps of the day's crop at ridiculous prices. But some of the junkies finally learned the trick and worked it themselves. Some dealers finally came to going directly to the warehouses, and at times would be summoned to come up and look at a batch of stamps.

"Give you twenty dollars for the lot," he might say.

"Bah!" and the stamps would be hurled into the baler, though minus Kroog's tearing-apart quirk. "I send 'em to da mill first." When or if the customer went away without raising the ante sufficiently, the stamps would be rescued from the baler and offered to somebody else.

Kroog had a rival, old Mr. Newbold, and the two were

bitter enemies. Every dealer dreaded having them meet in his office, for there were always loud words and seeming jeopardy to furniture. The elderly Mr. Newbold carried a heavy cane, which he was admittedly ready and eager to use on Kroog's person. Once Newbold sat at an auction sale with a roll of stamps in his outer coat pocket, and after the sale, found that they had disappeared. He was purple with rage; he knew the culprit at once.

"That skunk Kroog was sitting right behind me!" he spluttered. Sure enough, when he was thoroughly cornered, it was found that Kroog had the stamps. They were returned to Newbold and the affair was settled—though with difficulty—without homicide.

Newbold did much scouting outside of New York. He used to go through New Jersey and Pennsylvania, peddling furs to individual customers; but the mangy catskin neckpieces which he worked off on small-town women were really of less importance than the old correspondence in attics which he pretended to ask about in a casual, oh-by-the-way manner. Once he halted a Negro trundling a wheelbarrow load of old paper to a bonfire, and found a sixpence Canada in it; and if you don't believe one old stamp could be worth the quarter he paid to the Negro, just look in the catalogue. At another place he found two old ladies whose family had come originally from Baltimore, and who admitted having some old family correspondence with kin in that city, running back—oh, fifty years and more. Newbold pricked up his ears and wanted to see the letters at once. No, they said, we can't get at them now—all packed away in trunks in the attic. Next time you come around . . .

He took pains not to be too long in coming around again, but met with a stunning disappointment. No, they

said, there were no stamps worth mentioning; in most cases only the letter, not the envelope, had been saved; and the letters back in the pre-envelope days, when they were just folded over and became their own envelopes, had no United States stamps on them—just a few queer old labels of one sort and another; so they finally burned the whole mess; been wanting to get it out of the way for a long time, anyhow, and make room for other things—

With a pencil, Newbold was sketching as they talked, a slender rectangle on a piece of paper; he wrote inside it as good an imitation as he could achieve of the famous signature "James M. Buchanan," and under it, "5 Cents."

"Were there any labels like this on the letters?" he asked.

They peered at it. "Oh, yes, several."

"How many?" he persisted.

They looked at each other. Oh, maybe twenty or twenty-five, they guessed.

"I'd have given you a hundred dollars apiece for them," he said, solemnly. Of course he wouldn't have, though he could have made a nice profit at that; but his announcement had the stunning effect he desired. They were absolutely paralyzed for a moment; then they melted into tears and wept piteously, poor souls, at the thought of the fortune they had thrown away; a horrible example of the sort of folk who, when they see a huddle of something old, can think of nothing but starting a bonfire.

Hen Kilton was a Nassau Street character engaged in a byway of the stamp business which probably many present-day philatelists have never heard of. He had been in "Variety" in his youth and also traveled with a circus as "The Great Egyptian Juggler." He was likewise a dancer extraordinary, and even decades later was as light on his toes

as thistledown. He was a stamp collector all the time; you may find his collections of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and other countries entered in stamp exhibitions—though under another name—as far back as 1893. Once when he was traveling through Georgia with the circus, another performer stole some of his stamps, including a couple of fine U. S. 1847's. Hen had the man arrested, and the culprit engaged a local, small-town lawyer to defend him.

The attorney quickly learned from his client that Kilton was a New England Yankee, and when Hen had testified, the limb of the law took over his cross-examination with the air of a hungry man sitting down before a big platter of corned beef and cabbage. One of his early questions was, "Mr. Kilton, where were you born?"

"In Connecticut," replied Hen.

"Connecticut," repeated the lawyer, glancing at the jury. Another question or two, and then—

"That's a nice watch and chain you have there. Where did you buy the watch?"

"In London," replied Hen, wondering where all this was leading.

"And the chain?"

"Got that in England, too."

"Ah! American jewelry not good enough for you, I suppose?" with a can-you-imagine-it look at the jurymen.

"Oh, I wouldn't put it that way," protested the witness.

"Now you say one of the stamps stolen from you was a—a twelve-cent stamp, I believe."

"Yes, sir, twelve-cent, 1851."

"By eighteen-fifty-one you mean—"

"That it was issued in 1851."

"I see. And now, whose picture did it have on it?"

"Washington's."

"And what color was that stamp?"

"Black," replied Kilton, as any philatelist would, thinking of the color of the ink.

"Black," exclaimed the lawyer, with another triumphant glance at the jury.

The drift of this questioning was a mystery to Hen until the attorney made his speech to the twelve good men and true. Then, after his preliminary warming-up, he declaimed with rapidly rising indignation, "Gentlemen, here is my poor client being persecuted by a Yankee, born in Connecticut, the State where they make nutmegs out of wood and sell 'em, a man who, by his own confession, won't do business with American merchants but prefers to buy his fine gold watches and everything he uses in England; and this man comes here into this court and tries to make this honorable and intelligent jury believe that the picture of the immortal George Washington on a United States stamp is black; that George Washington, the Father of his Country, was a nigger! Gentlemen, I ask you a simple question; can any dependence whatsoever be put in the word of a man like that?"

The jury acquitted the defendant without leaving their seats.

Kilton later forsook the sawdust and the footlights and went into the stamp redemption business. He found that the government would redeem stamped envelopes or post cards on which addresses or advertising matter had been printed in larger numbers than the buyer could use. For example, if a mail-order house had an ad of a particular article printed on the back of ten thousand post cards and then sent out only 9,800, they could turn the remaining two hundred back to the Post Office, which would redeem them at seventy-five cents per hundred. Or if a candidate

had ten thousand self-addressed, stamped return envelopes printed for his campaign and sent out only 9,920, or a corporation had fifteen hundred of the same printed for the return of proxies for the annual election of directors, when it had only 1,472 stockholders, the Post Office would redeem the unused ones at the face value of the stamps only; it wouldn't pay for the envelopes.

So of course there arose certain middlemen who made a business of gathering up these stamped envelopes and cards and either selling them back to the government or to other users. To turn them in to the Post Office, you had to have a "run" of, say, ten or more of the same envelopes; for the idea was that of helping out the large user who had overbought his needs; not to be bothered with paying out a few pennies to anyone who might pick up an unused stamped envelope. And there must also be at least some pretense that the person who returned the envelopes was a representative of the person or company who had originally bought them.

Kilton started in this business in Chicago, buying the envelopes and cards from the junkies who found them in the waste-basket emptyings of office buildings and big business concerns. His experience in make-up aided him in putting things over at the post office. He would appear in his ordinary garb and mien as an employee of, say, Lyon & Healy, with forty or fifty envelopes, get the money on them, go back home, don another shirt and tie, perhaps another hat, add a little mustache and appear at the window again as an office man from Sears, Roebuck & Company; redeem that package, vanish and come back with a few lines delicately sketched on his face, making him look much older, hair powdered at his temples and a pair of spectacles, this time bringing a lot of proxy envelopes un-

used by his employers, the Illinois Steel Company. This couldn't go on forever undetected. "That guy needn't think he's fooling me," said the clerk who usually served him to another one day. "I've been onto him for months."

Either they made trouble for him or he thought the pickings in New York would be better, for he finally came over to Nassau Street and built up a considerable business there. The post-office clerks were more complaisant and willing to play ball with him, so much so that he arranged to pay modest commissions to one or two of them. Because of their partnership, he could work in a few odd envelopes with his "run" of twenty or more and get away with it. He had space rented with a stamp concern in one of the larger buildings on Nassau Street, and his confreres recall seeing his post-office clerk pals actually dropping in now and then at their noon hour to ask, "Got a package for me today?"

Kilton also had several junkies on his staff, who would bring to him all their waste-basket gleanings; so that his place became a clearing house for not only stamped envelopes and post cards, but for fountain pens, pencils and other office supplies, even some Liberty Bonds, and a gold tooth. He never gagged at anything. Back of his long table or counter was a big rack of pigeonholes, marked "Prairie Oil & Gas," "U. S. Steel," and other names, for his most common proxy envelopes, into which he distributed them until he had enough for a package. He had frequent opportunities to buy whole boxes of envelopes or post cards, which he got by paying a slightly better rate than the Post Office or just by going after them, which Uncle Sam wouldn't do.

He began reselling many of these to other concerns or persons who weren't squeamish about using a second-hand envelope. (We had a letter from a stamp dealer not so

long ago, mailed in a thirty-year-old stamped envelope, with someone else's corner-card scratched out on it.) Kilton labored hard to devise an opaque liquid with some chalk and sizing in it and of just the peculiar tint of post-card paper, with which he could paint over the ad on the back of a card—and the address on the front, too, if there was one—so that it could be written on and used again. But this was never as satisfactory as simply pasting a piece of paper over the advertising or address. Incidentally, we saw a card just the other day from a small stamp concern, not in New York, which was a throwback to the past; the old three-quarter-face view of Jefferson printed in black which marked it as about forty years old—and pasted over its entire back was a piece of white paper, on which was typed a simple offer of a U. S. 1869, twenty-four-cent invert stamp for $870. Holding it up to the light, you saw that originally printed on the card was a reminder of "Humphrey's Homeopathic Simples (Aconite, Belladonna, Nux Vomica, etc.), Price $1.00 per Dozen. Humphreys' Homeo. Med. Co., New York, January 1st, 1900." Fancy offering an $870 stamp on such a medium!

Well, Hen built up such a demand for his second-hand envelopes and cards that he couldn't cover the addresses rapidly enough by hand to supply it. He had a friend who ran a Tammany free-lodging house for bums up on the Bowery, from which he was expected to produce from seventy-five to a hundred votes each election day. "I've got a mechanical genius up there," he told Kilton, "and I believe he can figure out a machine to do this for you."

The inventor labored for months on the machine, using such materials as he could lay hands on at no cost, and when it was completed, those who saw it say that there was probably never anything else to compare with it in the

history of mechanics. It was fully twenty feet long, cobbled together out of scrap metal and timber, old bicycle sprocket chains and wheels, salvaged gear wheels, scale springs, straps, twine and hairpins; but when you fed envelopes into it at one end, they came out at the other—in a large majority of cases—with a rectangle of paper pasted over the addresses on their fronts. The trouble was that this machine glutted the market; prepared envelopes faster than Kilton could sell them.

Hen was perhaps the most eccentric character ever seen on the street. He never ceased collecting. He had his coats specially made with a huge inside pocket on the right side, big enough to hold a stamp album of goodly size, and that side of his coat when he was on the street stuck out in front of him like a spritsail. Notoriously stingy, he would often work through the noon hour, lunching on an apple or a banana and a dry roll, taking bites out of each in turn as he walked to and fro, sorting and distributing his envelopes. He would save parts of these comestibles and put them away in his table drawer, where the mice would nibble them and roll them about in the dust, but that made no difference to Hen.

He had fearful paroxysms of temper when something went wrong, often kicking a door furiously and striking himself on the head with his fists. Once he was working and lunching on a pint bottle of milk while two men looked at a part of his cover collection—and he had some good ones—on the low counter. His milk bottle was on one end of the counter, and as he lifted it to take a drink, the bottom of it fell out and the milk gushed in all directions.

With a howl of rage, he smashed the remainder of the bottle against the wall and scooped up his covers with hands and forearms to save them from the milk, but was

in so insensate a fury that he spun around in that graceful dancer's pirouette of his and raised them above his head, to throw them out of a window. The two onlookers sprang to their feet and dashed to the door, hoping to reach the street and grab some of the covers before passers-by discovered what they were. But fortunately, the love of those precious envelopes prevailed over Hen's rage; he lowered his arms, still trembling, and the treasures were saved.

And there was Sam Singer, the stamp repair man, who left a notable record in the stamp business world; the man who could build a new stamp out of fragments so skillfully that you couldn't see the joints. Sam was born in Przemysl —remember what a time we had, trying to pronounce it during the World War when the Grand Duke Nicholas was driving toward it? It was in Galicia, a part of Austria-Hungary then; goodness knows where it is now. Sam rose to fame as a repair man in Paris in the '90's, where he repaired for some of the very best people—and caused some of them considerable embarrassment in after years, too. It is recalled that a New York dealer came home from Europe about 1900 in high excitement and said to his clerks, "From now on, buy every damaged stamp you can get hold of, if it's a worth-while issue. There isn't any such thing as a damaged stamp any more. Those fellows in Paris—one of 'em in particular—are doing simply marvelous things with old stamps."

Sam, the "one in particular," was eventually lured to America, where he flourished for many years. There is many a rare old stamp today, seemingly as sound as when it came from the press, but which once had a tear in it, perhaps halfway across, and which Sam mended with such uncanny skill that the break cannot be detected save with a powerful magnifying glass. Such work as this seems per-

fectiy legitimate to the present writer; but when Sam—always upon order, of course—built an apparently sound stamp out of the fragments of two or three others, there began to be an odor about the affair which was offensive to the nostrils of the more ethical philatelists; and when he took one with the corner torn off and manufactured a new corner, drawing in the lithographed or steel engraved design in perfectly matched color and line, reproducing the perforations and piecing out the postmark, why, *that* was just a little too much!

Great Britain tried printing stamps for herself and colonies on a paper with a chalky surface which would come off very easily, so that if one tried to wash off the postmark, the stamp design would wash off, too. Once a rather shady dealer showed Sam a certain colonial stamp and remarked that if the date on that postmark were so-and-so, the stamp would be worth a lot more to him.

"Let's see it," said Sam. He laid it on the table and bent over it, scrutinizing it, after his fashion, from a distance of three or four inches, which always worried dealers, for he had a hacking cough, and they didn't know . . . Anyhow, after a minute's study, he said, "I can fix it."

And so he did; took three figures of the date off that fragile surface and substituted three others so nicely that the scars could be detected only by high magnification and a suspicious eye.

Sam was a collector on his own, and after he had been in America several years he discovered that he had, through a carelessness that was little short of criminal, bought two or three of his own repaired stamps without noticing it until some time afterward. He therefore formed a habit, when he rebuilt a stamp, of inscribing faintly a very tiny "M" (for "Mended") in a circle in a lower corner of the

back of the stamp, and thereafter, before buying a stamp, he was always seen to turn it over and look at its back through a glass.

He did not always have to do this, for there were dealers of the better class who would stamp on the back of one of his jobs, "This stamp has been repaired"; though even then there were some who did not go ahead and explain that a part of the stamp had been re-created or that it had been built from the fragments of two or three others.

There was another fellow—who it was will never be known—who was Sam's peer on at least one occasion. A stranger went into the shop of John F. Negreen, a dealer now dead, in the early part of the century, and offered a pair of the famous Pan-American inverts of 1901. It will be remembered that this was a two-color series, with a picture in the center in black and a surrounding frame of another color. Some sheets of the two-cent denomination went through the press wrong the second time, with the result that the vignette of a railroad train was upside down, making these stamps valuable rarities. Negreen was amazed and delighted at sight of the stamps. He examined them carefully, as he thought, to make sure that they were not counterfeits. No, the engraving was absolutely legitimate. He questioned the stranger very straitly, and heard a plausible story as to how he acquired the stamps. It was evident that the man knew the value of his find, but after much haggling, Negreen bought the pair at the bargain price of $800. Some time afterward, when a buyer put the stamps under a high-powered glass, it was found that the vignettes had simply been cut from the centers of two normal stamps, turned around and remounted in the frames upside down, with a skill so marvelous that it must be seen to be believed. Sam Singer admitted that he couldn't have done

better himself. But there were those who began to suspect that Sam swaggered a little when he said it. Was he in truth the real artist? He never admitted it, and as he has long since passed away, the question will never be answered.

Is individuality disappearing? We have no such colorful characters in the philatelic demimonde now as these of yesterday, and undoubtedly some folk are glad of it. There are still chaps getting their living precariously from stamps —the curbstone or short-order lad, for example, whose office is under his hat, who knows where to buy cheap and sell high, and whose aim is the one-day turnover—to sell before dinner all he may have bought since breakfast. As just one example of these fellows' clever ideas, they were selling the new thirty-cent Atlantic Air Mail stamps of 1939 along Nassau Street at a ten per cent discount within five hours of the time when they were issued. They had bought sheets, stuck several of the stamps on first-day covers which they could later sell at a handsome profit, saved the plate number and arrow blocks of four, and sold the few remaining singles at 27 cents each, so as to clean up their stock by nightfall!

There are still traveling stamp dealers, including some who commute between Europe and the Americas and do a large business. There are still stamp hunters who do a bit of personal searching, but who for the most part buy through established contacts with business houses or stamp-hounds in foreign countries. Some of these are honorable folk, but some others—well, one of them, selling to a dealer some stamps just obtained from a correspondent abroad, grinned over war conditions after his trade was completed and said, "Of course I ain't gointa pay the guy for 'em."

NOTABILITIES, HUMAN AND INANIMATE

CHAPTER NINE

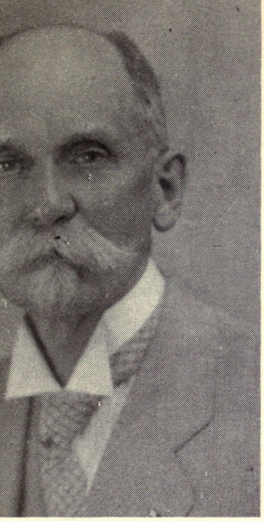
IT IS not alone the schoolboy, the clerk, the capitalist and the chauffeur who collect—there are also scholars, devotees of the arts, priests, and potentates enlisted in the great army of fans. King George V of England was for decades perhaps the most famous of philatelists; his son, King Edward VIII, began dabbling in the hobby when a boy, and some of the royal dukes were ardent collectors. Many British noblemen, including the Earl of Crawford, already mentioned, have been thirty-third degree devotees. And there were also such varied characters as the late King Ahmed Fuad of Egypt, the ex-King Alfonso XIII of Spain, the present King Humbert of Italy and the Czar Alexander III, who preserved until his death his collection of birds' eggs and stamps, begun when he was a boy. It is recalled that when we issued our great Columbian series in 1893, our first big splurge in commemoratives, one of the very early applications for a set came from the nine-year-old Queen Wilhelmina of Holland, through the Dutch consul at New York; and the queen is still at it.

When in 1884 the King of Siam's youngest brother, Prince Tshanfu Banurenhghi Surang Wong Chhom-Luang Bannhangtwonghi Wordate, was appointed postmaster-

NOTED
COLLECTORS

Right
John K. Tiffany

Left
Hiram E. Deats



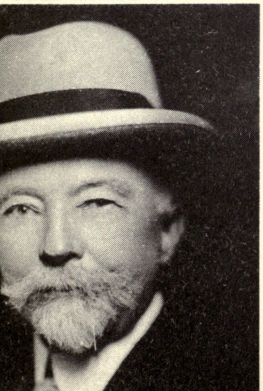




Right
E.L.R. von Ferrary

Left
Arthur Hind





Right
Col. E.H.R. Green

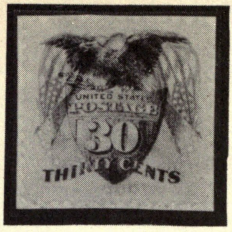
Left
Chas. Lathrop

Pack

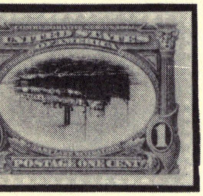


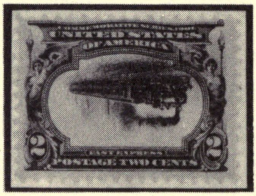


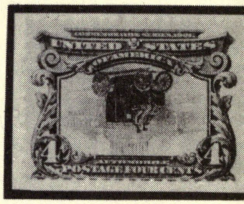




1901











1918



From the Collection of Philip H. Ward, Jr.

The seven United States inverted center stamps. The 1918 air mail is from a sheet for which Col. E. H. R. Green paid

general of his country, he sent at once to Leipzig for a fine album and all the varieties of stamps that he could get hold of in one shipment—approaching the subject with the sledge-hammer technic first adopted by a noted American collector whom we shall mention hereafter. The late Queen Marie of Roumania was a collector and passed her hobby on to her son, King Carol; and princes of the royal house of Japan are numbered among the elect. For decades after Japan was opened to the commerce of the world, the Japanese sold without stint to the eager Occidentals, for prices which seemed to them fabulous, many of their greatest art treasures and all of their old stamps that could be found. Then, becoming Occidentalized and beginning to wear the ugly clothing of the white races, they also became hobby-conscious and developed a sense of shame at losing so many of their rarities. So the twentieth century sees many of their noble and wealthy men becoming philatelists and collectors of their own old porcelains, armor, and ivories.

In the western world, General Porfirio Diaz, dictator-president of Mexico from 1884 to 1911, is said to have had the finest collection of Mexico, Central and South America ever assembled, many of them with unique association value; for it was long his custom to procure panes of new issues by the Latin American republics and have them autographed by their Presidents. He had fine singles, blocks and panes of the issues of Maximilian's tragic empire, the inverted quetzals of Guatemala, and so forth. When the revolution of 1911 burst over his head he had to leave his stamps behind in his flight. During the saturnalia which usually accompany such upheavals, a gang of peon soldiers under command of a stripling "captain" invaded Chapultepec Castle, broke open the strong boxes where the stamps were kept, and after a stupid, uncomprehending glance at

the albums, tossed them through the windows and into a bonfire below—an act of vandalism rivaling, in the minds of all the philatelists, that of the destruction of the records of Aztec culture by Spanish priests nearly four centuries before.

In the United States, our top-ranking collector at present is of course President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who is particularly interested in American countries, in Haiti and Hong Kong. The last-named specialty he inherited from his mother, who was for decades a keen collector. A number of his associates in the Administration are also collectors, with interesting evolvements, as we shall see later. Senator James M. Mead, of New York, has probably the largest collection of anyone on Capitol Hill. Former President Herbert Hoover is enrolled in the American Philatelic Society, but does not appear to be very active in the hobby. One might go on to mention eminences in the arts, such as Adolphe Menjou and Jean Hersholt, film actors; Lauritz Melchior and Lily Pons, Metropolitan Opera singers, Ellis Parker Butler, the author, and that waggish scribe, H. Bedford-Jones, who likes to use his brother philatelists' real names for characters, not always lovely, in his stories. That of Harry L. Lindquist, editor and publisher, for example, has figured frequently in them, and in a quite recent one he was murdered. Pitifully, Mr. Lindquist has begged to be a hero some time in a romance, but in vain; Bedford-Jones is inexorable.

For reminiscences of King George V and dozens of other great European collectors, Mr. Charles J. Phillips, long a British dealer, but now a resident of New York, is easily pre-eminent. As head of the Stanley Gibbons concern, Mr. Phillips was for years the chief purveyor of stamps to the king, and used to visit Buckingham Palace regularly on cer-

tain days with new offerings, items he thought the king needed to fill gaps in his collection—which embraced only Britain and colonial possessions and dominions. Soon after his arrival at the palace the democratic monarch, his face alight with pleasurable anticipation, would bustle in with a genial "Good morning, Mr. Phillips," and a handshake, then, "Sit down. Have a cigar? Now, what have we today?"

Although Phillips could not make a practice of introducing just any American philatelist who wanted to meet the king, whenever there came one who had a really great collection or who was a high authority, King George was always glad to meet and talk shop with him, to look at the visitor's treasures, if he had any with him, and to display some of his own. Fine stamps were frequently offered him as gifts, but the king was a stickler for the rule that the royal family does not accept gifts of commercial value, though he relaxed it on rare occasions when it would have been too unkind not to do so. At one time a young American collector, who had risen to eminence in a short time by lavish expenditure, was in London and Mr. Phillips arranged to take him to the palace. During the interview, the talk drifted to a certain imperforate stamp, and the king remarked that he had never seen a genuine one.

"Oh, but I have several, Your Majesty," prattled the collector.

"I'm sorry, Mr. A.," Phillips put in. "If you have any, they are forgeries. Such a thing as a real one doesn't exist."

"I didn't know that," said the other, abashed. "I bought them from an American dealer, and I supposed they were all right."

The end of the call came, the visitors arose, and Mr. A. thanked the monarch for his courtesy and the opportunity of seeing his stamps. Then he added, diffidently, "Now it

would give me great pleasure if Your Majesty would accept a stamp from me for your collection, just as a—a souvenir of my call"; and before Phillips's horrified eyes, he handed the king one of those fake imperforates!

So courteous a man as royal George would not humiliate a guest in his house, and for so small a thing; so he bowed and without evincing the slightest surprise at the nature of the gift, thanked the caller as heartily as if he had given him something really worth while. When they were outside, Phillips turned on his companion furiously.

"What under the sun were you thinking of," he demanded, "to give the king that worthless piece of paper? I ought to kick your stern all over London."

The young man couldn't explain it himself. Just embarrassment and confusion, it seemed. Not knowing that the stamp was a fake, he had put it in his pocket before they started for the palace, intending it as a gift for His Majesty. When he was saying his farewell, he suddenly remembered that he had intended making a presentation of something or other; in his excitement he momentarily forgot that Phillips had denounced the stamp as a counterfeit, even forgot what stamp he was handing out. There didn't seem to be anything that anybody could do about it now, so nobody did anything. Did Mr. Phillips ever apologize to the king for the *gaffe*? one asks. No, he replies, and the king never spoke of it to him, either; it just seems to have been one of those contretemps so ghastly that two gentlemen couldn't even mention it to one another. But the king evidently didn't hold Phillips accountable for the vagaries of his American customer, for the incident did not disturb their business relations.

Mr. Phillips recalls that the Prince of Wales, now the Duke of Windsor, when a boy in his early teens, frequently

bought stamps out of his pocket allowance, but once gloomily remarked that he didn't believe he would ever get anywhere with his collecting, because the "Old Man" picked up everything good that came along.

The king did make many rich purchases, some of them in America. He bought, for example, the entire collections of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland from Charles Lathrop Pack, then conceded to be the most comprehensive in existence. But even royalty can't get everything it wants, and King George died with many rare old items still missing from his collection. It is still kept up and perhaps some day it may become a part of the British Museum. Sir John Wilson is its curator now, and the present king has authorized him to sell one of the many duplicates when there is a favorable opportunity, and use the money in buying other stamps. At a sale in New York in 1939, the Estate of King George V was represented by a buyer. Little Princess Margaret Rose is carrying on the philatelic traditions of the family.

The legend that King George was an unsuccessful bidder for the famous British Guiana 1856 one-cent magenta rarity at the Ferrary sale has gained wide credence, but it is said to be untrue. This stamp, the world's most valuable scrap of paper, the only one known of its kind, is a shoddy-looking thing, set up in type and printed in a newspaper office in Georgetown, the Guiana capital. It is off color through error, and the four corners have been clipped a bit for some reason, which would reduce the value of any ordinary stamp frightfully; but not so this rough gem. From the time of its discovery, its price has leaped at every sale—and each of its four changes of ownership is known. When the great Ferrary collection was dispersed between 1921 and 1925, the British Guiana stamps were the star perform-

ers. A pair of the 1850 two-cent black on rose—another crude newspaper job—on an envelope, sold for more than twenty thousand dollars, and a dozen other items brought from one to five thousand dollars. The appearance on the auction block of the 1856 error was looked forward to with eager anticipation. Arthur Hind, the Utica millionaire, who was bent on outdoing Ferrary in the matter of a stamp collection, had given his agent permission to bid as high as sixty thousand dollars for it, if necessary, but the bidding stopped far short of that, and the stamp was knocked down to him for about $32,500 in American money.

And here let us pause to contemplate a fine example of the irony of events. When the news of that sale was flashed back to England, a man in his middle sixties named L. Vernon Vaughn heard it with a queer, wistful little smile; for half a century before, he, then a boy of fifteen, had found that very stamp on an old family letter and sold it for six shillings! He was interested in acquiring pretty sets of new, unused stamps then, and needing money with which to buy them, he decided to sell this one, as it was rather a poor copy, anyhow, and he thought he could easily find a better specimen in the family attic. The man to whom he sold it didn't like its mutilated condition, but evidently he, too, knew he was getting something good, else he wouldn't have paid the boy even six shillings for it; though, says Mr. Vaughn, he "impressed upon me that he was taking a great risk by buying it, and that he hoped I should appreciate his generosity." A few years later, that man sold this and some other British Guiana stamps, all now great rarities, for £120 to Thomas Ridpath of Liverpool, who evidently had in mind at the time the idea of selling this 1856 item to Ferrary, for he did so as soon as possible, and therefore, it is reasonable to suppose, at a

handsome profit, though we do not know the figure. In Ferrary's collection it remained for forty-four years.

When Phillips asked Hind why he paid such a fantastic price for the stamp, the latter replied that he had determined to buy the highest-priced article offered at the Ferrary sales, thinking that it would give him so much publicity that he would receive many offers of rare stamps, including some perhaps never before on the market; but in this hope he was disappointed. He received thousands of letters, but was able to buy almost nothing of any real importance.

As for the king's interest in this stamp, Bacon, his philatelic secretary, told Phillips that he "didn't want a cripple in his collection," referring to the cut corners. When Hind and several other collectors called at Buckingham Palace during a philatelic exhibition, the king told Hind he did not begrudge him that stamp, but that he had been interested in getting a Niger Coast provisional, twenty-shillings on one-shilling, on which Hind outbid his agent in the sale. Hind immediately offered to present the stamp to the king, but the latter just as promptly, though courteously, informed him that this was an occasion when he would not relax the rule.

Hind liked to go on trips around the world with William C. Kennett, his philatelic secretary, picking up stamps in every country he visited; buying blocks of four at the post offices, then visiting the dealers' shops, and even seeking attic and trunk hoards. As told by Harry Konwiser in the magazine *Stamps*, in Samoa they ran into a group of beautiful native maidens, all supposed to be princesses of the old royal blood, who told them of a house on a hill where there were many, many letters. When they had located the place, they found it was the former home of Robert Louis

Stevenson, now preserved as a shrine, where a crusty caretaker told them that there were no letters there, and if there were, he wouldn't let strangers look at them. In Tonga, warned beforehand of the king's likings, they went to see him with bottles of Haig & Haig under each arm. The king was desolated at being unable to supply Mr. Hind with certain old stamps, but he could do the next best thing—he could give him the plates. But in the middle of the following night, the British Resident awoke Hind from sleep to demand the return of the plates to him, saying that they weren't the king's property.

Ferrary and Hind were both reckless buyers, and paid little attention to expert advice. Ferrary gave as one of the reasons why he never exhibited his stamps the undoubted fact that there was a dealer tendency to charge him too stiff a price for a certain rarity if they knew he lacked it. "They know I can't refuse to buy a variety I haven't got," he said plaintively, "and they take advantage of me." This sounds more plausible than his other excuse that he promised his mother never to let his stamps leave their home in the Rue de Varenne. Phillips once met him coming from a certain large stamp shop and chided him, saying, "Why do you go in that place? You know they would just as lief sell you a counterfeit as a real stamp." To which Ferrary pleaded, "I know it, but I occasionally find some variety there that I want, and I would rather buy a hundred forgeries than miss that variety that I couldn't find elsewhere."

Hind was similarly headstrong. He had a wonderful collection, including probably the finest assemblages of Spain, Mauritius, United States and Confederates in existence. He had bought the whole of the Ferrary collection of Nevis uncut sheets, of the Uganda missionary stamps, of the Indian feudatory states, and a flock of Hawaiian mission-

aries. He had corralled the only known copies of the Lockport and Boscawen postmaster stamps, the Annapolis five-cent red, of which only one other copy is known, the Alexandria five-cent black on buff, one of five known copies; the New Haven five-cent blue on buff, one of two copies extant and another New Haven almost as rare; the only known pair of the ninety-cent U. S. blue, 1861; the only known unused block of four of the five-cent red-brown U. S. 1851, which had come to him via the F. W. Ayer and Henry Duveen collections; two pairs of the thirty-cent brownish-orange of 1860, and so many more rarities that several catalogues were required to list them. But, lamented Phillips, he had also quantities of junk; he would never take advice.

He died at an unfortunate time for his estate—in 1933, when America's spirits and financial status were low. His collection was appraised by Kennett and Phillips, and sales of the stamps were begun late in 1933; but the results were not what the estate had hoped for, and a great sale to be held early in 1934 was canceled after some expectant European buyers were already on the way. A draft for $82,000 had been sent with buying orders from one wealthy collector across the water, and among others who had placed such orders was King Carol of Roumania, some of whose bids were twenty-five per cent above catalogue prices. A British syndicate took over the remainder of the collection and sold it in London. The total sum realized, says Mr. Phillips, was $680,000, about sixty per cent of what the stamps had cost Hind. The British Guiana 1856 rarity remained in Mrs. Hind's possession, it being claimed that her husband had given it to her just before his death. In 1935, by which time Mrs. Hind had become Mrs. P. Costa Scala, this stamp's value was placed at $50,000, but everyone is

well aware that with rich men's bankbooks in their present condition, it would probably not bring half that sum if it were sold.

Phillips says that the estate would have been $250,000 richer had Hind been willing to accept an offer of $485,000 for his United States and Canada stamps which Phillips procured for him shortly before his death. But Hind held out for half a million, and there was no sale. Even at that, the stamp collection was the most valuable part of his estate. The rest of the assets of this man who had once paid taxes on a million-dollar income reached a total of only $636,450.

With Hind died the last of that great clan who tried to encompass everything. Those who are left are all specialists.

F. W. Ayer of Bangor, Maine, who as a very young man began buying in a big way late in the nineteenth century, might have kept some great rarities out of the hands of Hind had not unusual circumstances intervened. Among his other startling moves, he bought a great number of complete sets in sheets of our Columbian issue of 1893 as a speculation, then lost his nerve and traded them at face value to dealers for rarities. No expense daunted him. He once wrote Phillips, then with the Gibbons concern in London, asking him to come to Bangor at once with a good assortment of worth-while stamps. They had a good laugh in the Gibbons office over this letter, and Phillips wrote that he was too busy to trek across the Atlantic just at that moment. They had hardly had time to turn around before five-thousand pounds sterling came by cable from Ayer, with a curt communication whose general tenor was that if this wasn't enough he would cable another five thousand. Money talks louder than typed words, and the cable wasn't cold before Mr. Phillips was packing his bag.

But Nemesis, in the form of his millionaire Yankee industrialist father was on Frederick's trail. Ayer Senior regarded his son's wild expenditure of money on stamps as but little better than blowing it in on wine, women and song. After some years, an impasse was reached, and Phillips received an anguished letter from Ayer, saying that he was about to be disinherited for his philatelic folly, and would have to sell all his best stamps. He came over to London with about $750,000 worth, arranged with Gibbons to sell them at auction, received an advance of $25,000 on account and cabled it to his father as proof of his sanity. He thereafter disappeared from the ranks of the great collectors.

Another heir who began collecting even earlier, though without the recklessness of Ayer, was a boy over in New Jersey named Hiram E. Deats. Left an orphan before his maturity, he must have had some wise guardians, with perhaps some philatelists among them. The New York *Times* of August 6th, 1890, reporting the annual show of the A. P. A., remarked that "H. E. Deats of Hightstown, N. J., a young man of eighteen, shows a collection of proofs of United States stamps that his guardians permitted him to give $7,000 for." At the age of nine, young Deats had found on the floor of the post office of his home town an envelope with a foreign stamp on it, a blinding revelation to him. Until that moment, it had never occurred to him that everybody didn't use the same stamps. He set about collecting them, and for three or four years supposed himself the only stamp collector living. Then a cousin showed him a stamp price-list, and the gates of a new world were opened.

Before he was thirty he had one of the three greatest revenue, match and medicine stamp collections in America.

His United States and Confederate collections were world renowned. In the '90's he was Ferrary's chief rival for Confederates, his postmaster provisionals of that short-lived nation being considered the best of his time. He discovered the unique Boscawen stamp in 1894 and sold it to Ferrary, from whom it came back to Hind for $12,000. He was likewise a philatelic bibliographer. In 1896 J. W. Scott wrote, "Complete libraries of all stamp publications are probably possessed by only two men, Messrs. Tiffany and Deats." He has touched no subject to which he has not added knowledge. Historians of United States and Confederate stamps and even Sir Edward Bacon, compiler of the Earl of Crawford's catalogue, all make acknowledgment of his help. He and two other young men, George Toppan and Alexander Holland sweated through a hot summer at compiling the "Boston Revenue Book," that Bible of the fiscal collector. Deats's career has been a record of making collections of this or that and selling them. "The fun is in the chase," is his favorite saying, and once attainment has been realized, he turns to something else.

Other great collectors of the recent past—Tiffany, Corwin, Curie, Chase, Duveen, Pack, Mandel, Worthington, Thorne, Hawkins and Blair—have already been mentioned in the chapter on specialization; likewise Mrs. Cromwell, Watson and others among living hobbyists; and there are yet others; Arthur H. Lamborn, the coffee millionaire, for example, whose collection of plate number items, all in mint condition, included almost every issue from 1894 to 1920; and Theodore E. Steinway, who, when he was married in 1913, feared that his wife would object to his spending so much money on stamps, so he sold all his British colonials save the Australians, his favorite specialty, and built a bungalow for her with the proceeds. But lo and

behold, she became a collector, too, and later their four sons and two daughters took up the hobby, making them a unique family. A. H. Caspary, a New York broker, is interested in nothing but rarities. "He won't look at anything that costs less than ten or twenty dollars," a dealer told us. Naturally, his is one of the wonder collections of the present day. Just as a sample—he has a block of six unused of the Pleasant Shade, Virginia, Confederate postmaster stamp—and a single one is catalogued by Scott at $2,000! Mr. Caspary also has a single and a pair. A pair from the Hind collection sold to Judge Emerson of Providence for $5,400, and a pair on cover is catalogued by Scott at $6,000.

Alfred Lichtenstein, another of the eminent philatelists of the present moment, whose collections of British North America, Uruguay, Argentina, Mauritius, Cape of Good Hope and our western express franks, to mention only a few of his specialties, are known the world over, has some items such as a couple of Mauritius stamps on an envelope and a block of four of the Cape of Good Hope triangular wood block errors on a cover, before which collectors stand with uncovered heads.

The Crockers, Henry J. and William H., cousins of each other and of the Pacific Railroad magnate, were famous collectors around the turn of the century. Henry built great collections of Hawaii and Japan, and wrote a monograph on the Hawaiian Numerals. His Japanese collection, as already reported, was destroyed in the great fire of 1906, but the Hawaiians were in an exhibition in London at the time and so escaped. William's wealth enabled him to make many lucky purchases from less fortunate folk. A widowed stamp dealer, known to and beloved by all the Pacific Coast as "Mother" Craig, who carried on the collection begun in the 1860's by her husband—Sydney Views,

British American and early United States, including a Brattleboro and other rarities—fell upon hard times in 1884, and sold this collection to William Crocker for $1,100. In 1887 he bought another man's collection of western franks, U. S. envelopes and U. S. and foreign revenues for $850. A South American stranded in San Francisco sold his fine collection of that continent to Crocker for two hundred dollars.

He paid a little more dearly for the block of four twenty-four-cent 1869 inverts, which had been discovered in Liverpool in the latter '90's by "a mysterious party" known to Liverpool dealers "only as the Upside-Down Man." He sold it to a small dealer jokingly called "the office boys' friend," who, in turn, sold it for five pounds; a transaction whose memory, in the light of later transfers, was so painful that he could never bear to talk about it. It passed into the hands of William Thorne of New York. He sold it, when he broke up his collection, to a dealer, who handed it over to William Crocker. At the sale of Crocker's collection in December, 1938, a New York dealer bought it by ocean telephone for approximately $11,650 and resold it very neatly to E. Bradley Martin, Jr., of New York, a rising star in philately from what present-day journalese calls the "socialite" class, for $25,000. What memories his name recalls!—that Bradley Martin ball in 1897, for example, a milestone in the social history of Gotham. The present Mr. Martin seems well on his way toward the ownership of the world's most valuable collection. From that same Crocker sale he also bought—with dealers in between making nice profits—a mint block of the 1893 Columbian four-cent error in blue for $6,000, a used specimen of the thirty-cent 1869 invert for $4,000, and a mint copy of the 1901 Pan-American two-cent invert for $3,250.

Incidentally, there are those who believe that his block of the twenty-four-cent 1869 invert will eventually displace that British Guiana 1856 error as the world's most valuable philatelic item. There are not wanting skeptics who point out that all research has failed to find any governmental record or other proof of the origin of that Guiana rarity, and these whispers have undoubtedly injured its market value, probably unjustly.

William Crocker was one of the few rich men apparently too busy to give much time to his so-called hobby, and so did quite a bit of his collecting by wholesale or by proxy. When the Gibbons company bought the first Castle collection of Australians in 1894, Mr. Phillips, its chairman, traveled to America and all the way across it with a bag full of the stamps which he knew Crocker needed. The banker wanted the stamps, but he was just too busy to see Phillips, and so the latter cooled his heels around San Francisco for several days. Finally Crocker said, "Just go through my albums, pick out from your stamps anything that's missing, and I'll buy them." Phillips did so, and when he succeeded in obtaining another audience, he presented his bill, amounting to many thousands of dollars. Crocker at once gave him an order on the cashier for the money.

"But don't you want to see the stamps I've sold you?" asked Phillips. "I've mounted them all separately, so that you can see just what they are."

"I haven't time," said Crocker. "I'm satisfied. I only wish you had mounted them right in the albums where they belong."

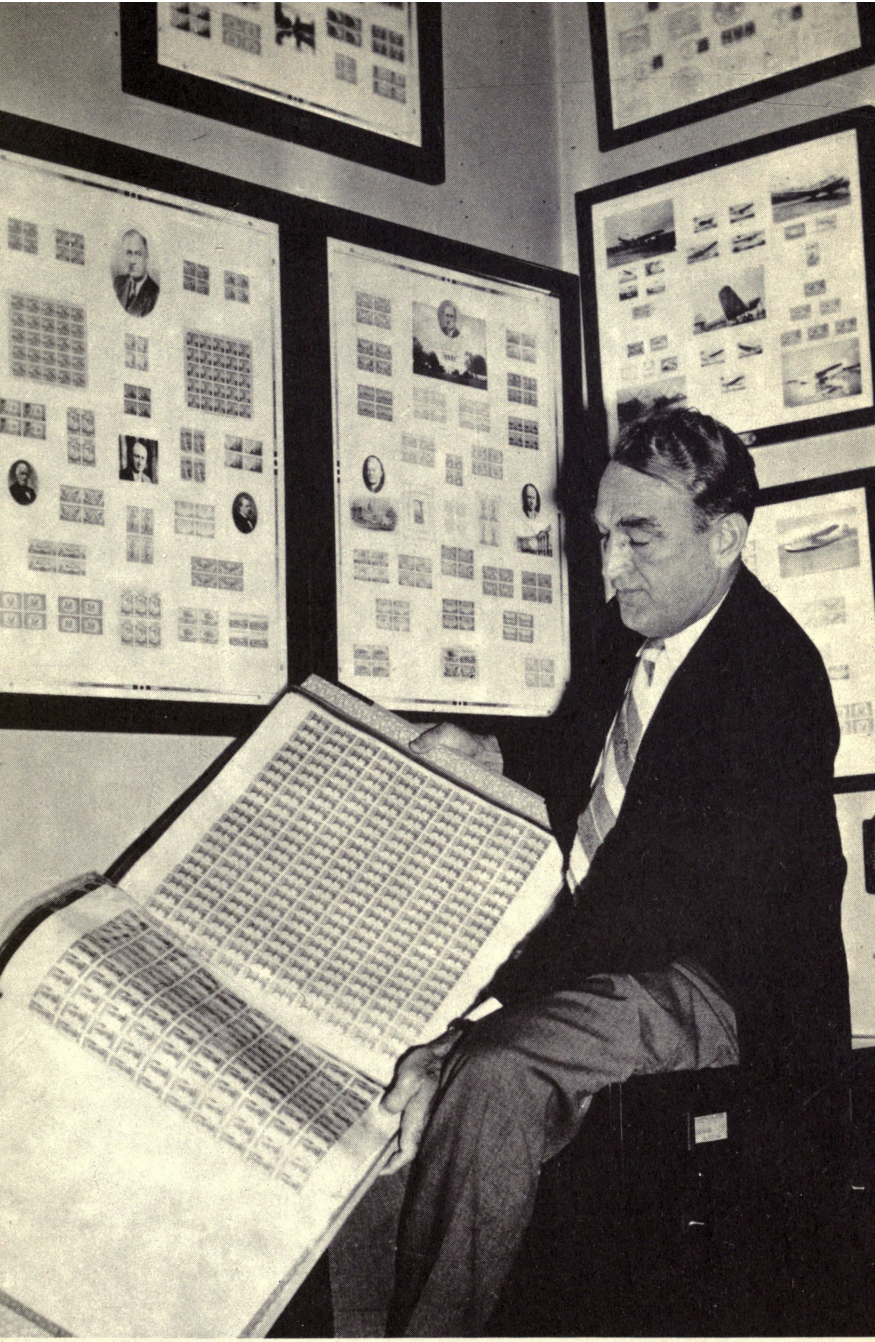
Of all American collectors, none was so different or so magnificent as the late Colonel Edward H. R. Green, son of Mrs. Hetty Green, the world's most famous millionairess

and miser. Her penny-pinching disposition was not inherited by her son; he saw money as something to have fun with—not in the way of riotous living; he was no playboy—but mostly with hobbies. And with all his spending, he was no Coal-Oil Johnny; his fortune was much larger when he died than when he inherited it.

He was middle-aged before he suddenly decided that he would become an addict to philately. There are two stories told of his beginning. One is that he went into a large uptown stamp house in New York and asked for a "collection of stamps." A clerk showed him an envelope containing possibly two hundred mixed. He waved that aside impatiently. "I want a real collection," he said.

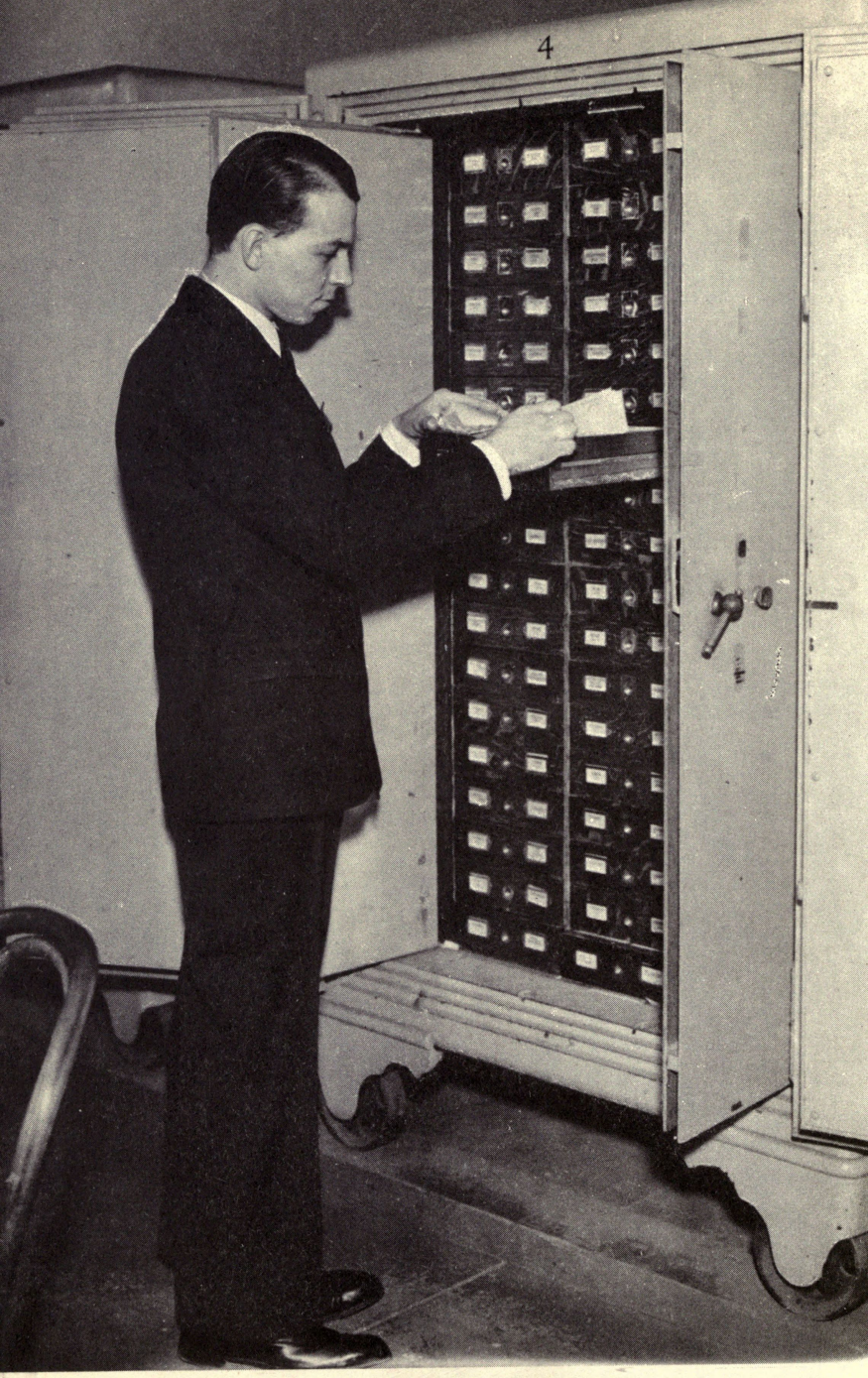
The clerks weren't bright enough to discover who he was, though the wealthy giant with the round face and lame leg had been pictured and written about often enough, goodness knows. So they went on showing him, one after another, packets of steadily increasing size—five hundred, a thousand, and finally perhaps five thousand stamps, with a top price of perhaps fifty or a hundred dollars. The customer was increasingly indignant. They didn't seem to understand him at all. He knew that a real stamp collection cost thousands of dollars, and they were offering him junk. He finally stumped out of the place in disgust and never went back.

Another story is that he went into one of the uptown shops and bought a packet of a thousand stamps and an album, which he said was for the son of his laundryman. A day or two later he came back, asked to see the manager; said that he'd become interested in philately after looking over those stamps and decided to begin collecting. Had they a good lot for him to begin on? They had; another man's collection in seven or eight albums which had been



Wide World Photos

Senator James M. Mead of New York mounts his stamp collection in various ways.



Wide World Photos

Bonnet opens a drawer in a row of specially built safes in the

turned over to the dealer to be sold. After some discussion, the colonel handed over thirty-one thousand-dollar bills in payment for the collection, and took it away with him. Both these stories are probably founded on fact.

Later Colonel Green discovered Nassau Street where, in the next few years, his money gilded the frame of life for several favored merchants, and the uptown shops saw little of him.

The colonel was no fool; once he got the hang of things he studied philately, and soon knew his way about the labyrinth. He found that the quickest way to build up a collection was to buy other men's collections of which it is calculated that he bought, all told, about a hundred and twenty. He was also apt to give a dealer a blanket order to buy every specimen of certain stamps—Cape of Good Hope triangles, for example—that he could lay hands on. He very nearly cornered the market on the United States stamps that were overprinted for Guam shortly after our acquisition of it. He probably had the greatest number of duplicates of any collector in history. Along about 1919-21 when his enthusiasm was at its height, he would close his desk in the old Seaboard National Bank Building shortly after three P.M., call his chauffeur and say, "Now, George, let's go over to Nassau Street." He had at various times several dealers with whom he spent much money, but these were casually selected; and this brings up one of the favorite stories of the Street.

Ordinarily a good-natured man, the colonel sometimes took quick offense at a thoughtless remark or action of a dealer and forsook him forever. He was always friendly with policemen, occasionally stopping to talk with them. Once he came out of a stamp shop in some heat and told the traffic cop on a near-by corner that he had been badly

treated in that place. The policeman knew rather less about such business than he knew about the Man in the Moon, though he was vaguely aware that stamps were sold along the street; in fact, a dealer's frame of stamps was visible beside a doorway from where they stood.

"Why don't you try them guys over there?" asked the helpful cop, pointing.

"I will," said Colonel Green; and he made his word good by spending some hundreds of thousands of dollars with that shop in the next two or three years, even sending the head of the firm on one occasion on a damn-the-expense trip to Russia to buy a special collection which cost him about fifty thousand dollars.

There were sometimes two or three dealers at once whose shops were his favorite places of call. At times he didn't bother to tell George which place he wished to visit, and on such occasions George would stop wherever traffic conditions seemed most favorable. A shrewd young clerk in one of the shops—they were all on upper floors—sometimes carried collections bought by Green down to his car, and he cultivated the chauffeur, giving him cigarettes and learning more of the colonel's peculiarities. He also heard that George's schoolboy son was a beginning collector, which gave the clerk an idea. He made up an album of cheap stamps out of his employer's stock, gave it to the chauffeur, and thereafter, George more frequently found it convenient to stop in front of that building.

During those peak years, the number of collections bought by Colonel Green was fantastic. He might buy one of ten albums today, another of twenty-five tomorrow. If a collection had a few stamps in it that he wanted—sometimes only one stamp!—and the dealer showed a slight reluctance, as they naturally came to do—and who wouldn't?

—to break it, the colonel, after chaffering a bit as to price, would finally say, "Oh, wrap it all up." His big, dark-green, seven-passenger Pierce-Arrow car—and how much greener with envy it made other dealers when they saw it standing in front of a certain building!—sometimes drove away with its rear seating space piled so high with wrapped albums that the colonel's round, beaming face could just peer over them. One of the small, folding seats in front of him was arranged so that he could rest that bad leg on it.

How eagerly his regular dealers listened in the late afternoon for the stump, stump of that leg in the hall outside the door! When he entered, he sat down with his side to the dealer's long table, hoisted that and then the other leg to the table, and sat thus, examining the offerings. It was a common thing for him to write a check for from ten to twenty-five thousand dollars for an afternoon's purchases. The biggest single day's check was for $77,000. Another of $72,000 was given in payment for a British American collection, and the deal was put through in fifteen minutes. There was one dealer who, if he spent only three thousand or five thousand dollars, would stamp about the office afterward, cursing him for a damned piker and a tightwad.

This dealer, whose ethics were not of the highest, once had a collection made up and mounted in albums by his two clerks, embodying a lot of good twentieth-century stamps, in which the colonel was particularly interested at the time, and several pounds of goods which had been on hand for a long time. The clerks worked for days on the job. When the albums were made up, they had put in so much cheap stuff that the proprietor raved, "Junk! I wouldn't even show it to him! Why, there isn't even five-thousand dollars' worth of stamps there!"

The clerks contradicted this, pointing out that their

catalogue value was really between seven and eight thousand dollars, and that there were things there which Green particularly needed to fill gaps in his collection. The boss was finally persuaded to take on the deal. The rarest, the best stuff must of course be shown to the customer, to the exclusion of the other, and in such a way as to seem casual, to give the appearance that the collection was all like that. It wouldn't do to put slips of paper in the albums as markers, so a page where the best items occurred was slightly bent or thumb-nailed after the manner of the gambling shark's marked cards, and these albums were placed on top. The dealer would pick up one in the most casual manner and say, "Now, for example," carefully flipping it open at the marked page, and when the colonel had seen a few stamps there, "Now take another album," and there would be some more luscious beauties.

"Whose collection is this?" asked the colonel.

"It's a Russian Grand Duke's," was the yarn. "The Grand Duke—er—Alexandrovitch. Chased out of Russia when the Bolsheviks came in; went broke and all that, you know."

("He couldn't remember that name again to save his soul," muttered one clerk to another in the next room.)

The "collection" was priced at $25,000, and the colonel, after beating the price down to $21,000, said, "Wrap it up," and went away, well pleased with his bargain.

After all, he was having a good time, he could afford it, and who is there to criticize him? He lived in a suite in the old Waldorf-Astoria, but he kept only some of his stamps there. He had a house in Ninetieth Street, which was full almost from cellar to garret with his stamp and coin collections, and there he had a staff of girls sorting, trying in vain to keep ahead of their employer's purchases, which he

hoped "some day" to reassort himself. He bought the magnificent collection of Joseph Leavy, a lifelong specialist in Belgium, which had many re-entries and plate varieties, all carefully described on the pages, with plate positions determined and noted in many cases. Green turned this over to one of the girls, who removed the stamps and remounted most of them in stock albums, sidetracking what she regarded as duplicates and throwing the old album pages away, thus destroying Leavy's priceless life work.

Once he found that he had bought a stamp which had been repaired by having parts of the margins added. In high dudgeon he hurried around to the office of a big optical concern.

"I want a magnifying glass," said he, "that will enlarge a postage stamp to a size four feet square, and with sharp, clear definition."

The company worked for weeks, grinding the lenses and building that device. They charged him $22,000 for it, but that was nothing. The worst annoyance was that when it was delivered to the Ninetieth Street address it was so big that the door frame had to be taken out before they could get it into the house. The colonel had a white porcelain screen built into the wall, and on that he would throw stereopticon enlargements of his stamps for study.

Colonel Green was a frequent attendant at auctions, but didn't bid as recklessly as one might expect, being often outbid by others on single rarities, on which he was apt to display excellent judgment. Plate number blocks intrigued him for some time, and he actually enlisted the aid of the City Hall Post Office in this fad. The booklets of one-, two- and three-cent stamps which we have been buying for years are shipped out to the post offices in boxes; and at this office, clerks would go through the boxes for Green and

sort out every booklet in which plate numbers appeared. At intervals of a few days he would come around and buy the accumulation, paying for them from a wallet full of new money carried in an inside vest pocket. Those who knew him say they never saw him have a soiled bill; if he had to take one in change, he got rid of it as quickly as possible. He is known to have bought as high as twelve hundred dollars' worth of the stamp booklets at once. Then he would pass the evening very happily in his Waldorf suite, pulling the clips out of the books with a pair of small tweezers and laying out about three blocks of four of each plate number for himself. The rest of the stamps he would turn into his own bank, the Seaboard, next morning and get cash on them.

There was always something boyish about the colonel. One afternoon he went into Nassau Street in great glee with an atomizer full of a new and wonderfully volatile liquid which, when sprayed upon a stamp, would bring out the watermark very clearly for a few moments, then evaporate, leaving the stamp theoretically as good as new. He wasn't at all interested in buying stamps that afternoon; just wanted to play with that new gadget. At his order, the annoyed dealers brought forth stamp after stamp for him to spray and watch delightedly as the watermark stood forth and then slowly faded. He didn't buy a dime's worth that day, and the dealers hoped he would never discover another such plaything.

He once commissioned a Nassau Street concern to prepare a great number of album pages for him, beginning with Great Britain and colonies, and allotting only one page to each stamp, on which it alone was to be mounted in blocks, pairs and singles, and with all its varieties. At a top corner of each page was to be lettered the stamp's num-

ber according to Gibbons, Scott and all other cataloguers who might list it. The total cost of the order ran into thousands of dollars. The pages were delivered, and the dealers heard no more of the matter for a while. Finally one of them asked the colonel how he was getting along with the new albums.

"Oh, that idea didn't work out at all," he replied. "In some cases I couldn't get all the varieties and so on onto one page and—in short, it was a mess."

"What did you do with the album pages?" he was asked.

"Threw 'em away!"

Colonel Green is best remembered by many in connection with the famous air-mail bi-color sheet of 1918 in which the airplane is inverted. A Washington stockbroker's clerk named W. T. Robey went to a branch post office in that city on the morning when the stamps were to be issued, but they had no sheets that were well centered. The clerk said a new supply would be in about noon, and when Robey went back with thirty dollars in his pocket, a sheet was handed out to him. At the first glance, he saw that the center vignette was upside down. He asked the clerk if there were any more "like this." There were only three more sheets, and they were all normal. Robey then called the clerk's attention to the invert, and the latter asked him to return it, which Robey of course refused to do. In those honest days, government still considered itself a bit disgraced if it let an inverted or imperforate sheet get outside the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. The clerk therefore rushed to a telephone, called up the postmaster-general's office and gave warning of the error that was afloat. Robey and a fellow clerk dashed about from one branch office to another, trying to find more of the sheets, but in vain. Stamps are printed in sheets of four hundred, so there must

have been at least three other panes of one hundred like Robey's, but they have never appeared. Some gossips believe they are in the government's own stamp collection. Anyhow, the sale of the stamps was halted for two hours in New York and Philadelphia that day while clerks searched for more bad sheets.

Robey at once received a bid of $10,000 for the sheet. He went to New York, but could get no better offer. A man in Philadelphia asked him to stop there on his way home, and when he did so, asked him for an option on the sheet at $15,000, in behalf of a group being formed to buy it. Robey gave the option, and next day had an offer of $18,000 from a Washington dealer, but had to sell to the Philadelphia syndicate, which in turn sold the sheet to Colonel Green for $20,000.

Certain dealers asked the colonel to have compassion on his fellow collectors, and he graciously broke up the sheet, retaining the arrow and number blocks and the cross-line block in the center, as well as a few singles. He sold some singles at $150 each, and some later at $250. A few were lost. At one time thirteen copies, mostly with straight edge, blew off or fell off his desk, were swept up by a cleaner and destroyed. And once when he was away from home and Mrs. Green wished to send him a letter by air mail, she found one of those inverts on his desk and, not knowing its value, stuck it on the letter. Her husband quickly discovered it, peeled it off and thereafter wore it in a pendant on his watch chain. If still in existence, it is the only used specimen of that rarity!

That was undoubtedly the highest postage ever paid on a single letter. As an indication of what real stamp rarities will do for their owners, a single copy of that stamp was

bought by Senator Frelinghuysen in 1932 for $2,750, and in 1939 one was sold at the auction of Stephen D. Brown's collection for $4,100!

The twenty copies retained by Colonel Green were, so it is reported, in the cabin of his yacht when it sank in New Haven harbor. They were recovered, but in what condition—ah, that is a secret. Some of his other fine stamps were along with them. The colonel became a radio enthusiast some time after that, built his own broadcasting station at Round Hill, Massachusetts, and lost his interest in stamps. Shortly before his death in 1937 he was rousing from his several years' coldness and beginning to putter with his collection again, but his death cut short all the dealers' hopes. As items in his thirty-six-million-dollar estate, his stamps were appraised at $1,298,444 and his coins at $1,240,300.

As this chapter is written, those stamps have not yet been sold, and all sorts of rumors may be heard. Did those airmail inverts sink with the yacht, get wet and lose their gum? If so, according to prevailing standards, that greatly reduces their value—though there are mutterings of rebellion among collectors whose experience with unused stamps has been so unhappy—sticking to whatever is near them in damp weather, curling up and cracking in dry—that they threaten to wash the gum off all their mint stamps and let those cavil who will. The late William E. Hawkins, who had one of the greatest collections of unused nineteenth-century in existence—it used to be told of him that he had only one used stamp, a ten-cent 1847 bisect on an envelope, and that was given to him—had also a cottage on the New Jersey coast, and there some of his fine mint sheets and blocks, dampened by the salt sea fogs,

stuck to album pages and to each other so vexingly that Hawkins became disgusted and ceased collecting.

"O hateful error, Melancholy's child!" cries Messala in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar;* and sixty years ago, there were many who agreed with him. P. M. Wolsieffer, a veteran dealer, now dead, used to tell of how he tried to sell a nice, well-centered twenty-four-cent 1869 to L. W. Durbin, a prominent dealer of the day, but the latter refused it. "Why?" asked Wolsieffer, then a boy. "Because," replied Durbin, "the printer has made a mistake and printed the picture *upside down.*" So young Wolsieffer traded the stamp to another boy for a ten-pfennig German. The modern collector doesn't agree with Messala. To him, the error is the whipped cream of philately.

The other most famous of our twentieth-century errors was the two-cent of the two-color Pan-American series, on which the train was inverted. There was a one-cent invert also, but at least seven sheets of this got into circulation. There seems to have been only one sheet of the two-cent, and this was bought by Frederick W. Davis, employee of a linotype company in Brooklyn. He presently began peddling a few of the stamps on Nassau Street at five dollars each, but dealers were a little afraid of them, and one who bought a block of four for twenty dollars became frightened and gladly sold it the same day at what it cost him. How he would like to have it now! To hear Davis's side of the story, one should read his pamphlet, "How I Made a Fortune on the Pan-American Stamps." The "fortune," according to his own story, was three-hundred dollars; but he lists some of the things he bought with the money—"highly polished oak dining table at Loeser's (recently marked down from $15 to $10.50) and four beautiful oak dining chairs to match at Abraham & Straus's, one with

side arms and all made by Sykes of Buffalo for the round sum of $13 (regular price $15)"—they were only part of the spoil. Finally, he wrote an article for the Brooklyn *Eagle*, the check for which paid for a trip to Buffalo "on the famous Heffley excursion." It is all delightful reading.

BEDTIME STORIES

CHAPTER TEN

IN 1886 the New York *World* was publishing every day a bit of mill-end fiction, along with its news and editorials. In the issue of May fifth there was a thrilling story about the narrow escape of Dick Somethingorother from losing his ancestral home, just as he had begun hankering to get married. The place was mortgaged right up to the ridge-pole, no less than a thousand dollars' incumbrance, and the skinflint who held the mortgage wouldn't grant another day's time, not even if Dick gave him his right eye. Sadly, Dick and his faithful sweetheart were going through some of his effects which would have to be removed or thrown away. They opened an old trunk in the attic; nothing of value there, said Dick—just some old letters and such. But his girl, who was a stamp collector, suddenly uttered a piercing cry of joy at sight of a letter from Brattleboro, Vermont, away back in eighteen-forty-something, and with a queer little label on it. Dick didn't know what it was, but she did. Here were several more from New Haven which excited her, several from St. Louis.

Dick of course thought she was slightly gaga; but she explained to him that when Congress authorized stamps in 1845 but forgot to have any printed, the postmasters at

New York, Baltimore, Alexandria, Providence, New Haven, Annapolis, Millbury, Massachusetts and some other towns made stamps of their own, which were used until the government's first stamps came out in '47; and these were now great rarities. Well, sir, believe it or not, they took those letters down to a stamp dealer in New York and got a cool $1,350 for them (think how much more they could have realized if they had held onto them for forty years!), paid off the mortgage and lived happily ever after.

This motif has been worked into many forms, with and without stamps. Ben Ames Williams retold it with a comic twist in the *Saturday Evening Post* only three or four years ago. The leading character, a shiftless but likable Down East idler, whom luck always rescues from his troubles, is about to be turned out of his old home with his wife when he finds a batch of Hawaiian Missionaries in the attic, etc., etc.

There are other stories resembling these which are vouched for as fact rather than fiction. There is the one, for example, about the little old lady in London, a widow for many years, living in a furnished room in poorer and poorer parts of town until matters were so desperate that she just didn't know how she was going to pay the rent another week or get bread to eat. She seemed to have sold everything of value she had, but at last she thought of something else, though it didn't seem much of a prospect. Her husband—silly boy!—had collected postage stamps, and she still had his collection sentimentally stowed away. She shed a few tears at the thought of parting with these little tokens which he loved so much and which seemed to bring back his own dear self so brightly, but she must get a few shillings or pennies out of them if she could. So she put on

her battered little hat and risked a coin on the Tube, and went timidly into a stamp dealer's shop in the Strand.

"I wonder if you would care to buy a few stamps which I have here," she said to a clerk. "They were my husband's. . . . He has been dead for many years. . . . Only my need for money has induced me to sell them. . . ."

The clerk turned over a few pages, looked in a startled way at the little old lady in her threadbare dress, flipped over another page or two, and asked if he might show the albums to the proprietor in his office. He took them into the room back of the shop, and in five minutes reappeared again.

"Will you step this way, please, madam?" he asked.

The proprietor, magnifying glass in hand and an album open before him, rose, bowed and begged her to be seated. He asked a few questions, and then, clearing his throat, he said, "Madam, I couldn't think of making you an offer for this collection. It would be unfair to you; it is too valuable. But with your permission, I should like to arrange to have it sold at auction."

He went on to explain the auction machinery, the commissions expected and so on. "In the meantime," he concluded, "I shall be glad to make you an advance of—well, shall we say three-hundred pounds? . . . John! Get a glass of water—quick!"

They laid her on a sofa and moistened her brow and slapped her wrists in a masculinely awkward way, and presently the old lady was able to sit up and say she felt better now, and she couldn't imagine what was the matter with her. And in a quarter-hour she was on her way in a cab toward a bank with some real cash in her pocket for immediate needs and a—no, not a check—a cheque; let's preserve the atmosphere—which was to launch her on a new

era of comfort and security. For they say that when those stamps were put up at auction, they brought more than twenty-five thousand dollars.

A pleasant story, that, and one that deserves to be true, as it may very well be. Anyhow, it makes a good contrast to an incident which took place in New York thirty years ago. A plasterer who was an amateur stamp collector came to the shop of Bogert & Durbin one day in great excitement. He had been doing a job in the home of an old lady named Kennedy on lower Fifth Avenue, just above Washington Square. In the basement he had seen a quantity of old letters, the correspondence of her husband, long since dead. Many of them were from foreign countries—Canada especially—and there were some fine stamps among them; he named a few which he had seen. He had spoken to the lady about the matter, but he needed someone with cash to back him up. Would they—but of course they would!

But when he returned to the house, he found that disaster had happened in his absence. Aroused by the suggestion that she had valuable stamps in her home, the lady decided to act for herself. A mere plasterer wouldn't know what he was talking about, and even if he did, he probably wouldn't pay her much for the stamps. So, instead of proceeding slowly and cautiously, she just called up a dealer—how she obtained his name we don't know, but he's been dead for many years, and it doesn't matter; he hotfooted it up to the house, gave a hasty look, offered her fifty dollars for the lot, closed the deal and got the letters out of the house at once. She thought she had made a pretty nice trade until she saw the plasterer again. He had been intending to deal more fairly with her; it had never occurred to him that she would sell out everything for fifty dollars.

"I could have given you that much myself, out of my own pocket," he told her. "You had hundreds, maybe thousands of dollars' worth of stamps on those letters." It developed that besides hundreds of stampless covers, there was at least one Canada twelvepence—its catalogue price today is fifteen hundred dollars—more than a hundred of the Canada sixpence, some hundreds of U. S. 1847's, the English tuppence 1840, sometimes in strips of six, many old Trinidad lithographs and other things too painful to mention, the total value running well up into the thousands.

There was another fifty-dollar buy still earlier which turned out still better. The janitor of the old Mills building at 15 Broad Street in New York told a Nassau Street dealer one day in the '90's that there was a loft in the building where there were many old papers and envelopes with stamps on them. Would the dealer be willing to clean out the accumulation and give him, the janitor, a little tip of—this very hesitatingly—say, fifty dollars? The dealer went to the loft, looked for about three minutes, handed fifty dollars to the janitor and ordered a truck to move the stuff to a warehouse. The man who told us this story said that one of the partners in the stamp firm told him in 1902 that they had already sold $25,000 worth of stamps out of this lot and had enough left to keep the market interested for the next thirty years. Whether this is strictly true or not, the fact is that many thousands of dollars came from that small investment. This, like many other finds of those days, was rich in U. S. 1847's, all on original covers, of course, and many other items valuable even then, but far more so now.

There were two finds of the St. Louis postmaster stamps which were spectacular, each in its own way. In 1895 a Negro janitor named Bob in the Court House in Louisville,

Ky., was ordered to destroy a lot of old papers which had been lying in a corner of the basement since before anybody could remember. Bob found some letters having queer labels on them—pictures of a couple of bears holding up a circular sign of some sort. They didn't look like real stamps, but they might be foreign, for all he knew, and Bob was vaguely aware that there were slightly demented white folks who collected such things. Finally, he needed a little pocket money—say, fo' bits—for a particular purpose. He picked all of the stamps he could find from the waste, and not knowing how to go about marketing them, offered them to two white employees, the jail turnkey and another fellow, who, after some haggling, bought them at Bob's price, fifty cents.

They in turn sold the stamps to a saloon keeper who was just a little smarter than they were for five dollars, and were jubilant over their thousand per cent profit. If they learned from the papers that just three of the 137 stamps in that lot, namely, the five-, ten- and twenty-cent St. Louis, all on one cover, were sold not long afterward for $4,000, they must have had narrow escapes from apoplexy. What the saloon keeper made off the deal as he parceled them out to stamp dealers we do not know, but the rumor is that he rapidly grew wiser as the deal progressed, and before long, was sneering at offers of $500 for good copies of the twenty-center. C. H. Mekeel, St. Louis dealer, quickly heard of the find, rushed over to Louisville, and succeeded in buying up the whole lot. Meanwhile, when news of the bonanza began to drift around Louisville, someone claimed to remember that some of that old paper from the basement had been used to fill in under a new concrete pavement laid around the Court House not long

before, and there were enthusiasts who wanted to tear up the pavement.

There were seventy-five of the five-cent stamps in that lot, forty-six of the tens and sixteen of the twenty-cent. The integrity of the twenty-center had never been thoroughly established until that moment. Many copies of the five and ten were known, but only four copies of the twenty had been found, and many authorities did not believe in it. J. B. Moens, Belgian pundit, had declared only three years before, "The twenty-cents has never existed; it is a faked five-cents." The true story, as now known, is that the plate at first comprised six stamps, three fives and three tens, in two vertical columns. The postmaster decided that a twenty-cent stamp was needed, but didn't want to pay for a new plate. So an engraver battered up two of the fives from the back of the plate with a hammer, then smoothed the surface and engraved a "20" thereon, making a pretty crude job. No wonder the wiseacres distrusted it.

The second great St. Louis find occurred in 1912, when an old banking concern in Philadelphia cleared out a vast accumulation of letters and papers going back as far as the eighteenth century and sold them to a junk-paper warehouse. Now, just across the street there was a little corner tobacco shop; its proprietor knew stamps and had somehow learned of the great accumulation of old papers in the banking house. He had tried to get permission to go through them and buy what he found valuable there, but in vain. Those bankers, like the old Nassau Street law firm, were too wise and too busy to be bothered with nuts like that. Years passed, and one day the tobacconist saw with horrified eyes a truck marked "Hemingway Paper Stock Company" back up to a side door and begin to load up with bundles of old papers. It was the noon hour; he was

alone in the shop—had no one with whom to leave the business if he went over there to see about the matter. And so finally the truck drove off, and with it a fortune. So limited was the vision of the little shopkeeper that it never occurred to him that he might just lock up the store and go out and get possession of that load of paper somehow. Had he followed the truck to the warehouse and said to the manager, "I'm a stamp collector, and I believe there are some old stamps in that stuff that I'd like to have," he might have bought the truckload for fifty or seventy-five dollars. But for fear of losing the sale of two or three cigars and a package of Bull Durham, he tossed away a chance to acquire stamps and letters which were estimated to be worth a hundred-thousand dollars. And we wonder what the bankers thought when they heard that!

Hemingway, the paper man, was not a philatelist, and might have missed finding the stamps had he not noticed, as the paper was dumped out, some eighteenth-century letters which excited his curiosity. He began looking further, and found autograph letters of Robert Morris, Anthony Wayne, Benedict Arnold and other notables, account books of Chaloner and White, who were provisioners to the Continental Army, and he also found stamps such as he had never seen or heard of before. To shorten the story, there were not only many stampless covers and early United States stamps, but there were twenty of the twenty-cent St. Louis, seventy-nine of the ten-cent and six of the five-cent; there were a ten and a twenty together on one cover; a pair of the twenty, seven pairs of the ten, and three strips of three of the ten.

The late Herman Toaspern, New York dealer, fondly remembered by collectors as "Toasty"—how many remember when Walter Winchell's column announced in 1934

that "Herman Toaspern, famous postage-stamp expert, will Little-Church it with an upstate marm named Doris Burdett?"—well, Toasty, as might be expected, knew better how to chase and throttle opportunity. A junk-paper dealer, one who had not studied the philatelic phase of his business, cleaned out the accumulation of a concern in downtown New York some years ago, but someone around the office, attracted by the appearance of an old stamp and knowing nothing about its value, picked it out of the mess and showed it to Toaspern the next time he saw him. Before you could say "philately," Toasty was at that company's office, demanding the name of the paper dealer; thence he rushed to the Italian's little warehouse on the East River, and learned that those particular papers were in some bales which he had shipped to a paper mill at Ogdensburg, New York, several days before.

Toaspern did not despair. Knowing that a freight shipment travels at a very leisurely pace, he caught the next train for far northern New York, carrying scarcely more than a toothbrush; leaped into a taxicab at the Ogdensburg station and authorized the driver to break the law in reaching the mill. He arrived with his heart in his mouth, and was enormously relieved to find the shipment in a car standing on a siding, not yet unloaded. The mill manager was not surprised at his caller's business; he had seen crazy stamp-hounds before. But he was a kindly soul. At Toaspern's question, he casually penciled a few figures on a pad.

"Oh, say fifty dollars," he replied.

Toasty handed over the money blithesomely. He found more than five-thousand dollars' worth of stamps in that batch of paper.

Eustace Powers, another veteran New York stampist who

died recently, once made a somewhat similar mad dash. One morning he received a batch of about a thousand stamps, all U. S. old-timers, from a man in New Orleans, who asked him to quote a price on them. At lunch that day, he heard a Nassau Street dealer remark that he had just received a thousand nice old stamps from New Orleans. In mid-afternoon he heard of another thousand which had come to town. There was no dodging the fact that someone in New Orleans had found a gold mine and was sending out samples of the ore. The result was that that night Powers lay tossing in a sleeper berth on a train pounding southward. At New Orleans he found that the man Meyers who had sent the samples to him was a restaurant keeper, and the stamps came from a friend of his named Bill. "Bill's got a barn full of the stuff," said Meyers. Sure enough, the barn was nearly full of boxes of old letters, going back to ante-stamp days. A compromise price of eleven-hundred dollars for the lot was finally reached, but the stamps panned out several times that much.

Attorney Harold D. Watson can make one's mouth water with stories of the finds that were possible forty or fifty years ago, when there were hundreds of old offices in our larger cities still unransacked by the collecting horde. Already a collector of long standing, when he became a clerk in a law office in 1893, Mr. Watson says, "the really bright days began." He had an eye on every old law office in New York, many people gave him tips, and when old papers were cleared away, he was right on the spot. He recalls finding three $200 revenue stamps in one box of letters and documents. When the City Court was moved from one building to another about 1896, the clerk who was ordered to cull out and destroy old papers agreed, for a modest sum, to save the stamps for the fledgling

lawyer. He got two suit-cases full from that lot, and was always "doing a land-office business in disposing of the duplicates."

One morning in 1894, when he was in law school, he was passing the office door of Hamilton Odell, a famous old lawyer and referee, and saw several big hampers of old papers in the hall. "Now, listen!" he said to the janitor who was about to move them, "there's a landing up on those stairs to the roof that nobody uses. What about pouring all this stuff out there? I've got to go through it. I'll give you three dollars and put the paper back in the baskets."

"Don't bother puttin' it back," grinned the man. "For three dollars I'd murder me grandmother. Jist lave it on the flure." If he had had any idea of the values that the youngster was to find in that trash—the 1847's, the 1851's, the New York postmasters and other fine items—he might have asked more than three dollars and the refilling of the baskets. Young Watson missed all his classes in law school that day, but the haul was worth it.

In those days, too, small-town and village post offices had many out-of-date stamps in their stocks which were treasures to the collector. Along in the '90's R. R. Bogert sent a dollar each at one time and another to some hundreds of postmasters asking each to send in return a sample of every stamp he had on hand. Frequently, samples worth considerably more than face value would come back, and then Bogert would buy all the postmaster had of that item. As an instance, he found in one office a two-cent newspaper wrapper of a certain die which was currently worth ten dollars, and was able to buy a hundred more of them; a thousand dollars' worth for two dollars!

Newbold, the stamp hunter mentioned in an earlier

chapter, while touring the country "selling furs," always canvassed the post offices. At one place a crabbed old postmaster grumblingly revealed to his astonished eyes the gorgeous 1869 series, up to and including the thirty-cent; one version has it that even the ninety-cent was there, though some cynics consider this improbable. Newbold forgot for a moment that he was in a post office and not a stamp shop.

"What'll you take for them?" he asked.

The old man glared in amazement. "Face value, of course!" he barked. "Don't think I'm goin' to sell 'em at a discount, do ye, jest because they're a few years old?"

Newbold humbly bought all he had.

There was an occasional country postmaster in those days who didn't know the rules, and was a great help to collectors. Those big, beautiful newspaper and periodical stamps of 1875-95, theoretically, no collector could own in mint condition, because their sale to persons other than publishers for use on shipments was sternly forbidden. But this writer can testify, and has the stamps to prove it, that in his early youth, a post-office clerk once sold him a set of them, going as high as he had money to pay for. Nor are postage-due stamps supposed to appear in albums in unused condition, for they are not to be sold to the public at all; and yet quantities of them have been bought in minor post offices not so very long ago. A collector in 1897 reported buying postage-dues at a hamlet in Washington "with four houses and fourteen population," and as he was turning away, the postmaster said, "Say, I've got some other stamps here maybe you'd like. They've got a Siwash on 'em, and they're different from anything I ever see"; and with that, he brought forth the big periodicals. The absurdity of stocking such an office with these stamps need

not be dwelt upon. The collector bought all of them that he had money to pay for, and said he wished he could buy more.

"Take all you want," said the postmaster. "I'll trust you for 'em." Another village postmaster, at the instance of a collector, sent a large order in to Washington for periodicals, including some high values, and when the Department wrote back, inquiring what he wanted with such big stamps, he learned for the first time of the rules regarding them. Ah, well; we shall never see days like those again.

Harry M. Konwiser told us the curious story of a stamp find which he had from a dealer in Newark, New Jersey, who played the part of the doormat in the episode. "Somewhere in this country," said the dealer, "there is a chap who owns a sheet of the City and Suburban Telegraph stamps which were actually kidded away from me. You know the item; little oval design, issued in the '70's. There were one-, two- and three-cent denominations, and they are priced today at from forty to seventy-five dollars each, or a hundred and sixty-five for the three singles. The stamps were lithographed in sheets of sixty, imperforate, in six vertical rows of ten each, in this order; two-cent, one-cent, one-cent, two-cent, three-cent."

He went on to say that one day in 1919 two boys came into his shop with a sheet of stamps which they had found on a city trash dump on the "meadows"—the great tidal marshes lying between Newark and Jersey City. The sheet was a bit soiled, but only slightly rumpled from its rough experience in an ash wagon. The dealer looked at it and decided that it was a reprint. But just because some people will buy reprints, he offered the boys fifty cents for it, which they seemed to think quite adequate.

A customer who was in the shop at the time began to

chaff the dealer for having given even fifty cents for the thing. At this moment a Newark attorney and collector entered, looked at the sheet, agreed with the dealer that it was a reprint, but said he was willing to pay a half dollar for it, just as a curiosity, and rescue the dealer from his bad trade. Influenced by his friend's ridicule, the dealer accepted the offer.

A few days later a collector browsing in the shop remarked to the merchant, "Mr. Replevin"—as we may call the lawyer—"won't be in to see you in quite some time, I fancy."

"Why not?"

"Because that sheet of telegraph stamps you sold him for half a dollar is in an auctioneer's hands in New York now, and it'll be on sale soon."

Sure enough, a few weeks later, a sheet like that was auctioned at $925. The dealer called at the attorney's office, but received only evasive answers. He engaged a lawyer of his own, who threatened suit, and who learned that the sheet had been sold ostensibly as the property of another collector who acted as the other attorney's dummy; that the lawyer himself had actually received the check for $925 less commission. The dealer was bent on testing his rights in the courts, but that was very shortly after the World War, both he and the attorney were of German ancestry and members of the same German club, and other club members advised him to forget the matter, as Germans were too unpopular at the moment to start airing their troubles in public.

A few years ago, the Bank for Savings in New York was gathering up some old papers and sending them to a storage house. A Holmes guard had been engaged to watch the job; and here is an instance of the universality, the

democracy of stamp collecting. That guard was a collector, and as the papers were handled, his eyes followed longingly the occasional old stamp which he saw on letters and documents. Suddenly he sighted two which he could not let pass. They bore stamps of the United States City Despatch Post, a semi-official local letter delivery concern which operated in conjunction with the New York post office before government delivery of letters began, and which issued the first adhesive stamps in the western hemisphere. The letters were addressed to the elegant Philip Hone, once mayor of New York, and president of the Bank for Savings in the 1840's. The guard took them to the present head of the bank and said, "May I have these?"

The president found it difficult to answer. "These of course are just the sort of things we should like to keep ourselves," said he. But after a moment's thought, "Here's what we'll do; we'll keep one and give you the other, for calling it to our attention. How's that?"

The guard thought it was not so bad, considering . . . The letter he got was really a circular, soliciting business from Hone for the Despatch, remarking that "The Proprietors are fully impressed with the conviction that punctuality alone can secure confidence, if their arrangements are such as to place it beyond doubt." It was mailed within a month after the first issuance of that first adhesive stamp on the continent, and it would probably have been lost to philately if a Holmes guard had not been a stamp collector. The letter is now in the collection of Walter P. Chrysler, Jr.

There are many other stories that might be told; one, for example, of the rumor of a batch of New York postmaster stamps in Beacon, New York, up the Hudson among the mountains; but in what or whose house? One

New York dealer went up there and searched the town, as he thought, but couldn't find them, and another later went up and discovered them in the back of an old desk. Some philatelists say, with the old western prospectors, "Stamps are where you find 'em," meaning in reverse that they're not always where you expect to find them. Harry Konwiser, for example, had the perfectly sound and logical notion that the basement of that big old red-brick headquarters of the American Bible Society in New York, erected in 1853, ought to be simply another Golconda for stamps. The Society had existed nearly forty years before that, and probably brought its older records over to the new building when it was put into use. There should be Hawaiian missionary stamps there by the dozen. So Mr. Konwiser procured permission, went down there and toiled in that gloomy vault for days on end, swallowed enough dust to replace all that blown off the Dust Bowl, and found nothing of consequence. Somebody had perhaps been there before him; and furthermore, it appeared that those parsimonious missionaries in Hawaii had deadheaded all their letters to the Society by the hands of kindly ship captains.

Elliott Perry, who claims to be the unluckiest fellow alive, once went from New York down to Salisbury, North Carolina, to search the attic of the former home of an old newspaper editor and publisher and Confederate soldier, which was reported to be rich in treasure. The house was then inhabited by the sister of the departed editor, and when Perry and his guide entered, the first thing they saw in the hall was a portrait of the brother in uniform on an easel draped with the Confederate flag and bearing the legend, "Lest We Forget." Mr. Perry, being from Massachusetts, was of course to the old lady—who was totally and acidly unreconstructed—a damyankee of the lowest

type; and when he had sweated through several broiling summer days in that attic without finding anything, she was probably of opinion that he got just what was coming to him. Worse still, Elliott once went all the way to California in behalf of Senator Ackerman, on a hot tip that an old mining company office should be full of Gold Rush gems, but again found nothing.

But there are horror stories worse than these. Many of them used to be told back in the '90's. There was the one about the young amateur collector who procured the privilege of going through some old letters, with results only so-so. There was one item which should have been a good one—a ten-cent U. S. 1847; but to his disgust, the sender of the letter had cut it in two diagonally—why, he couldn't imagine—and stuck it on that way. He left it as it was; but a few days later he discovered from a catalogue that a stamp cut like that was a legitimate and valuable item, priced at forty dollars. He rushed back to the house, but found that the lady who owned the old letters, her interest stirred by his search, had decided to collect stamps herself, had soaked that split ten-center off the envelope to mount in her album, and burned the envelope!

Another story current fifty years ago was that of a New Englander, not a collector, who heard for the first time of those Brattleboro provisional stamps and their value to collectors. Then he remembered that his wife had been a Brattleboro girl and he had been courting her around 1845. . . . He hurried to an old trunk in a closet, where he still kept her love letters. Sure enough, no less than twenty of them carried the Brattleboro stamp. Why, here was riches! He took them downstairs, letters and all, and put them on the sitting-room mantel while he went out to the barn and woodshed to do some chores. When he came back, he

would remove the letters from the covers, he and his wife would have a good laugh over them, and then he would take the envelopes down town and mail them to Boston, and receive a check for, maybe, two thousand dollars.

But while he was in the back yard, his wife came in from a neighbor's house, found the letters on the mantel and began looking over them; and as she did so, she began to blush. Nobody could have made her believe that she had ever been so silly. Why, these things were just mush! She couldn't conceive why her husband had brought them downstairs, but there was one thing certain; she wasn't going to let him read them aloud and make fun of her about them. So she just gathered them up, envelopes and all, and laid them on the coals in the grate. What her husband said when he came in from the woodshed is not recorded.

GOVERNMENTAL FIVE-AND-TENS

CHAPTER ELEVEN

IT WAS in 1890 that the word "commemorative" appeared in postal service. In that year Great Britain issued a stamp to mark the fiftieth anniversary of penny postage. Since that time, "commemorative" has covered a prodigious deal of governmental Woolworthing; and some countries go ever farther and make a racket of it. The increasingly gorgeous pictorial stamps which have been pouring forth in an increasing flood during the present century for a long time posed as commemoratives, but many of them have long since ceased to make even that pretense, and have become just little pictures sold at anywhere from fifteen thousand to seventy thousand per cent profit. And yet they have their uses, and they give pleasure to many people.

Remember that although most of the early stamps carried portraits or mere conventional or heraldic designs, there were pictorials as early as 1850—though with never an idea of selling them to collectors, because there weren't any collectors. The crudely engraved New South Wales series of that year, now among the dearest of treasures to many a collector's heart under the name of "Sydney Views," carried pictures which a critic of later years described as "three houses in a row, and four people in the

foreground sitting for their photographs, one of them plainly suffering from colic."

A few other countries used pictures—ships, scenery, a locomotive or two, the animals and fish of Canada and Newfoundland—in the next two decades, but not until 1869 did the United States go on a little spree into pictorials; and it is only necessary to read the newspapers to learn how undignified, even rough a proceeding this was considered to be. These stamps were of novel shape—square—some of them printed in two colors, an unheard-of thing in this country—and only three out of ten had portraits of our great men on them, as old precedent decreed—which rubbed the fur of not a few conservative editors and citizens the wrong way; they saw no reason for change. Of the three-cent blue with a locomotive on it, editors declared that it was neither historical, national nor beautiful, and only showed that some engraver had got a good contract. One editor was of opinion that the railway scene was a delicate hint as to "how some Congressmen make their money." "Let the Post Office folks give us back our old head of Washington," was a typical demand. Even the *American Journal of Philately* declared that the shield and flags on the thirty-cent blue and carmine was "the meanest looking stamp we have ever seen, reminds us more of a bunch of rags hung out of a junk store than anything else."

The three-center, being the one most commonly used for postage, came in for the worst slamming: "The present miserable experiment in blue," the New York *Herald* called it. Editor Bennett went on:

> It is about time that some definite form and design of postage stamp should be adopted, so that people may know to a certainty what mucilaged square of

> paper will carry a letter to its destination and what will not. . . . Can it be that the spirit of jobbery so prevails in our Post Office Department that we must have a new design every six months or thereabouts?

"Every six months" was just literary license, for we hadn't had a really new stamp design in seven years; not since that oversize Jackson head of 1862. The criticism was so bitter, however, that not for twenty-four years thereafter did the government venture to depict anything but deceased political and military heroes on our stamps; an interesting commentary on the change that has taken place in our attitude. No doubt there were many young collectors then who would have been glad to have new and colorful issues, but the government just couldn't afford to flout the higher strata of public opinion.

But in the meantime other countries, not to mention the engravers and lithographers, had discovered the philatelist, and were not only beginning to issue new stamps more and more frequently, but were obligingly reprinting old ones for his benefit. As early as 1862 an engraver advertised in the *Stamp Collector's Magazine* of London:

> NICARAGUAN STAMP.—Will be ready in a week. A beautiful proof of the Nicaraguan stamp (equal to the original) will be sent for 13 postage stamps. Only 75 proofs of this will be taken; each proof will be numbered, and then the block burnt. An early application is really necessary, 25 copies being already sold.

Publicists even then were prompt in pointing out that such proofs were little better than forgeries; that once in the hands of a collector, there was nothing to prevent his palming them off as stamps which had actually been sold

through a post-office window, but never stuck on a letter. Non-collectors were unable to understand the delicate distinction propounded, and sneered at it, as they do yet.

Thereafter, small governments began reprinting obsolete issues of stamps from old plates, and when a new issue was designed, selling the remainders—sometimes large—of the old issues as unused specimens. When a Central or South American government was overthrown, as happened frequently, new stamps were of course called for, and the remainder of the old stock was thrown on the philatelic market. Not only that, but some governments became so depraved that they engraved new dies of their old series, if the old dies had been lost. The first stamp of the Fiji Islands, printed in a newspaper office and frankly bearing its name, "Fiji Times Express," was twice thereafter reprinted from type similarly set. This is the sort of thing that governments used to call "official imitation," "reprints," or "proofs"; but honest philatelists called them little better than counterfeits. Jassy, Roumania, was one of the most barefaced centers of such forgery. Officials there, finding a good market for the rare first Roumanian issue of July, 1858, obligingly produced at different times three imitations—all varying in slight degree—of the 54, 81, and 108 paras, which they sold as genuine. Many had been sold before the fraud was discovered and advertised in the 1870's.

A collector, writing to the *American Journal of Philately* in 1868, said that of an order of forty stamps just received from a dealer, twenty-three were facsimiles or proofs—a sad commentary on the state of the market at that time. In 1875 the *American Journal of Philately* published its "Roll of Dishonor":

Moldavia counterfeited the first two issues of its postage stamps to swindle collectors.

Hanover reprinted its stamps to turn an honest penny.

Prussia reprinted its first issue, and probably realized the magnificent sum of ten dollars by the operation.

Spain cancelled the old stock of stamps remaining on hand, and did a thriving business, peddling them out to collectors.

But in that same year the United States announced that it was prepared to supply at face value "specimens of all its obsolete issues of adhesive stamps." To accomplish this, it had to engrave new dies for the two stamps of 1847. The difference between impressions from these plates and the original could be detected, however, and there is no chance today of selling one of the reprints to a well-informed and watchful collector.

The New York Philatelic Society, as soon as the announcement was made, rushed into print with a resolution strongly protesting such action as tending to throw discredit upon collections already formed, and destroying the interest of real collectors in the hobby—all of which is as true today as it was then.

Editor Godkin of the New York *Evening Post* jeered at the Society in his accustomed pontifical way, pointing out what he considered the inconsistency of collectors, in that "When the Society can get the stamps, it says that they are bad." His opinion was that the collector only wanted a difficult chase through "the dim recesses of the Bowery . . . in dusky corners of Myrtle Avenue in Brooklyn . . .

up mysterious flights of stairs in Nassau Street." He therefore believed that if, instead of selling them openly, the government would hide the reprinted stamps in Arizona and Maine, distribute them among "indigent Chinamen in San Francisco and small shopkeepers in Keokuk and Galveston and Kalamazoo," the collectors would "search for them with zealous interest." Well, one must admit that he had something there. . . .

The United States Post Office Department placed an exhibit in the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in 1876, of which the editor of the *American Journal of Philately* wrote:

> I am almost tempted to pass over it in silence, as it is a disgrace to the country, but as it is my duty to prevent collectors from being deceived, I will point out a few of the *mistakes*, as we must call them; a complete set of the adhesives is shown, the same as the Department has been passing off on country school boys as stamps; of course they have a right to show any rubbish they wish, but they should not label a page of counterfeit stamps, made a year or so ago, "Engraved and printed by Rawdon, Wright and Edson," because it is well known that the firm was dissolved about twenty years ago, and we believe all the members of it are dead, but I suppose the department intended to tell us that the original stamps were engraved by that firm. . . . The makers of the 1851 issue are given as Toppan, Carpenter, Casilear & Co.; of the 1869 issue, the National Bank Note Co.; of the 1870 issue, the Continental Bank Note Co. The Department stamps are all shown in proof specimens, the colors of which only approximate those in use.

Some of the stories from Latin America in those years are delightful. In 1877 there was a postmaster-general of Honduras named Toledo, who had a brother who had held the same job in Guatemala for several years, and the two made a nice business of selling remainders. The Honduran Toledo sent his brother to New York to order some new stamps from the National Bank Note Company, the one-half-, one-, two- and four-reals and the one-peso being the denominations needed. But upon making inquiries among dealers as to the denominations most popular, he found that one and two centavos would sell well to collectors, so he added those to the order. A million stamps were ordered, and 200,000 were sent at once to the Honduran consul's office on Broadway, where they were placed on sale to dealers in lots at prices to suit, and no reasonable offer refused if the order was large enough. As Honduras had only 40,000 population then and most of them unable to write, it was clear that it would have difficulty in absorbing the remaining 800,000 stamps, so they were boxed and shipped in four lots to R. Toledo at London, Hamburg, Paris and Berlin. There, safe from any revolutionary disorder which might break out at home, Mr. Toledo's agents could dispose of them at figures which indicated nice profits.

In 1879 Gus B. Calman of New York bought a large quantity of this or another printing from Toledo, and began selling them in Europe and America. He was soon joined by his brother Henry, and thus a business in "remainders" was begun whose repercussions are felt to this day. These were the brothers who bought out J. W. Scott in 1886 and organized the Scott Stamp & Coin Company. Gus died in 1898 and in 1901 Henry sold the company to

other interests. But before proceeding further with their story, it is necessary to mention N. F. Seebeck.

This gentleman first appears as a stamp dealer in New York before 1880; but the goings-on in Central America and elsewhere presently convinced him that he was wasting his time, so he went into the manufacture of stamps on a big scale, with the proviso that he was to have all the "remainders" to sell on his own account. The *Philatelic Journal of America* said of him in June, 1889:

> Mr. N. F. Seebeck, an old-time stamp speculator, is the secretary of the Hamilton Bank Note Company, and must thoroughly understand this business, as he made stamps for Dominica (sic) Republic and Bolivar, and understands the use of the cancelling stamp, as the many fraudulently cancelled specimens of these stamps to be found in the market and in the albums of unsuspecting collectors will show.
>
> "History repeats itself," so collectors will be looking for a nice, big series of Salvador stamps on white, blue and various colored papers; with and without network, imperforated, perforated and rouletted, and possibly a nice crop of surcharges in all the latest styles of type; an "error" or two may also turn up.
>
> Postal cards will no doubt be furnished to suit the various hues of complection to be found among the inhabitants, and several modes of folding will be introduced.
>
> Altogether, not over a hundred varieties are likely to be added each year for Salvador, but to those who deplore this fact, we can offer the consoling information that a similar contract has just been made with the governments of Honduras and Costa Rica.

The jeer at the Dominican Republic referred to the fact that the issues of 1879-80-81 of that country were produced and canceled by thousands in New York City without ever seeing their alleged native land. Other countries whose stamps would be canceled to your order in those years were those of Labuan, North Borneo, Bolivar 1879-91; the Liberia picture issues, Spanish colonials, and others. In 1899 it was said that there were more canceled Labuans on dealers' approval sheets than the small post-office force of Labuan could cancel in a lifetime.

Mr. Seebeck, too, would obligingly cancel whole sheets of several countries for anybody, for he always had plenty of them on hand. The contracts which he began making in 1889 with Latin-American countries specified that he was to supply each with an entire new series of stamps every year. At the end of each year the current issue was to be demonetized and all the remainders returned to Seebeck—and he always saw to it that there were plenty of them. He was to retain the plates of all issues.

His first contract was with Salvador, and at the end of the first year, 445,000 of the one-centavo and 504,000 of the twos of that country were returned to him. Meanwhile, he had made contracts with other neighboring nations; Honduras and Nicaragua in 1890, Ecuador in 1892. It is known that his Nicaragua contract gave him the right to make reprints if he hadn't enough remainders to satisfy the market, and such were made of the Nicaragua 1896-97-98 postage, postage-due and official stamps. It is suspected that he made reprints of some of the other countries, too. The postage-due Nicaragua stamps of 1901 were surcharged "Correos 1901." In 1904 an imitation of this surcharge was made in black to fill a dealer's order. It was also later made in blue. None of these stamps was ever regularly

used. There were several "errors of color" in the 1903-4 issue which never passed through a post-office window; just sample sheets sold by a high post-office official to dealers. The "essays" are as the sands of the sea. Most surcharges have variations in spelling, italics "accidentally" used, and so on. Of the official stamps of 1900-02, surcharged in 1903, the catalogues say, "It is doubtful if any of them ever saw Nicaragua."

The result has been that to this day the unused stamps of those countries, jeeringly known as "Seebecks," are under suspicion, and some collectors will not touch them. The Seebeck orgy greatly advanced the tendency to collect used stamps only on covers; and today your really conscientious collector can look kindly upon such a stamp only when it is on an envelope and bearing the marks of having been actually sent through the mails—and even then he is apt to be suspicious.

All this brought about the organization by British philatelists in the 1890's of the Society for the Suppression of Speculative Stamps—which, by the way, the English slurringly called "gumpaps." J. W. Scott organized a similar society in this country; his nickname for it was the American Society for the Suppression of Vice. It issued a circular to the Latin-American countries in 1896, as a result of which Ecuador, much perturbed, canceled its contract with Seebeck in 1896, "in consideration of the disrepute into which it had brought the postal administration of that country." Scott said that this action should "start a boom" in the stamps of Ecuador, if only in appreciation of the action of the officials. But as may be conjectured, the SSSS on both sides of the water died long ago, drowned in the rising flood of commemoratives; for there were too many young, amoral collectors who cared only for the pretty

stamps, and little whether they had ever been used for postal purposes.

Early in the '90's, Gus Calman made a contract to buy from Seebeck all his remainders of the four countries. Gus was the largest buyer in the United States of remainders. Among other things, he bought from Guatemala all the quetzal issues of 1879-81 and the Barrios issue of '86. After his death his brother Henry took over the contract with Seebeck, and when Seebeck died about 1900, Henry bought everything that was left from his executors. He then had about ninety million unused Central and South American and West Indian stamps. In 1924 he still had huge numbers of the Seebecks left—some sixty million, said the *American Philatelist*. A little later, when the number had been reduced to fifty-five million, it was reported that they had been sold to a dealer in Lucerne.

J. E. Handshaw, the veteran dealer whose autobiography has already been mentioned, was a large dealer in remainders. In 1895 he bought more than a million mint Cubans, all demonetized, in sheets of one hundred, which made a pile six feet high, and they cost him only eleven-hundred dollars. He admits that they were not popular with dealers, or collectors, "However, I sold a great many of them and also traded many at fair prices." F. H. Pinkham of Newmarket, N. H., publisher of the *Eastern Philatelist*, bought a quantity of them to use as premiums with subscriptions. About 1905 Handshaw bought 100,000 Bolivars in sheets from Henry Calman for $5,000, and from a South American got half a million Argentine, Paraguay, Bolivia, Chile, Peru, etc., for $4,000. The S. H. Bixby Co., makers of shoe blacking, used Seebecks for some time as premiums but, deciding to end the practice, Handshaw bought what they had left. Later he picked up a million Seebeck "errors"



From the Collection of Alfred Lichtenstein



A mining town post office in gold-rush days.



from Calman, a million more from a Philadelphia dealer, and a hundred-thousand sets of the two-colored stamps of the Dominican Republic in sheets.

Seebeck was not the only racketeer; there was C. H. Mekeel of St. Louis, who swung a somewhat similar deal with Mexico. These men maintained that the influence of such promotions was wholesome and brought in many new collectors. Scott and the antis were certain that it was killing philately. The promoters retorted that it was the antis who were doing the killing. "Frighten off the young collector," said Gus Calman virtuously, "and what will become of the future of philately?" Even today there are defenders of Seebeck who claim that he created thousands of new collectors by placing those myriads of pretty new stamps within their reach at ridiculously low prices. If that be true, can it be possible that the governmental Woolworths of today are performing a similar service?

Honduras bought so enormously of Seebecks that it canceled its contract with him in 1895 and so few were used for postal purposes that it was never necessary to reprint any of the issues, and remainders of those printings are still to be had at modest prices. Ecuador, on the other hand, didn't have enough, and had to reprint again and again for philatelists. Salvador, meanwhile, was keeping up with the Joneses, and by 1904 had issued 404 stamps. As a striking contrast, the plate made by Perkins-Bacon, the great British engravers, for St. Helena in 1856 was the only one from which all stamps of that colony were printed for thirty-four years. Different values were produced by surcharging. A new plate was finally made in 1890. St. Lucia was almost as economical. Surcharges, by the way, seemed to have become a governmental racket in the latter '80's. American editors claimed that Cochin-China, Gabon, Nossi-Bé and

other colonies "swindled collectors outrageously" with them.

Another would-be racketeer was A. N. Ridgley, a former skating-rink operator in Australia, who actually closed a deal in 1887 with the Hawaiian postmaster-general, whereby the latter was to supply him with 200,000 canceled stamps in eighteen-, twenty-five- and fifty-cent and one-dollar denominations for $2,000 or one cent per stamp. As they cost the government less than a hundredth of a cent apiece and were not used for postal purposes, the only labor involved being in canceling them, the post office seemed due to make a nice profit. But some suspicion arose in high places, everybody became nervous, and the deal was finally abrogated. It was said, however, that $1,465 worth (face value) of the stamps was bought by one of the postal clerks for twenty-five dollars, and $545 worth by another clerk for ten dollars.

There were royal racketeers in those days. In 1892 Portugal issued a new set of sixteen stamps for herself, and sixteen values for each of her colonies, some of the values having five deliberate varieties. Peter Karageorgevich, after assassinating King Alexander of Serbia in 1903 and making himself king, forbade the use of stamps bearing Alexander's portrait, and issued a set of provisionals until new stamps carrying his own portrait could be prepared. Ninety per cent of the provisionals were bought by collectors, and Peter raised a nice sum with which to pay off his debts and start his reign. The Sultan of Brunei was another monarch who saw the light. Deciding in 1894 that his country needed a postal service, he made a deal with his friend, an adventurer named Robertson, by which Robertson and partners were empowered to print stamps to the value of $5,000, "for which His Highness shall not be required to

make any payment in return." Thereafter, His Highness was to pay $3,000 for every $5,000 worth of stamps, it being expected that the collector demand would be lessened. Only the Brunei Government was to sell the stamps in the country, only Robertson and partners outside.

The little pocket republic of San Marino has for nearly half a century been one of the most notorious of the racketeers. Having few sources of revenue, it used to sell titles of nobility at reasonable rates; then the rise of philately gave it a new idea. It affected worry in 1894 lest its postal issues become subjects for speculation. In announcing a special issue to commemorate something or other, its officials set forth that "in order that collectors, speculators and merchants shall not make the issue rare or scarce," they would supply collectors themselves. "From the factory to you," as it were. This was the first national philatelic agency, a sort of bureau which today is found in a number of countries, including the United States.

Orders to the amount of not less than ten dollars, San Marino advertised, would be promptly executed; and to every customer ordering a hundred dollars' worth, his stamps would be posted in a special five-lire envelope of which only 2,000 copies would be made, and which, in order to be valid, must bear the San Marino postmark. Here, more than forty years ago, are some of the outstanding features of governmental merchandising today—the national sales agency, the commemorative issue, the deliberately scarce article. If the 2,000 lots had been sold, the state would have collected $200,000. The sale fell far short of that, but enough cash was realized to build a new sewage system in the capital.

Meanwhile the nation was coining money, purely "play-like" money to sell to collectors, for it never circulated,

Italian money being used exclusively in the country. In 1899, Government had another brilliant thought; there must be two kinds of stamps—one for postage to and from other countries, the other for internal use. As San Marino has only some thirty-odd square miles of territory, and a good walker can traverse the length of it in three hours, it may be imagined that not many of these are ever put into actual service; most of them go into collectors' albums. Even the Encyclopaedia Britannica remarks that San Marino "makes a considerable income" off its postage stamps, and "finds a fruitful source of revenue in the frequent changes. . . . The only exports beside postage stamps are stone from Mount Titano . . . and the strong wine grown on this volcanic soil." Since 1918 it has averaged one new stamp issue almost every year, and sometimes more than one a year. Its greatest difficulty is in finding subjects to commemorate. But much bigger countries than San Marino are now wrestling with the same problem.

The United States was catching the infection about the same time. When we issued our series of sixteen gay pictorial stamps in 1893, commemorating the four-hundredth anniversary of Columbus's landing, conservatives thought it a rather vulgar theatrical-posterlike gesture. Senator Wolcott of Colorado, ridiculing their large size, said they would make good chest protectors. Some demanded to be told what need we had for a five-dollar stamp; suspicion that they were printed to sell to collectors began to rear its head, and the iniquity of selling for one, two or five dollars a tiny piece of paper which cost from six to nine cents per thousand to manufacture and which performed no postal service was dwelt upon. But the public liked the pretty pictures, and $35,000 worth of them were sold from the

post-office windows in Chicago, extra clerks being necessary to handle the rush.

That the pictorial idea was now taking root was proved by the fact that when the Olympic Games were inaugurated in Athens in 1896, Greece, which since the beginning of her postage had pictured nothing on her stamps but the head of Mercury, issued a special series. Although it was a bona fide postal issue, some Americans looked askance at it. Said the magazine *Stamps*, "The main question in deciding whether to accept a commemorative issue as worthy a place in one's collection is whether the event recalled thereby is of sufficient magnitude to warrant its celebration in this manner." After much powwow with himself, the writer decided that the Olympic was worthy. It is difficult today to conceive of such squeamishness.

And then in 1897 came the first charity stamp—that of New South Wales, a onepence to be sold at a shilling, or twelve times its face value, and a 2½d, to be sold at 2s6d, the profits to be used in erecting a tuberculosis hospital. They were four times the size of the current postage stamps, and the penny value, as the *Australian Philatelist* so elegantly described it, "depicted an exhausted female being succoured by an angel." Some American editors seemed to think it was the stamp collectors of the world who were being suckered. The profits were about $15,000, which would erect a considerable building in those days. "The worst of it is," said one writer, "this will encourage others to do likewise"; and it did.

When Newfoundland in 1897 issued a series of fourteen pictorial stamps, publicizing its industries, its sea and river fishing, its caribou and ptarmigan shooting, United States critics thought such ballyhoo a most indelicate procedure. But our own government, stirred by the taste of lucre from

the Columbian series, was already planning another for the Omaha Trans-Mississippi Exposition year, 1898. Upon hearing of this, editors and writers fumed with horror, and several sent letters of protest to the Postmaster-General. *Filatelic Facts and Fallacies* of San Francisco said:

> Where is the dignity of this great country going to when the postmaster-general can lend the help of his department to such a scheme? After this, we shall not wonder at all if the enterprising managers of any county fair apply to the post-office department for the issue of a new set of stamps, bringing forth the beauties and attractions of Backwoods County.

At first the Postmaster-General planned only five values—one-, two-, five- and ten-cents and one-dollar; but the idea grew on him, and he added a four-, an eight-, then a fifty-cents and a two-dollar; "putting it beyond the reach of the young collector and many others," raged the critics. "A contemptible scheme," and "A spurious set" were some of the names for it. One article was headed, "A Speculative Issue."

Thereafter it became a practice to issue new stamps for each exposition—and on other occasions as well. Buffalo in 1901 brought the Pan-American two-color series, with three inverts. Meanwhile other countries were taking to the charity surtax idea like ducks to water. When the great Baltimore fire occurred in 1904 it was rumored that this country would issue a two-cent relief commemorative, to be sold at five cents for the benefit of the Baltimore city government; whereupon an assistant postmaster-general characterized the report as ridiculous. "This Department," said he, "is not in the business for its money-making possibilities." Ponder that, in the light of later developments.

And so the great commemorative flood began and continues to this day, rising higher and higher each year to marks never before reached. Now only a few self-respecting Ararats such as Norway and Sweden still rear their snow-crowned heads above the waters. John N. Luff, in the *Collectors Club Philatelist* in 1922 wrote that "the prospect is favorable for a decrease in the output. . . . We appear to have passed the height of the flood and to be slowly returning to normal conditions." Little did he know! An indignant writer in *Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News* in 1904 said it was all right to buy a "menagerie issue" if you could get it for a nickel, but when you pay more, you are simply helping to support "some bankrupt country with about 800 inhabitants." Still true as gospel today, save that the bankrupt country may have from a hundred and thirty to a hundred and eighty million inhabitants. And that writer "hadn't seen nothing yet." When the British colonies that same year brought forth new issues with the crown watermark in multiple, another editor considered this "the last straw which will break the back of the philatelic camel." But that camel's back has been broken time and again; it has more lives than a cat.

All protests were vain, and so governments found a new sort of revenue just dropping into their hands like ripe fruit from a tree. Sometimes stamp hobbyists in high places helped the cause along. An American philatelist was for several years a financial adviser to the Haitian government, and during that time Haiti's stamp issues were numerous and colorful. Then he took a similar position with the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, and soon Abyssinia blossomed out with many new stamps. Young nations quickly caught the idea. North Ingermanland, a little patch of earth between the Neva and Finland, declared itself

independent of Russia in 1920, set the presses going and turned out fourteen pictorial stamps, one an invert now worth forty dollars, before Russia noticed its existence and squelched it a few months later.

Italy fortunately has a long history from which to draw events for commemoration, but has so nearly exhausted them with her numerous stamps that some of the celebrations seem rather remote—the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Alessandro Manzoni, the fourth centenary of the death of the Tuscan warrior Francesco Ferruci, the centenary of the Military Medal of Valor, the two-thousandth anniversary of the birth of Horace, the bi-millenary of Augustus Caesar—it would be tedious to name even a tenth of them. As for celebrities, so many of them have appeared on stamps that the supply began to run low several years ago, and Brazil and other countries have been picturing persons whom American collectors couldn't find in any encyclopedia or other book of reference. Finally, in desperation, about 1937, several foreign countries suddenly developed an admiration for the United States and began celebrating the writing of our constitution and the setting up of our government. They are at it yet. They are portraying our presidents and other heroes. Literally dozens of countries issued series in honor of our World's Fair at New York in 1939, and some honored the San Francisco Fair, too. The remorseless war upon the collector's purse reached its peak that summer when France, which had already issued twenty-six stamps for self and colonies in celebration of our great Fair, announced the imminence of a hundred and forty more stamps. At that, Theodore Champion, her great philatelic publicist, who had stood by his native land through all her previous stamp racketeer-

ing, gagged and declared that he would have nothing to do with the new issue.

An enormous change has come over governments in the past three decades, and over our own only since 1920. Time was when the collector was an object of contempt, a nuisance. It was reported from Hungary about 1895 that the government had boys employed, tearing off the margins of stamp sheets, and no pleading by collectors was of any avail. The plate-number bugs had made themselves unpopular in America, too. In 1896 a collector reported seeing clerks tearing margins off sheets in the New York post office. An outrage was reported from Newport, Rhode Island, in 1884, where the postmaster refused to pick out an assortment of envelopes for a dealer when he found that they were wanted for collectors. "If you want them for business purposes," said he, "I'll get them for you; but if for collectors, I can't bother with them." On the other hand, Springfield, Massachusetts, reported practically ideal conditions in 1903; "We are fortunate in having most obliging clerks at the stamp window. Both Mr. Connor and Mr. Gaffney, the cashier, are very kind in assisting collectors to obtain well-centered specimens, etc." But what a different story in the larger cities!

By 1890 the Post Office had decided that foreign stamps, used or unused, received from Europe, must pay the regular twenty-five per cent duty as printed matter; and instead of figuring this on the cost of producing the stamps, which the collectors would have agreed to, they laid the duty on the invoice value. Philatelists sometimes arranged with foreign correspondents to affix several high value stamps to a letter, just to make a collector's piece. In 1891 Government ruled that if more than enough stamps were affixed to pay the postage, the receiver must pay the duty on the

extra stamps. In one case, sixty-five cents was the penalty on one letter entering at New York. Such envelopes were actually seized, the addressees being permitted to remove the contents, and the covers released only upon payment of duty. But after some years of battling by the stamp fraternity, stamps were placed upon the free list in 1897. This, however, will give a hint of the intransigent attitude of the government at the time.

It was when the Columbian series of 1893 appeared that Uncle Sam first began to show touchiness about the reproduction of his stamps in books and periodicals. During more than two decades of the twentieth century, our limitations in this regard were the most rigid in the world, due to the stubbornness of an iron-headed chief of the secret service named Moran. In 1909 a law was passed which made the mere possession of a reproduction of a stamp a criminal offense. Only a portion of the outer frame of one of our stamp designs could be legally reproduced. Even foreign stamps, even—and here was the height of absurdity —even old express and carrier stamps of our distant past, never used by the Post Office, must be mutilated when pictured.

Of course you might not have in your possession a foreign publication which pictured United States stamps. No homes nor business offices were searched to discover such publications, but probably they would have been if Moran had had his way. Periodicals illustrating our stamps frequently slipped into this country because the Post Office hadn't time to examine them all; but books, in the later years of Moran's reign, seldom did. Persons have ordered such books from abroad quite innocently, paid for them, and never seen them. Upon inquiring at the New York post office, they would eventually learn that "We destroy such

books as that; they're illegal." Russia itself could have been no more summary. But what a change there has been since a stamp collector, Franklin D. Roosevelt, came into the Presidency! Our country now joins others which have long had an intelligent attitude in such matters, and so far, no one has yet cut a picture of a stamp out of a catalogue, pasted it on a letter and tried to send it through the mail.

George B. Sloane remarks upon the vast difference in the attitude of the Post Office twenty years ago and now. Twenty-five years ago, if you, a youthful collector, went to the stamp window of a city post office such as New York and asked for one of the new ten-cent stamps, requesting that it be well centered, the clerk would "Gr-r-r-r-r" at you like a wolf in a steel trap, making some snarling remark about "collectors" in a tone indicating that they were of an order rather lower than cockroaches; and other customers lined up behind you would stare at you as at some unusual mental case. And oftentimes you had to take your stamp as was. The result was that boy collectors usually waited in a corner of the post office until there were no other customers at the window and then approached timidly, hoping that the clerk wouldn't be too vicious. Of course this wouldn't happen in the average small-town post office, as we ourselves can testify. Courtesy and sympathy have always been more common there than in the great city. But there was no official support from Washington for any such courtesy. For more than half a century Uncle Sam was as stupid in his attitude toward collectors as were the railroad executives in their discourtesy toward people who were fascinated by locomotives, never realizing that such folk were potentially their best friends.

But how different it is today! Sir Philatelist is top dog now, and Uncle Sam, beaming and rubbing his hands, says,

"What will you have today, Sir or Madame? I am at your service." The New York postmaster sends out word that children who want new stamps or first-day covers from anywhere will be taken care of just as if they were in a kindergarten. Extra forces of clerks are rushed to the places where first-day sales take place, in the effort to give good service; stamps are lightly canceled, so as not to spoil their appearance, the name of the town and the cachet are so clearly and carefully stamped that they might almost have been done on a printing press. A group of people who spend millions of dollars yearly, paying many times their intrinsic value for little pictures printed by the government and not demanding postal service in return, is well worth cultivating; but it required the coming of a philatelist President to the White House finally to drill the fact deeply into the iron skulls of Department officials.

And yet, with all this service, collectors are not satisfied. The little post office at Cooperstown, New York, had to handle 600,000 baseball centenary stamps on a date in 1939, most of them on first-day covers, requiring a special force, who worked several days, yet postmarked every cover with the traditional first-day date, even though some went out several days later. And yet there were collectors who raged because some of these letters were delayed a week. At least one wrote an indignant letter to a stamp magazine about it, and was still more furious because his letter wasn't printed. If he could only realize what fine service he is getting from the Post Office, by contrast with what his fathers and predecessors had to suffer, he might give thanks instead of excoriating.

These business-return envelopes with a row of bars or stripes down one end, like an old-time oarsman's jersey, sent you by concerns which want something from you; do

you laymen know how the postage on them is paid when you send one of them back? Well, it's done by means of postage-due stamps. When a batch of them comes into a post office, directed to the Universal Whirligig Company, they are counted and the postman takes canceled postage-due stamps equal to the sum owing on them to the Universal office, along with the letters. He is charged with the stamps and must collect the cash from the Universal Company to cover them. Postage-due stamps are of course an object of desire by collectors, and naturally, the one-, two- and three-cent ones are most common, as they are found on many letters. Hence the clerk in the Universal office, if he handles this business or is in touch with collectors who will buy the stamps, asks the postman to bring him stamps of unusual values, and to ask the office to cancel them lightly; thus he has a readily salable article. A New Yorker was notified recently that a package addressed to him was found to have writing in it, and was asked to call and pay the excess postage. When he found the proper window, a pleasant little lady said, "Now, what denomination of postage-due stamps would you prefer?" and then smilingly, when he hesitated, "The one-half cents are uncommon." So he chose the one-halfs, she canceled them lightly and passed them out. Try to fancy that happening in 1910!

It is a fact that, in order to get high denominations of postage-due stamps, canceled, collectors in recent years have been known to wrap up a brick and mail it to themselves, explaining the gag to a genial clerk, telling him just what denominations of stamps they wanted, and adding, "And light cancellations, please."

The Government Philatelic Agency at Washington, which has become an enormous business, is another service brought about by the presence of a philatelist in high posi-

tion. It was founded in Harding's administration, in 1921, at the instance of Second Assistant Postmaster-General W. Irving Glover, whose wife was a collector. Its first fiscal year's sales were only $20,906.50, but the second year's jumped to $105,317.03 and the third year's to $129,646.51. Thence it rose steadily to $302,619.54 for the year ending June 30, 1933. Then the avalanche of new commemoratives under the Roosevelt administration brought it up with a leap to $811,723.00, and in the next year, 1934-35, it reached its peak with sales of $2,340,484.02. Since then it has almost steadily declined, and with the year ending June 30, 1939, the figures came down to $1,312,016.48. Efforts are now being made to boost business with the philatelic truck which tours the country with a full exhibit of our national stamps from the beginning until now, and which undoubtedly lures some new devotees into the hobby.

Another idea for increasing sales is being worked hard in the frantic designing of new series and new single stamps. The celebrity series of thirty-five stamps which is being prepared as these words are written is as nothing compared to the list of more than two hundred more or less noteworthy men and women whom a contributor to *Stamps* proposed in 1935 as philatelic honorees "to advance American culture." This writer omitted the name of O. O. McIntyre, the columnist, which was demanded on a stamp by a later publicist, and we are surprised not to see him among the new stamps pending. Perhaps if Mr. Farley remains in power long enough, we may yet see portraits of Dick Harlow, Joe Louis, Eddie Guest, Joe Di Maggio, Charlie McCarthy, Greta Garbo, Father Coughlin, Father Townsend, Father Divine, yes, and even Mr. Farley's own on our postage stamps.

Meanwhile, foreign governments continue to exploit us for all they are worth. All through the summer of 1939 many of them maintained stamp shops in their buildings at the New York World's Fair, where stamps intended solely for collectors and not for postal purposes were sold over the counter. Iceland has made a contract with a store in New York for the exclusive handling of her new stamp issues. It is to be hoped that some Icelandic agent does not become overenthusiastic, as did an agent of the Amundsen North Pole Flight in 1924, who sold exclusive American rights to department stores and stamp dealers here, there and everywhere.

The newest startling story of the exploitation of collectors comes in the autumn of 1939. Brazil has just had five million of a set of four stamps—ponder that figure, five million—printed, of which four million are not to see Brazil at all, but have been placed in her consul's office in New York. One million have been sent to Brazil, where one hundred sets of four will be delivered to certain of the larger post offices, with the specification that only one set be sold to a customer. The rest will be sold right from the factory to the collector.

These words are written at the close of 1939, which has seen the issue of the largest number of commemoratives on record. Already three hundred new stamps are known to be planned for 1940, and experts estimate that the number will rise to two thousand before the year is over. The motto of the governmental hucksters seems to be, "All the traffic will bear, and then some."

TREASONS, STRATAGEMS AND SPOILS

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE COUNTERFEITER began his nefarious work in 1840, within a few months after Britain issued the first adhesive stamp, though Rowland Hill, when he saw the imitation of the penny black, declared it "a miserable thing, and could not possibly deceive anybody but the most stupid and ignorant." The first forgeries made were to be sold for postage purposes. One of the cleverest of all time was not discovered until twenty-six years afterward. In 1898 it was found that a counterfeit of the one-shilling green had been sold at the Stock Exchange Telegraph Office in London for several months in 1872-73.

When collecting got into its stride, forgeries of the more uncommon stamps were stealthily turned out for philatelists. The cheat and the fakir always spring into action under such circumstances, and in the case of philately, individual fakirs were followed by national ones. Reproductions of those early Mauritius, Hawaii, Russia, and British Guiana rarities crept into the market and threw the whole collecting fraternity into an uproar. Fortunately for later generations, experts were able to identify and denounce the fakes. Even as early as 1863, an Englishman found it necessary to write a pamphlet on Postage Stamp Forgeries.

Later on, still more brilliant ideas were originated. Alleged stamps of Ecuador and Guatemala were on sale before those countries had even begun to issue stamps. Imaginary countries—Capacua, Bateke and Nova Potuca, for example—were invented, years before Anthony Hope's Ruritania and George Barr McCutcheon's Graustark got into print; small communities such as the old Greek monastery on Mount Athos, Moresnet on the lower Rhine, an obscure province in Sumatra and bleak, lonely places like Kerguelen Island, Torres Straits, Clipperton Island and glacial Spitzbergen and Franz Josef Land in the Arctic, none of which ever issued stamps, were represented as doing so, and there were the prettily engraved stamps to prove it. Thousands were sold before the cheats were exposed. Many of these were traced to "A nest of thieves fabricating frauds in Paris." Fake five-cent and eight-cent stamps supposed to have been issued by the Mormon colony of Utah in 1852 were among our own contributions.

You couldn't fool present-day collectors as easily as that. They watch their catalogues and periodicals, they know their geography and history. They are glibly familiar with little stamp-issuing countries, provinces and dependencies which most folk have never heard of. Go out today and ask the first five hundred theoretically educated people you meet what and where Nossi-Bé is—or Inhambane—or Inini —or Bhore—or Oltre Giuba; and the probabilities are that no one save some of the philatelists—who will inevitably be found among the five hundred—can tell you whether they are political units or chemical elements or heathen gods. Thus stamp collecting teaches geography and political history.

Even some eminent stamp concerns did not escape accusation. The *American Journal of Philately* said in 1869

that "Alfred Smith & Company must have sold enough of the Guatemala humbug to have turned in a considerable revenue to the concocter." By 1870 the *Journal* and several such journals in Europe were printing every month remarkably accurate pictures of stamps in colors. Other publishers and dealers would ask permission of these magazines to buy or borrow a few electrotypes to illustrate a price list. With these, actual counterfeits were turned out, gummed, perforated and sold. In 1876 it was declared that "Probably never in the history of philately in America were there as many counterfeits in circulation as at the present day." To guard against them "A Middle Aged Collector," advised in a magazine article, "Make it a positive rule to put no stamp into your album until you have devoted at least five minutes to a careful study of it." But this tedious process was evidently too exhausting to many collectors, and they continued to stud their collections with paste diamonds.

Other countries, too, were having their troubles with forgery—not only collectors, but governments. In Colombia the pest was so virulent that for a time no stamps could be affixed to letters save by the post-office clerks. You just handed your money and letter in at the window, and the clerk did the rest. And there was a story from Spain of certain parties who covered a stamp with a colorless something or other, no more stable than paraffine. The addressee washed this coating off and with it the cancellation; peeled the stamp off the envelope, recoated it with the stuff and used it again. It was asserted that long correspondences were thus carried on with only one stamp doing all the work.

Some small dealers announced that "We guarantee every stamp we sell," to which editorial critics retorted that their guarantees weren't worth the snap of a finger. Of a couple

of sheets sent out by the "Eagle Stamp Company," a Pennsylvania concern, with the notation printed thereon, "We do not need to warrant our stamps—they warrant themselves," the *Philatelic Monthly* commented, "And yet every stamp on the two sheets was a rank counterfeit." Editors frequently pointed out other unscrupulous dealers by name; "So-and-so of Boston is an individual to whom collectors had better not trust their cash." Philately certainly needed a Better Business Bureau in those post-bellum years, when many phases of life showed the degrading effect which war always leaves in its wake.

Counterfeiters were pikers in those days; stamps were being forged with a market value as low as one cent! Of course rarities were favorite game. In 1873 the *American Journal of Philately* warned "the tyro" to have nothing to do with Reunion stamps unless they were certified by a competent authority. "The originals are so very rare that you may as well make up your minds you will never be able to obtain them." A Philadelphia-Camden gang headed by a man named Petroni was rounded up in 1875, tried for forging foreign stamps and convicted, but received suspended sentences because it was the first case of the sort and because there was a slight flaw in the indictment! Petroni said he had sought legal advice before going into the business and had been assured that it would not be a violation of any statute. One finds in the report of this trial plenty of the legal hocus-pocus so familiar to us all, such as the argument of Petroni's counsel that no evidence had been introduced to show that there were in existence such countries as Nicaragua and British Guiana. In 1877 a forgery of the whole Mexican series of 1875 appeared. The *American Journal of Philately* said that report was that "the block has been engraved by one Beyer, a well-grown boy who

sells counterfeit stamps under the name of the Atlas Stamp Co."

It will by this time be apparent to most moderns that the honest dealers, editors and experts of those days had their hands full in the battle against chicanery. In the early '90's some prominent British dealers were rubber-stamping a guarantee on the back of every stamp they sold. The battle was fought right bravely and shrewdly, and with the honesty and care of those who have come later, even to the present day, added to theirs, there is now no valid reason why any collector should buy a bogus stamp.

Some of the most picturesque characters in philately are found among the forgers of the later nineteenth century. There were many notorious ones in Europe, but we have space to mention only those remarkable partners, Alfred Benjamin and Julian Hippolyte Sarpy, who operated in London. They actually had the nerve at one time to print and circulate a business card, reading, "BENJAMIN & SARPY, Dealers in all kinds of Facsimiles, Faked Surcharges and Fiscal Postals. 1 CULLUM STREET, LONDON, E.C. Fakes of all descriptions supplied on the shortest notice."

Fred J. Melville in *The Stamp Lover* tells of a visit of Ferrary to their shop, when, after salutations, this conversation ensued:

> Ferrary: Have you got anything for me?
>
> Sarpy (*after contemplation*): I think we have; a Straits Settlements inverted surcharge. (*Pause, then raising his voice*). I say, Ben, haven't we got an inverted surcharge Straits? Here's Mr. Ferrary wants to see it.
>
> Ben (*from behind the arras*): I think we 'ave, Sarp. I'll just 'ave a look.

A few minutes later the stamp was passed out to Sarpy, shown to Ferrary, who kept it.

Sarpy: Didn't we have another of those, with double surcharge, one inverted?

Ben (*still behind*): So we did. Now where is it? (*A brief delay while Ben gets to work and the variety is produced.*)

On one such occasion Ferrary, it is said, accidentally touched the surcharge with his finger and it smeared. There was some discussion about this, but the great collector, so Benjamin affirmed, accepted it. Sometimes we think Ferrary must have been just a little dumb.

This precious pair were finally convicted in 1892 and given short prison terms "with hard labour," on the charge that, as a philatelic witness described it to the court, they "took a Sydney View, cleaned it, postmarked it, and turned it into a New Zealand fiscal." This was a deep, dark mystery to the judge until explained in plain language. Another forger, a Dr. Assmus, was given three years, so Mr. Melville tells us, probably because the judge was more greatly shocked by the turning of the queen's head upside down on a colonial stamp than by the other forgeries, which didn't seem to impress him seriously.

In America the most notorious and impudent forger of the period was S. Allan Taylor, who founded this nation's first stamp journal at Albany in 1864, and thereafter operated mostly in Boston. He was often known as "Just-as-good Taylor," because of his open insistence that for the purposes of collectors, his forgeries were "just as good" as the real stamps. He described himself as "a gentleman of flexible conscience and speculative disposition." Late in his career he once remarked, "In the early days all dealers sold

imitations; some of them have changed their methods, I have not." Taylor in his earlier days worked hand in hand with F. Trifet of Boston, and in 1867 had the nerve to advertise in Trifet's magazine, his "Hamburg Local or Boten stamps; These are not of the spurious New York manufacture."

Taylor often privately expressed his opinion that stamp collectors were damned fools, and there are those even at this day who excuse him on the ground that, when pinned down, he would not claim that his stamps were genuine; that if collectors were asses enough to buy his imitation stamps, he had a right to make and sell them. Once when Walter S. Scott was a very young man he was commissioned to go to Boston and buy a pair of Canada twelvepence stamps at an auction, paying as high as twelve-hundred dollars, if necessary. There he saw Taylor, who was saddened at the thought of a fine young man like Walter drifting into the stamp business. "Why does your father let you do it," he demanded, "when you might turn your talents to something so much more worth while? The idea of coming up here to pay twelve-hundred dollars for a couple of little scraps of paper. It's criminal insanity!"

He seemed quite sincere in his denunciation. But collectors by that time were becoming too wise to buy his imitations, and in his later years—he died somewhere around 1906-7—he was a platform man on the Boston Elevated line.

There are stamps once rated high which later fell under suspicion and declined enormously in value. There are whispers today about two of the world's unique stamps which have sold for enormous figures—skepticism because their life history cannot be authenticated; and yet they may be

as genuine as an ear of Indiana corn. But Ferrary bought from C. H. Mekeel of St. Louis in the '90's a unique alleged St. Louis local stamp, "City Dispatch 2 cents," black on blue paper, on a valentine letter, postmarked Feb. 14, 1851 and addressed to "Miss F. Wood. At Mo. Hotel, St. Louis, Mo.," in payment for which Ferrary wrote a characteristic check—just penned the whole thing on a piece of blank paper:

Iselin & Co., Bankers, New York.
Pay Mr. Mekeel of St. Louis
Twenty-four hundred and thirty-five dollars $2435.00
Philip Renotiere Ferrary

But at a Ferrary sale in 1922 this stamp had fallen from its high estate and brought only £17 10s, because its genuineness was under suspicion.

There are national governments, great and small, today, unblushingly working Taylor's just-as-good idea for all it is worth though they do not offer their shoddy wares as honestly as Taylor did. Instead, the pretense is kept up that these are stamps sincerely intended for postal purposes. Mexico, Nicaragua and some other countries have been doing this ever since the days of Seebeck. The deliberately scarce item is a favorite stunt. Bolivia has issued as few as twenty-five of a single stamp. Of the sixteen Mexican items of 1915 surcharged on stamps of 1903, it is said that only five denominations were purchasable at the post office, and certain values were printed in lots of only from six to fifty copies, which were handed to a favored few. A surcharged series of 1916 was blatantly speculative; small quantities of each value were sold at post offices, but subsequently could be bought only from government officials or their agents, at advanced prices. In 1929 a small lot of stamps in several

varieties, printed in colors different from those of the regular stamps, was offered at the post office.

The stern dicta of the two great cataloguers on either side of the Atlantic stand between such fakery and the collector's purse, if the latter will only listen to them. Gibbons refuses to recognize souvenir stamps. Scott will not recognize them unless they have been offered to the public regularly through post offices for a reasonable length of time. He who collects may read such notes as this in the Standard Catalogue under Cuba: "The so-called Artists and Authors set of 17 varieties of postage, 4 airpost and 2 special delivery stamps was on sale at post offices that day only. We do not recognize them as having been issued primarily for postage purposes." In the same catalogue, under a reproduction of an Italian stamp picturing "Christ Among His Disciples," a suavely factual bit of irony informs the reader that this "unnecessary" issue was sold almost entirely to speculators.

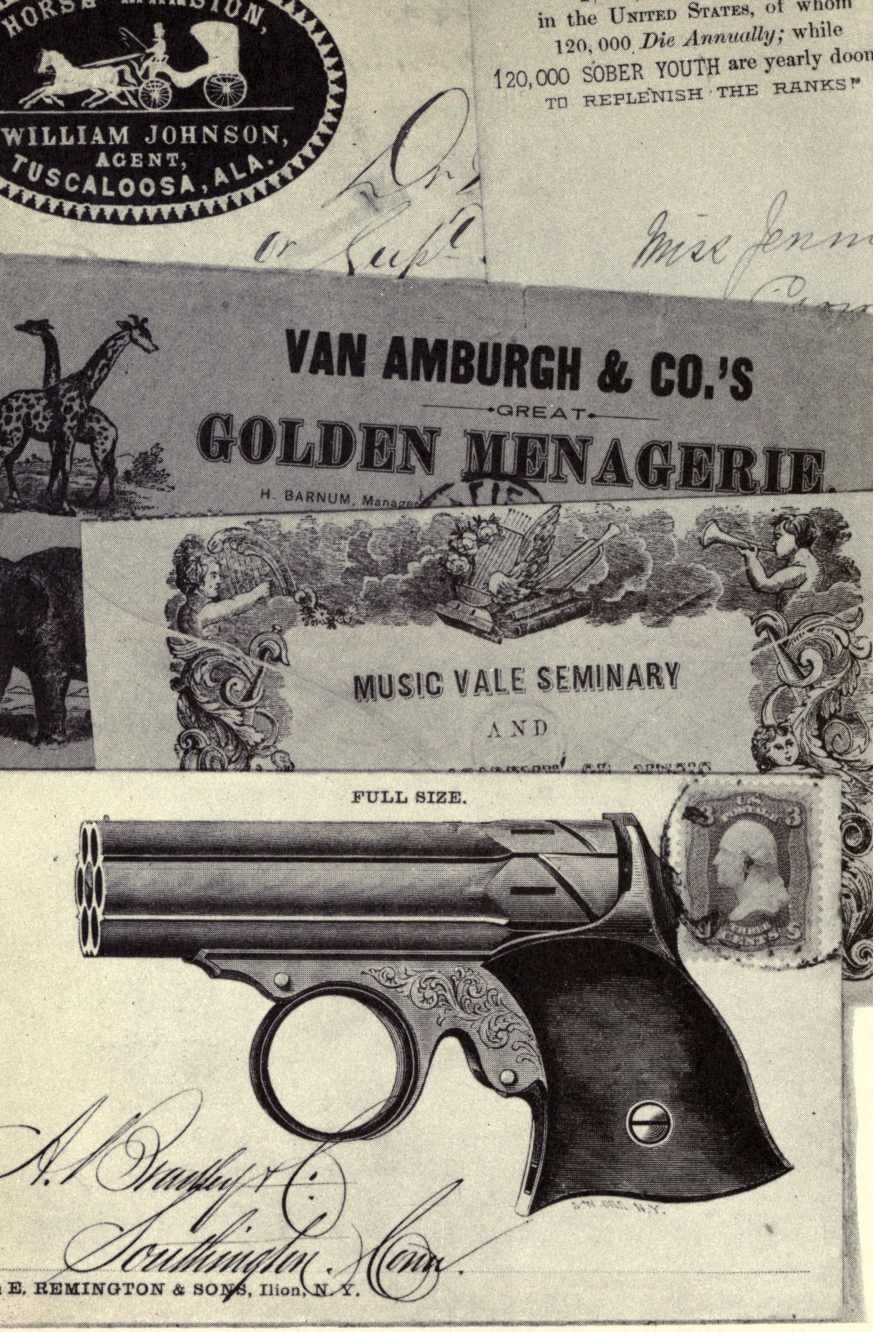
When New South Wales issued that tuberculosis hospital stamp in 1897 she launched a most pernicious idea. The single stamp or series of stamps sold at an increased price—two, three, five, and in the case of the Austrian musicians' series, ten times face value—for the benefit of this or that charity or welfare work, society or private enterprise, sometimes almost unblushingly for the government itself, has become a commonplace. D'Annunzio's adventure at Fiume, and indeed, the brief existence of Fiume as a state was admittedly financed largely by stamps, as were likewise the stunts of Zeligowsky and Korfanty in Lithuania and Upper Silesia just after the World War. Little states like Lithuania and Latvia have almost worked the gift horse to death. In Italy no end of such organizations as the National Institute Figli del Littorio and the Dante Alighieri



Photos from U. S. Post Office Department

Above—The "smallest post office," Searsburg, Vermont: the type eliminated by thousands by Rural Free Delivery.

Below—A very early R.F.D. wagon, which operated in



A few oddities from Edward H. Knapp's collection of advertising and propaganda envelopes.

Society (at least twice) have benefited by special stamps. There may be communist collectors who through purchases of certain stamps have, knowingly or unknowingly, aided the Benevolent Fund of the Black Shirts. In the island of St. Kitts in 1923 a stamp was issued to enable the army officers to buy land and lay out a cricket field. The Belgian Congo recently issued stamps to promote the building of a zoo, and Germany has issued them regularly for the furtherance of certain favored horse races.

It has not been so many months ago that a man with a Spanish accent appeared among the dealers of New York City peddling the stamps of a Central American country; its name is not mentioned here because there are honest philatelists down there who are already sufficiently humiliated by the total absence of ethic from their government's postal doings. This traveling salesman would accept face value, or if the dealer was hard-boiled, he would shade the price a bit.

"Where do you come in?" he was asked by one dealer.

"Oh, I wouldn't handle them, of course," he replied frankly, "unless I got full commission. But my government is willing to give whatever is necessary to sell the stamps in the United States." The dealer to whom he was talking knew that twenty per cent is the ordinary share for such fellows.

One day not so many eons ago a swarthy, pompous gentleman entered the office of an official of a large company in New York which deals in stamps and philatelic supplies. He was followed by a somewhat younger, obsequious brunet person, no doubt his secretary, who was carrying a parcel. It was revealed that the big man was the ex-dictator of a Latin American country who had—like many tropical dictators, sooner or later—been suddenly compelled, for his

health's sake, to leave the hot, sultry climate of his native land, taking with him only a few bits of portable property, including not so much treasury cash as he could have desired.

The secretary opened the package which he carried and began taking out sheet after sheet of new stamps, of a variety which the stamp dealer had never before seen. It presently came out—though in much more suave and delicate language than we can muster—that the president, aware of the world passion for philately, and foreseeing that he would, at some time in the near future, be called upon to hit the trail running, had grabbed the whole issue of that particular stamp, thinking thereby to create a rarity and pick up some easy money after he reached the States by doling them out in limited quantities at premium prices.

The country which has gone into the business in a really big way is Russia. The Soviet Philatelic Association of that country—a government bureau, of course—is an absolute monopoly, and one of the blandest of the world's rackets. There are no other stamp dealers in Russia; you can't even swap a single stamp inside the boundaries. Beautiful new issues pour from the presses frequently, and the bureau advertises them in philatelic magazines of other countries. If you wish to buy them, you must pay in terms of gold rubles —not paper rubles. Many of the varieties are never seen on either letter or package, but if you desire used specimens, the bureau will sell them to you, canceled in the most natural way, and assure you that their virtue is above question. For these reasons, the stamps of the U.S.S.R. are, by wise philatelists—somewhat as the wholesale produce market says of parsnips or old hens on a day when they aren't selling well—they are "neglected."

The Soviet also seems to be supporting Tannou Touva,

a puppet state in Asia, largely through the sale of its colorful postage stamps, of which new designs appear every few months.

The putting on sale of a stamp for only two or three days, or three hours, has resulted in some interesting scenes. When Cuba offered her Air Train stamp in June, 1935, for example, only 35,000 were printed, and only 13,000 were available in Havana. They were on sale throughout the island at seven-thirty A.M. Crowds were in line in the cities at daybreak to buy them, and some camped overnight. As much as five dollars was offered for places in the line. When the windows were opened, there was a near riot. Speculation began immediately, and within a few minutes, prices rose to five dollars per pair. In Egypt, in 1926, when the Port Fouad stamp was sold in much more limited quantity, at that post office only, a mob of five thousand nearly wrecked the office and trampled two men underfoot. The police, made aware of the value of philatelic rarities, would drive the crowd back now and then and buy a few more stamps for themselves.

Once when one of these stamp sales was to go on in Mexico, a smart Yankee hired some peons to stand in line for him. As each person might purchase only a very limited quantity, he employed a considerable number, had them at the head of the line before daybreak and gave each of them a modest sum with which to buy stamps. But before the sale began he went away briefly on an errand. As soon as his back was turned, certain conscienceless persons approached the peons and offered them very attractive prices for their places in line. As the figures were much higher than their original employer had promised them, they saw no reason in the world why they should not sell out; so sell they did, and, not troubling to look up their first boss and

return his stamp money, they faded into the landscape, all independently wealthy.

For several years an organization flourished in the West Indies—a *sociedad*, they call it—which had a colossal philatelic idea. It wanted every nation on the western continent to put on sale for two weeks each year until 1945 a special stamp or series of stamps for its benefit. It signed up some Latin-American nations, but did not land the United States. With the proceeds—what was left, that is, after paying the overhead—the society would "secure the custody of, restore and care for any monuments erected to Columbus and the other discoverers of America." For years it was publicly stated that this society intended building with its increment a forty-million-dollar lighthouse in memory of Columbus; but it finally denied this and said that the lighthouse, which will doubtless be built of jasper and chalcedony and sardonyx and chrysoprase, will be the work of another organization.

Airplane flights have been a favorite method of exploiting the collector. From the time of Harry Hawker's flight across the Atlantic in 1919, the fad has frequently been thus used. Some of these covers have brought fancy prices in after years; one carried by De Pinedo in 1927 has sold for as much as thirty-five hundred dollars. When Darius and Girenas planned a flight from New York to Lithuania in 1933, their airplane propeller was in hock for repairs, and as there seemed no other way to get it out, they announced that they would get up a cachet and carry letters. As both of the poor fellows were killed in landing on the other side, it was an unfortunate idea.

One scheme was that originated by a pilot who wished to fly from Minnesota to London, but lacked some of the equipment for the job, including the minor item of a plane.

The captain, as he was of course called, just as a county-fair balloon aeronaut used always to be a "professor," was a good promoter. He organized Aerial World Tours, Inc., and persuaded the Newfoundland Government—for a promised consideration of $80,000—to permit his company to print 400,000 so-called air-mail stamps of one dollar face value, which were to be canceled by the St. John's post office when he took flight from there. The promoters, however, were to sell these stamps to collectors, and as will be apparent even to a beginner in mathematics, at four-hundred per cent profit.

After being printed in the United States, the stamps were delivered to Newfoundland, and the promoters, raising $5,000 advance money somehow, drew twenty-five thousand of them, which they began selling to philatelists. They proposed to pick up some extra money in various ways. In addition to the dollar charge for the stamps, there was a handling fee of ten cents per order, plus postage and registration. Covers could be registered for an additional fifty cents, though the regular mail charge was ten cents. For a further payment of fifty cents the envelope would be autographed by the crew. But the company would not guarantee delivery of any covers.

Philatelic editors on both sides of the ocean raised such a storm of denunciation that the scheme was killed in its infancy. The Standard cataloguers having indicated that they would refuse to recognize the stamp, the buying of them almost ceased. A group of persons, mostly dealers, who had been stuck with large blocks of them, organized a committee and tried strenuously to work them off. But it was of no use; Scotts refused to countenance the stamp, and finally the Newfoundland Government repudiated the whole deal.

Speaking of synthetic rarities, when Harry Richman, night-club and radio performer, and Richard Merrill planned their airplane hop from New York to London in 1936, they announced that they would carry only *five* letters, which were to be postmarked in Brooklyn and backstamped in London; the asking price of the covers was to be a thousand dollars apiece. When the Mexican aviator Sarabia flew to New York in 1939, his government issued only twenty-one hundred of a special stamp, of which four hundred were sent to the Universal Postal Union, after the usual custom; Sarabia received a thousand—some reports said he sold them for one-hundred dollars apiece, though he claimed that he received only from thirty to forty dollars—three hundred went to Mexico's Philatelic Agency, to be sold for as much as the market would stand, and four hundred were sold by lottery; none through the post office. The Mexican Philatelic Society protested in vain against such skullduggery. Some leading New York dealers in airmail stamps refused to handle this one, but one department store succeeded in corralling nearly a hundred copies from various sources, and they sold like hot cakes to collectors at $29.50 *before the flight took place.*

Among the Mexican stamps of 1935, the Standard Catalogue has this to say of one: "We do not recognize the variety created by overprinting No. 975 with the words, 'Vuelo de Amelia Earhart, 1935,' as a stamp issued for postal purposes." Only 780 of these stamps were issued, of which 480 went to the Universal Postal Union, ten were given to diplomats, thirty were sold to members of philatelic societies in New York City, ten—count them—ten were sold to the public at face value by lottery, and 250 went to Mr. Putnam, Miss Earhart's husband, who had supplied the die and the violet ink for the overprinting. Miss Earhart

had not been sworn in as a United States pilot, and as she did not deliver the mail to this government at our border, but carried it all the way to Newark, the post office there refused to receive it. Considerable pressure was brought upon the Standard cataloguers to induce them to recognize the stamp, but in vain. Foreign governments under the same circumstances have sometimes threatened all sorts of things if their stamps were not given a clean bill of health; threats which are never carried out.

These aviators become huffy sometimes when people don't come across. When De Pinedo made his world flight in 1925, he was given ninety-three letters at Calcutta to be carried to Melbourne. All carried a beautiful cachet with map of India and airplane, and the words, "Italian World Air Flight." De Pinedo had autographed all the covers according to request when he demanded that the Calcutta folk pay over twenty rupees per cover for Italian charities. They declined to do this. He accordingly delivered the letters to the Italian consulate at Melbourne with his autograph cut from each, and they were returned to the senders without passing through the mails, so that they had no philatelic value.

Rocket flights have taken many a dollar from collectors. Every now and then some promoter tries one, and the philatelists always help him out. The rockets never get anywhere, but that doesn't seem to matter. In a flight "from New York to New Jersey" at Greenwood Lake in 1935, the first rocket was prudently launched very close to the State line, soared about a hundred feet through the air and slid across the line on the ice. The second did only slightly better. There were 4,800 letters and 1,850 post cards in the rockets, on which enthusiasts had stuck seventy-five-cent and fifty-cent special stamps, in addition to the United

States stamps necessary to carry the missives back to their owners. In a stunt on the Texas Mexican border in 1936, advertised as "The First Complete International Rocket Flight in the World," one of the missiles actually did succeed in getting across the little creek there known as the Rio Grande. Another attempt in Cuba in 1939 was even less successful; the rockets just fizzed and wouldn't fly.

Of course there are elaborate cachets prepared for these events. The cachet, in company with the first-day cover, is a favorite fad just now. Anybody can promote one. If you wish to "sponsor" a cachet for the dedication of the Odd Fellows Hall at Squab Center or the fiftieth anniversary of the building of Peleg Pringle's cider mill at the Corners, you have only to announce it in a stamp magazine, and hundreds of collectors will send you money for the covers. We read that "So and so will have a surprise cachet for the end of April or beginning of May," and no doubt many collectors send stamps for they don't know what. The cachets of the Seth Parker World Cruise brought in a nice bit of money toward paying the expenses of the trip. Recently some disgusted anti-cachet collector produced a cachet reading, "Hooey, Baloney, Bunk," as a nose-thumbing gesture at the whole business.

The humiliating episode in our own country in 1934, when Postmaster-General Farley deliberately set about creating rarities for Administration philatelists, from the President on down, and for other favored insiders by distributing to them unperforated sheets of new commemorative stamps, the naïve revelation of the scheme by one of the insiders who sent his sheet, insured for $20,000—and how dumb those insurance men were!—to New York to be sold, the fearful row that arose in the philatelic world and then in Congress over the matter, the final capitulation of the

Postmaster-General—after blandly denying for weeks that any such sheets existed, his eventual issuance, under pressure, of imperforate sheets for everybody, so that the value of the insiders' haul was ruined, all this constitutes another highly significant incident in the revelation of the prevalent governmental ethics of the times. Incidentally, Mr. Farley's is the first postal administration in our history in which the Postmaster-General's name has appeared on the margins of stamp sheets—which also has its significance.

"—NOR CUSTOM STALE HER INFINITE VARIETY"

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

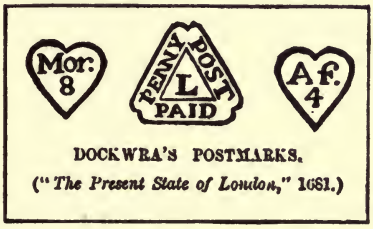
HENRY BISHOPP, to whom the British posts were farmed in 1660, is said to have devised the first stamped postmark—a small circle with two letters above, denoting the month, and below, the day of the month. William Dockwra who, under government license, organized an excellent local postage system in London in 1680, had two postmarks—a triangular design containing the words, "Penny Post Paid," and a heart with "Mor." (morning) or "Af." (afternoon) and a figure signifying the hour at which the missive was mailed.

In the eighteenth century there came to be other stamps —"Paid," "Free" (on franked mail), and eventually, the name of the sending town and the date. From Bishopp's time until about 1825 all these stamps were cut on wood; then steel stamps came into use and continued into the twentieth century.

One of the curious stamps first used by our own young government is a little circle containing the date—the day of the month above, and name of month, expressed by two letters, below. And here we find that the Fathers of the Republic were so chuck-full of classical learning that they must needs print their capital J's as I's and their U's

as V's in the ancient Roman fashion. Thus when you see a stamp with "23" over "IV," the lower letters appear to be the Roman way of writing "4," but not so; it is the abbreviation for June 23d. The twelve months are thus indicated: IA, FE, MR, AP, MY, IV, IY, AV, SE, OC, NO, and DE.

The names of the sending office, printed in a straight line, began to appear in the early days of our posts, but only for the largest cities. New York, with the "New" above the



DOCKWRA'S POSTMARKS.
("*The Present State of London*," 1681.)

"York," appears to have been the first form; but very shortly the two words were put on the same line, and presently the date was added, "NEW YORK august*12." For decades afterward, however, small towns and villages had to get along with no postmark save a written one. By the beginning of John Adams's administration, the straight-line postmark was giving way to the circular one which, with slight variations as to size and internal arrangement of lettering, became universal and has so remained to this day. True, Philadelphia, always quaint, long used an octagonal postmark, and there were ovals and half ovals with one side perfectly flat, but the circle finally displaced them all. We find the seat of government mentioned in these early postmarks as WASH. CITY—a few years later with the Washington spelled in full or the rearrangement, City of Washington. Not for more than half a century could they

quite make up their minds to drop the word "City" from the name and just let the D. C. explain it.

The early die cutters did a lot of curious abbreviating to save themselves work. An Indianapolis postmark of 1827, for example, mentions the town as INDI^{s} I^{N}, while Florida was sometimes cut to FLO^{A}. They had many varying ideas as to abbreviation too: Ore. Ter. or O.T., Col. T. or C.T., etc., while the Indian Territory was variously written, Ind. Terr., Ind. Ter., Ind.T., I.T., and a few other ways. (Incidentally, I.T. in mid-nineteenth century might also mean either Iowa Territory or Idaho Territory.) The variety of these markings, the history and human interest stories that lie back of them challenge the curiosity and the collecting instinct of any human being who has even the beginnings of either of those attributes. Trace the history of Florida, for example from its Spanish days, when it was divided into East and West Florida—see the postmarks, "E. Flo." and "W.Flo." Next, as a United States territory, the circular postmarks, stamped in black, red or blue, name it as "Fl. T." or "F. Ty." Thence through its career as a State in both Union and Confederacy, the story goes on.

The abstract cancellation or "killer," as the modern collector calls it—we see it today usually as a group of parallel lines, straight or wavy, flowing from the postmark across the face of the stamp—was devised when England invented the first postage stamp. That first British cancellation die was a sort of hollow, double-outlined four-leaf clover, cut in wood, and cost each post office a shilling. The idea was carried over to this country soon after we began using postage stamps, though even to this day many small post offices cancel the stamp only with the town-and-date postmark. But no sooner had we begun using a separate killer than the exuberant American fancy began to play with its



Courtesy of "Stamps"

CURIOUS HOME-MADE CANCELLATIONS MADE BY POSTMASTERS IN THE 1860's AND '70's. NOTE THE SEEMINGLY MEANINGLESS ONES IN BOTTOM ROWS

possibilities, and within three decades had produced the wildest crop of postal markings ever seen in any country.

The postmaster at first cut or had the stamp cut out of wood. And then some chap discovered that a bottle cork was the easiest thing of all on which to carve a design. The possibilities for fun with a nice, new cork and a sharp knife were so vast and varied that a rapid decline in the whittling of wooden sticks was noted among Yankee postmasters.

One of the very early rarities among our cancellations is a circle with a lyre inside it, found on a stamp of 1847; but the stamp was peeled off the envelope ages ago, and no one now can tell where the letter was mailed or find any record of the town which used such a canceler. The Gold Rush and subsequent postalization of the Pacific Coast brought some curious canceling designs, notably the kicking mule of Goleta, California. But after all, was that any worse than the fat pig with which Sandisfield, Massachusetts, was canceling its letters in 1861?

Those early canceling inks weren't entirely waterproof and a tendency developed to wash the stamp and use it again. The troubles of the Post Office were complicated by the practice, which became widespread during the Civil War, of using stamps in small quantities as currency—for buying cigars or other small items, and even for paying street-car or bus fares. Oftentimes, when a passenger boarded a vehicle in the rain and fished out from a vest pocket two or three stamps already stuck together from dampness, a hot argument would arise between him and conductor or driver as to whether his currency was passable. They were fingered, stuffed into pockets and rumpled until they finally "become so defaced," wrote Postmaster-General Creswell in 1870, "as to be inapplicable to legitimate use for the payment of postage; and evil-disposed

persons have availed themselves of the opportunity thus afforded" of slipping old washed or lightly canceled stamps into circulation as currency. Mr. Creswell was therefore seeking some way of canceling a stamp which would render it forever useless thereafter. One measure that he favored was the prohibiting of the removal of canceled stamps for any purpose whatsoever from the paper to which they were attached. In view of the later appreciation of covers rather than the detached stamp, he was really offering collectors a boon, though they didn't realize it at the time. But Congress wouldn't act upon his suggestion, so that was out.

All sorts of schemes for defacing the stamps otherwise than by ink had been and were constantly being proposed. In 1862 the Post Office tried out a device which cut the stamp in two, but such a dolorous outcry was raised, especially by the growing army of collectors, that this was abandoned. Other cutting and scarifying ideas were tried during the next three years. A curious cancellation has been found on two stamps only of Hawaii, the one-cent purple of 1864-71 and the two-cent brown of 1875—a double circle with three tiny circles inside it, these three being sharp-edged punches on the metal die which cut the paper and carried the ink into the fibers. Some philatelists have surmised that this die was made for use in the United States, but rejected by the Post Office Department.

In 1863 a Mr. R. P. Sawyer announced that he had a new and unbeatable method. He calculated the annual loss to the government by the washing of stamps to be ten million dollars—a rather astronomical sum for those days. He could save all this by his new method, which did not cut the stamps or the envelope, and would cancel twenty-five letters in the time of one by the existing system. It was unwashable, and best of all, canceled each stamp in a dif-

ferent way. The system was the last word, the ne plus ultra. "No improvement," said he modestly, "can be made in the invention, the subject being exhausted." But we cannot learn the nature of his wondrous device, and it is lost to the world now, for the government never adopted it.

Creswell thought the simplest plan of defacement would be to gum only half the stamp, so that the other half might be torn off as a cancellation—a plan already tried in France. (He forgot the uproar over the mutilation of 1862.) In his 1870 report he listed a number of the schemes proposed to the Department by earnest individuals who thought they had solved the problem. Among the funniest was the one he called Number six, whose proponent said, "Let the defacing clerk place the letter upon some suitable support, and a single stroke with a rasp or coarse file will obliterate the stamp beyond restoration." And the envelope, too, he might have added, and probably a portion of the letter. Number seven's suggestion was the perforation of two or three stamps at once by an electric battery. Number eight's was "A thread to underlie the stamp; the thread to protrude below the stamp sufficiently far to allow of its being grasped by the fingers and ripped up through the stamp."

Number thirteen proposed "a very simple apparatus, consisting of only one cutter, two springs, three gears for driving flywheels, and four flywheels for driving three or more circular saws, to scratch off the surface of the stamp." To which a New York editor retorted dryly, "There are several of these defacement machines very profitably employed at the present time in sawing up boards." Number fourteen believed that stamps might be branded like cattle. "A small lamp should be kept burning, in which to heat the brand," and thus, he asserted, a man could deface a stamp in twenty seconds or even four per minute. Clerks

with hammer cancelers were even then defacing from 150 to 160 per minute.

An idea was already in operation at the time, having been introduced in 1867—the grill, as it is called now, which consisted in embossing or pitting the stamp with rows of tiny dots supposed to let the ink into the fiber and prevent washing. On the first stamp given the treatment, the three-cent red, the grilling covered the entire stamp; then it appeared as a smaller rectangle, and as years went on, with all sorts of variations, sometimes being found in the corners of the stamp, sometimes at top or bottom, and again on one side or the other. The grill ended in 1873.

Dozens of inventors actually patented their devices hoping to sell them to the government. There were ideas for not only punching holes, but for cutting a V-shaped notch in the edge of the stamp. One of these geniuses wrote that "The most effective means of canceling postage stamps is to remove a portion of the stamp by a punch." But "This has not heretofore been successfully accomplished without cutting the contents of the envelope." So he would slit his envelope near the stamp, in order that the postal clerk might insert a "suitable flat instrument" and thus protect the contents of the letter while punching.

Patent No. 101,604 proposed pasting a perforated sheet of paper on this tissue, then printing the design on the perforated sheet so that the printing would be partly on that sheet and partly on the thin tissue. Anyone trying to remove the stamp would tear the tissue and ruin the design. A slightly similar idea was that of the double-paper stamps of 1873, which were issued in one-, two-, three-, six-, ten- and thirty-cent denominations. They were made of two layers of paper, the top one thin and soft, through which both printing and canceling ink would thoroughly

penetrate, and any attempt to remove the postmark would wreck the stamp. Between January first, and April 15, 1875, twenty-eight million of these stamps were issued. Then they were withdrawn, because of complaints from postmasters that the upper, thin paper shrank and cracked, and that the stamps would not pack well, causing loss of time and waste in stock returned to the Department. These stamps may be frequently found in the two-cent and three-cent varieties today; the others are very scarce.

In 1877 another idea was actively tried—a three-cent stamp produced by the Continental Bank Note Company, with a design cut clean through the paper—a sort of wheel made of eight capital U's, all with the open ends turned in towards the axis; the idea being that any attempt to remove the stamp whole from the envelope would be futile. Less than ten thousand of these stamps were issued, all being sold at the Washington post office. As they could not easily be detached from the envelope, and as scarcely any collectors then were saving the whole cover, these stamps are naturally rare today.

It was after the Civil War that the rage for bizarre cancellations reached its height. Thinking up new designs and carving them on the ends of corks became a favorite pastime for postmasters. Geometric designs, stars, shields, acorns, flowers, leaves, trees, three- and four-leaved clovers, Latin, Greek and Maltese crosses, barrels, boots and shoes, comic and grotesque faces by the hundred, skull-and-crossbones, whole animals and fowls or just the heads, "OK," "PO," "U S GOVT," "NORTH," "WEST," not to mention letters of the alphabet, one, two or three at a time; these are only the beginning of the story.

Chicago in 1873 was using a billiard table, and making attempts at picturing a locomotive, some of them unbe-



Courtesy of "Stamps"

GROTESQUE HOME-MADE CANCELLATIONS OF THE 1860'S AND '70'S. NOTE KU KLUX KLAN "KILLER" USED AT SMALL TOWN IN PENNSYLVANIA

lievably crude; on another a man smoking a pipe is found; another, just the pipe itself with smoke artistically rising. Here is a star-and-crescent, here (always in black silhouette) a cat humping its back, the business end of a pitchfork, a man thumbing his nose, a man with a pack on his back. Brattleboro and Meriden each pictured the devil with his pitchfork. The postmaster at Waterbury, the watch and clock town, outdid everybody around 1870 and for years afterward in the wild play of his fancy, and his display of folk art has given him enduring fame in philately. He pictured nearly everything already mentioned, and among his scores of novelties were bees of various types, the head of an old woman in a sunbonnet, a mortar and pestle, a beer stein, an old congress gaiter, a pumpkin and a running chick with wildly flapping wings which was one of the hits of the era. There was a minstrel song, "Shoo Fly," which was very popular in the latter '60's, and which found its way into cancellations, in one case as a crude representation of a shoe and a fly. The other fellow having beaten him to this clever conception, Waterbury just cut the words, "Shoo Fly" on a cork and used that for a while. The word "HAYES" probably used during the Presidential campaign of 1876, also emanates from Waterbury.

Often cancellations were highly personal. One presents the postmaster's name, Frank Lyon, and an animal believed to be the gentleman's namesake. Such words as "HARRY," "BEAR," "DAY" and "HUB" are not always explainable now. Postmasters' lodge emblems are numerous. Sidney F. Barrett of New York has a remarkable collection of Masonic cancellations, including the familiar square and compass in many versions and all sorts of situations. The Sigma Chi fraternity was evidently pretty influential in Asbury (later De Pauw) University between 1861 and 1870, for a

ΣX postmark is found on many covers from Greencastle, Indiana, during that period.

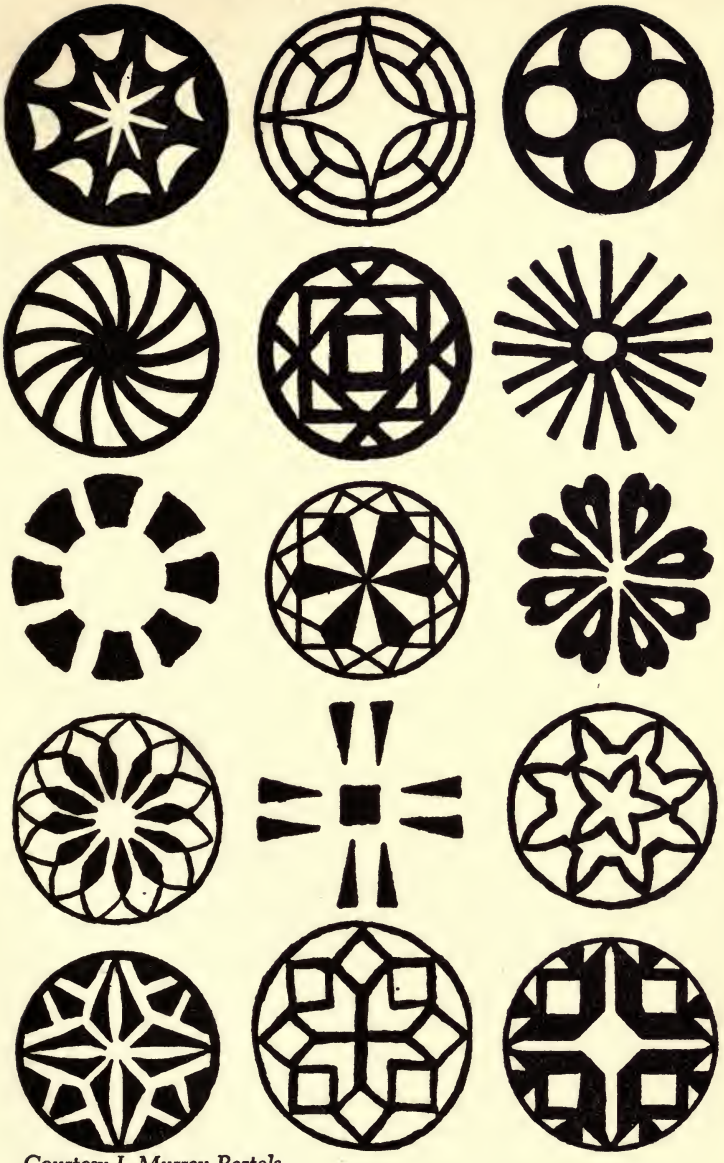
Railroads and steamboat lines had their own postmarks made in wood or metal; the railroad with its own name, the water line—whose mail service was at first purely a private affair—with the name of the boat, sometimes its picture also, sometimes with the captain's name added. These are made the subjects of some fine collections, and even the historian may learn things from them not readily found elsewhere. There is an undoubtedly genuine envelope with the postmark of a little short-line railroad in far northern New York, which Edward Hungerford, the great railroad historian—who was born up there and knows that region as he knows the back of his hand—could scarcely bring himself to believe had ever operated, even when he saw the postmark. And we learn that there was even a little steamer carrying mail the sixteen-mile length of Skaneateles Lake in New York in 1848; for here is a letter from Glen Haven at the head of the lake, postmarked by Skaneateles at the other end, also stamped "Steamboat" and "7," which shows that the boat got its customary two cents for carrying the missive, just like an ocean steamer.

What a rare field for collecting there is in the ocean mail cancellations from the earliest times to these. What stories lie back of those postmarks—"Ship letter," "Paquebot," "Posted on Board," "Posted on High Seas," "United States Sea P.O.," "Southampton Ship Letter." What romance and history and tragedy in the mail carried by ships to and from California during the Gold Rush and for twenty years thereafter, until the Pacific Railroad days; first around the Horn, then by muleback across Panama, then by Panama Railroad, sometimes—in the wars between Commodore Vanderbilt, Garrison and Ramsey-Carmack—across Nica-

ragua or Tehuantepec, with echoes from the guns of William Walker, the "gray-eyed man of destiny," sounding overtones above the rest.

J. Murray Bartels of New York discovered a number of years ago that special types of cancellations were used by the New York City post office between 1871 and 1876 on mail sent to foreign countries, and he began collecting them. Others followed his lead. These markings embrace a vast assortment of the most intricate and beautiful canceling designs in all philatelic history. The great majority are round; a rim encircling stars of myriad sorts, wheels, geometric designs and what may only be described as conventionalized flowers of many petals—these in addition to a few odd ideas. There were so many that each design could have been in use only briefly. Edwin Milliken, another collector of them, thinks that more than half of them existed only a few days. Somebody in the New York post office in those days actually out-Waterburied Waterbury in his industry, though in a more artistic way. Of some of the rarest patterns, only one or two copies are known. In addition to the cancellations, there were numerous other stampings to gladden the collector's heart; postmarks of the numerous transferring cities and ports, "Paid All," "Sufficiently Paid," "Insufficiently Paid," "Paid All via England and Ostend" and numerous others. When the face of the envelope was covered with them, they turned it over and continued the story on its back.

Another field for the collector is the street-car cancellation. The first street-car mail line was probably the Third Avenue cable line in New York, on which white-painted mail cars began running in 1895 from the main post office, delivering mail to its branch offices along the line uptown. Later, in many cities, the street car became a real railway



Courtesy J. Murray Bartels

A FEW OF THE BEAUTIFUL CANCELLATIONS USED ON SHIP MAIL OUT OF NEW YORK, 1871-76

post office and so continued for thirty years and more. As it neared a corner mail box, a clerk jumped off, emptied the box into a pouch which he carried, this in about thirty seconds, and boarded the car again, which did not stop running. Clerks in the car sorted the mail, stamped it with a postmark reading "RPO" with the name of the line, just as on a railway car, bagged and put it off at sub-stations or the main office.

Cancellations and postmarks were usually stamped in black ink, but not always. Charles F. Gramm, of Plainfield, N. J., great specialist in this line, shows you page after page in his albums of stamps all canceled in blue—or red—or purple. He shows you pages of varied shields, others of hearts, often pierced by arrows. You learn from his albums that the Japanese caught the infection, too; here they are—grotesque masks, death's heads, demons. The fantastic cancellations were forbidden by our Post Office Department in the latter '70's, but some of them have come back again in recent years.

August Anderberg of San Francisco has discovered a most intriguing branch of collecting in the postmarks of towns whose names have been changed! You must have a specimen of the postmark both before and after, you see. So far, Mr. Anderberg has confined his activities to Europe, and with territories being snatched back and forth as they are these days, he has his hands full, as may be imagined. Not only war, but the recent upsurges of nationalism have accounted for many changes. Some famous ones of course come to mind at once; Kristiania, Norway, changed to Oslo; Constantinople to Istanbul; Angora to Ankara; Pekin to Peiping; Petersburg (the Russian never called it St. Petersburg) to Petrograd to Leningrad; Queenstown to

Cobh; Prague (Prag) to Praha; Lemberg to Lwow or Lvoff —spell it any way you like.

Ireland, as might be expected, has gone off the deep end in digging up old Gaelic jawbreakers. Letters from Dublin are now postmarked Baile Atha Cliath; Limerick has become Luimneach and Tipperary is Tiobraid Arann—at least, until common sense returns to government. No end of confusion has resulted. The Chamber of Commerce of Bray, a seaside resort, complained that the town was losing its tourist trade because no one recognized it under its new name, Bri Chualann. Kemal Pasha was equally absurd in rooting out long-historic names such as Smyrna (now Izmir) and Adrianople, which has become Edirne.

Sometimes local citizens rise up so vehemently against a change that they succeed in nullifying it; as when the citizens of Trondhjem in Norway boiled over in 1930 at the government's decree that—in the campaign to "eliminate Danish influences from place names"—this large city should hereafter be known as Nidaros, the name of an ancient settlement in the vicinity. This would be like saying to Cincinnati, "Hereafter, your name is Losantiville." The hardy Norsemen made such a hubbub that their government, to save face, compromised on Trondheim, and this was accepted. H. L. Lindquist of New York, a specialist in the philately of his native Norway, lists in his magazine, *Stamps*, dozens of changes which have taken place in small-town names of that country—Indre Holmedal to Bygstad; Kinn to Floro; Bolso to Kleive; Mortensnaes to Nyborg, but, thank goodness, they didn't change the name of Aaa. We like that best of any of the world's place names, because of its simplicity. We don't know how they pronounce it, unless it's what you say when the throat specialist

pries your mouth open and asks to see your vocal cords wiggle.

The rise and fall of favorite comrades is pictured in comic fashion in post-office name changes in Soviet Russia. Leningrad still holds, but if the Bolshevik régime is overthrown, just watch that name crash! A garrison town near Leningrad was in Czarist days known as Gatchina. After the revolution it became Trotzk in honor of Comrade Trotzky; but when it was discovered that Trotzky was a felon of the lowest order, the town became Krasnogvardeisk —City of the Red Guard. Similarly, Elizabethgrad was renamed Zinovievsk, honoring one of the Fathers of the Soviet; but when Zinoviev took a hand in the private liquidation of Sergei Kirov, Soviet boss in Leningrad, the town changed names again, this time to Kirovo, in honor of the victim.

Some towns, such as Dorpat in Esthonia, have had four changes of name under different régimes, and many have had three in the past few decades. The German name Presburg, for example, became Pozsony under Hungarian rule and Bratislava when the Slavs took it over; Neusohl under the same régimes became, first, Beszterczebanya and then Banska Bystrica; Weisskirchen changed to Fehertemplon and then to Bela Crkva, all three names meaning Whitechurch; Karlsburg in German became Gyula Fehervar in Hungarian, and Alba Julia when Roumania took it from Hungary. The capital of Roumania has suffered no less than five changes in spelling. Now that Russia and Germany are on the loose again, Mr. Anderberg is doubtless working nights, for scores of names are being altered once more—sometimes for the worse, sometimes—from the American point of view—for the better. We deplore the Nazi seizure of Poland, but when they change the name of

Bydgoszcz back to Bromburg, we are with them. As we write this, the papers tell us that Il Duce has decided that the names of no less than thirty-two towns in northwestern Italy sound too Frenchy and so is replacing them with good, honest Italian words.

Mr. Anderberg hasn't yet gone into United States towns whose names have been changed, but we hope someone will do it soon, for here is a vast and fallow field. Think of the California gold camps which grew ashamed of their first rowdy names, jestingly coined by red-shirted forty-niners, and sought something more refined. Jamestown, for example, sounded ever so much better than Jimtown; Fiddletown dolled itself up as Oneida; Rabbit Creek Diggings blossomed out as La Porte; Wash had a classicist citizen who rechristened it Clio; Mud Springs became Eldorado overnight; Poor Man's Flat turned into Windsor, McCarthysville into Saratoga, and so on. There have been many changes quite as complete in other states, too.

There have been some amazing metamorphoses of place names in America. There was a hamlet down in the Louisiana Territory, near the Ouachita River, which the early French settlers named Chemin Couvert. The Americans who came later, when the village was in the Territory of Arkansas, had difficulty with the pronunciation; Smack Cover was as near as they could get, and so the name of the post office began to be spelled. But the Post Office Department has always had a yearning for shorter, one-word names, and so in 1870 the name became Smackover, one well remembered in the annals of petroleum. Similarly, the Department shortened Tenallytown, near Washington, to Tenley. Many changes were quite logical. In Indiana, as an instance, were two towns named respectively Hardenburg and Hardinsburg; their mail was always getting mixed,

so Hardenburg was renamed Hayden. By another process, that of lazy spelling, Belle Aire, La., gradually decayed through Bellaire and Bellair to Belair.

What an interesting collection this would be! Go back and see the waverings of the Post Office over whether to spell it Beverly or Beverley, Waverly or Waverley, Belvidere or Belvedere, whether to put an "i" or an "a" before the final "cola" in Apalachicola. Palatka was once Pilatka, Cleveland, Ohio, was Cleaveland, according to the postmarks, back in the 1830's. In 1864-65, Fond du Lac's name appeared on the postmarks as Fon du Lac. Towns like Lambertsville and Johnsonsburg have had the appendix "s" removed from their middles. Dozens of places once had a now abandoned "City" tacked on behind—Denver City, Boise City, Shasta City—no telling how many more. How many covers can be found now that were pounded by the old hand postmarkers in the once booming ghost towns of Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada and California? The east has its ghost towns, too—Greenwood Iron Works in New York, among many others.

Which recalls the fact that there are those who "collect states" that is, strive to get a cover postmarked at every post office, living or dead, in a certain state. One man collects Michigan, another, Vermont, another, Long Island, another, New Jersey north of the Raritan. When you remember that thousands of small, crossroads post offices were abolished by the coming of rural free delivery, this collection assumes the proportions of a task rather than a chore. One recalls four little post offices within a radius of eight miles, two of which vanished when the first RFD came trotting out in a buggy, while the other two disappeared a few years later when the automobile more than doubled the length of the route. And letters from some of

those little post offices were scarce, even when they were in existence. Post offices are still being discontinued every month, and there are those who make a business of obtaining nicely canceled covers from them just before they close, so that collectors in this line may not have to search too hard.

Which reminds us again that the RFD drivers began to sort and cancel their mail, just like railway mail clerks, and George W. Bye of Rutledge, Pennsylvania, has a collection of more than sixteen hundred varied RFD covers, showing many kinds of their postmark stamps; sometimes just RFD with the name of the town, sometimes RFD Postal Wagon, again with the name of the town and RFD No. 6 underneath. On some covers the number of the route is written in with a pen. Brinkleyville, N. C., and Model, Tenn., had pictures of the RFD covered spring wagon and horse on their canceling stamps. All colors of ink were used, the driver apparently following his own taste.

The United States Board on Geographic Names created by President Harrison in 1890 made some drastic changes. If you will look back to mid-nineteenth century, you will find a terminal "h" on many such names as Chambersburgh, Ogdensburgh, and Petersburgh. The Board in 1900 amputated all these "h's," and also the "ugh" from borough, so that Middlesborough, Ky., like others of that ilk, became Middlesboro. But Pittsburgh, like Trondhjem, arose in wrath and demanded its "h" back, and it alone, among American cities, was big enough to win the argument with the government. The Board around the turn of the century also knocked out many "c's" and replaced them with "k's"—among others, the one in Tuscaloosa. The citizens took it meekly for a while, but finally began a steady pressure to get that "c" back, and succeeded. But mean-

while, a new courthouse had been built, and it still has the name "Tuskaloosa County" carved on its façade, though the post office has long been postmarking letters "Tuscaloosa."

What stories some of these old postmarks tell of great moments of the past! Fancy the thrills in looking now and then, as A. J. H. Richardson does, at a cover in one's collection mailed in Paris late in the Reign of Terror, when heads were still falling at the word of Robespierre and St. Just and Fouquier-Tinville; a letter bearing the frank of the Comité de Salut Public (Committee of Public Safety), dated, "14th Germinal, Year 2" that is, April 3d, 1794, just nine days after the execution of Hébert and only two days before Desmoulins and the giant Danton went to the guillotine!

Or, in one's own country, there was Dr. Chase's Indian Territory collection, with its postmarks from the Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw and Seminole Nations, a valuable and unique historical exhibit. Or Harry Konwiser's Texas Republic collection, with its franks of President Sam Houston and General Winfield Scott, its cancellations by the post office of the agent of the Texas Republic in New Orleans, the only instance in history of a foreign country's having a post office on United States soil. Here we find that a letter of 1841 from Tuscaloosa, Ala., to Montgomery, Texas, cost eighteen and three-quarter cents postage from the sending point to New Orleans, and a dollar-fifty the rest of the way!

But for strange odysseys of mail, one must look at the early days of British Columbia's history, when it had no direct connection with the Canadian colonies further eastward. Here is an envelope of 1857 literally covered with markings. It traveled from London to New York and from

New York to Colon by ships—postmarks telling the story—across the Isthmus by rail, thence by ship to San Francisco and by another to Portland, Oregon; from Portland went to Steilacoom by stage and from Steilacoom to Victoria by Hudson Bay courier boat, probably manned by Indians. It took three months to complete the journey.

Alfred Lichtenstein's great collection of British Columbia is full of things like that, the stuff of which novels are made. For years, all mail from England or eastern Canada to British Columbia or vice versa had to pass through the United States and carry some United States stamps, in addition to those of the other countries. There were the expressmen, too, operating up to the mines in British Columbia, who might add their hand stamps to the rest. United States stamps actually came to be sold at the post office in Victoria; but sometimes they ran out of stock, and cash had to be sent with the letter to the British consul in San Francisco, who would buy and affix the United States stamps. So complicated was the matter of postage that sample envelopes were prepared, showing just what had to be done, and Mr. Lichtenstein has one in his collection, with the printed slip still inside, saying, "To secure dispatch, a letter from British Columbia for England should be enclosed in an envelope stamped in this manner."

But still queerer sometimes was the fact that a letter from our Washington Territory traveled through British Columbia. In the Lichtenstein collection we see one which went from Olympia via Victoria, perhaps because of some convenient boat-sailing to San Francisco, and so to London. Another comes back from London, via Panama and San Francisco to Victoria, and the addressee is at "Steilacoom, Washington Territory, Oregon!"

A few years ago the pre-canceled stamp appeared, and

presently some of the younger collectors became interested. Then came letters stamped by printed permit and by meter machine, and the circle of fans widened. Cancellations became an advertising medium, and another enormous new field was thrown open. Monographs had been written on these slogan cancellations, catalogues of them have been compiled. We believe we have seen the first advertising cancellation—though it is not a cancellation—in postal history, in the collection of George B. Sloane of New York. It is an ax head stamped on a letter of 1833, mailed at Collinsville, Conn., seat of the Collins ax factory for generations. It is not a cancellation, for there were no stamps for it to deface; but it was nevertheless an advertisement, just as much as the present-day turkey cancellation of Cuero, Texas, the Yale bulldog of New Haven, the copper smelter of Clarkdale, Arizona, and the bucking bronco of Prescott.

Today, every country in the world is ballyhooing through its postmarks—"Visit Sunny Australia," "Haitian Coffee is Best," "Buy Cuban Sugar," "Buy Irish Goods," "Baden-Baden Sells Cheaply," "Come to Bermuda, the Isles of Rest," "Buy Siam Rice," "Holiday this Year in Canada," "Nice ses Alpes Perfumées et sa Côté Fleurie," "Drive Oregon Highways," "Come to Atlanta Dogwood Festival," "Green asparagus for Flavor," "Hello! I am from Holly, Michigan," "Visit Corpus Christi," "Visit Mobile's Azalea Trail," "Eat Meat, Quality Up, Prices Down," "By All Means, live Electrically," "Eat Bananas, Always Good, Always Available," "Own a Canary," "It takes Needles to Make Shirts." There are thousands of them and new ones are appearing all the time. Recreation, efficiency, social welfare, government, what not, are being "sold" through cancellations: "It pays to play," "Justice for Genius,"

"Prompt Payment will help Lower Taxes," "Your Tax Dollar gives you Security, Health, Protection, Education, Recreation." One of the noteworthy things is that cancellations are being made the medium for a world-wide campaign for safe automobile driving: "Drive Carefully, Save Lives," "Safety or Sudden Death?" "The Higher the Speed, the Worse the Accident," "There can be no excuse for Bad Driving," "Courtesy Prevents Accidents," "U. S. Auto Toll is 3000 Deaths every Month. Stop Killing!" "Cautious Drivers are Always Survivors," "Drive Carefully, Accidents Must Stop." Whether it is doing any good or not, the Post Office keeps hammering.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

NO SOONER was the postal service created by governments in Europe in the seventeenth century than kings, nobles, counselors and legislators began to say, "Now, look here! We can't be expected to pay this—what do you call it?—postage, on anything. That would be too absurd! Look who we are." And so they didn't pay any postage; and thus it has been from that day to this, even in the democracies.

It is true that when England first set up a national postal system in 1660 there were high-minded men who objected on principle to a franking privilege, even for themselves. Of course it was understood that the monarch and all his cousins and his uncles and his aunts must have their mail carried free; that was already being done by such haphazard posts as were then raggedly functioning. And of course the king's ministers, some of whom actually did most of his thinking for him—they ought to be favored, too. But when a franking clause for members of Commons was inserted in the Parliamentary bill of 1660—which created a national post for England—Sir Heneage Finch opposed it, calling it "a poor, mendicant proviso, and below the honor of the House." The Speaker, Sir Harbottle Grimstone, refused for some time to put the question, saying that he

felt ashamed of it. (Does any American Congressman blush now as he franks a campaign document?) But a large majority of the Commons were already eager for a taste of the gravy, and when the bill was put to vote, it was carried by a huge majority. Commons had erred, however, in making no provision for noblemen's letters, and so, when the bill reached the Lords, it was of course thrown out. This made it necessary for the two Houses to get together on the subject, and presently the bill emerged with both Lords and Commons on the free list.

So enthusiastically did the fortunate frank holders take advantage of the privilege that within a few years one finds bales of clothing, cases of bacon and hams, kegs and barrels of liquor, hunting dogs, even "two servant maids going as laundresses to my Lord Ambassador Methuen" and "Dr. Crichton carrying with him a cow and divers other necessities." And as for letters, a member of Parliament would write his name on a sheet of letter paper for anybody who had a pull or was of the right political complexion or properly introduced, and the wonder is that any postage was paid at all. In Smollett's *Humphrey Clinker*, published in 1771, Mrs. Winifred Jenkins, a maid, begins a letter to her chum, Mary Jones, with "Lady Griskin's butler, Mr. Crumb, having got Squire Barton to frank me a kiver, I would not neglect to let you know how it is with me and the rest of the family," which proves that the word "cover" was being used a century and a half ago somewhat as philatelists use it now. Again and again Jenkins naïvely begins, "Having got a frank, I now return your favor."

It was therefore quite natural that when our Continental Congress began to sit in 1775 it was not long before it had bestowed the franking privilege upon its own members. In 1782 the favor was granted to the signers of the

Declaration of Independence, the commander in chief of the armies and several heads of army departments, and the heads of the Departments of War, Finance and Foreign Affairs. After the present government was set up, it was given to the Presidents for life, the Vice-Presidents, cabinet members, Congressmen, and gradually to all the brass hats in the various government departments as well as the army and navy.

But as it was extended to more and more government functionaries, it became a burden. In the first few years of the republic even political privilegees were pretty decent in their use of the frank, but later newcomers quickly realized its infinite possibilities. A New Jersey Congressman in Jackson's administration rode his horse down to Washington when Congress opened, and franked it back home, the animal trotting all the way behind the mail coach. Whether he expected the Post Office Department to feed it en route we cannot discover. This gives a hint as to why Old Hickory disliked the whole system. He pointed out in 1834, when he was President, that the Post Office had lost a hundred-thousand dollars in a year, largely because of franking, and urged—but in vain—that the practice be curbed.

England in 1840 gave us an object lesson in honesty. With the introduction of penny postage, Parliament totally abolished all franking—whiff!—just like that. But our Congressmen were not quite big enough for such action. In 1844-45 they made some feeble gesture toward "correcting" the evil, but by that time the age of pie and plums and gravy had a strong hold upon us, and no real progress could be made. In fact, the progress was in the other direction. Within a few years Congressmen were sending boxes

and trunks by mail, franking their laundry home to be washed, scribbling or rubber-stamping their names on whole packs of envelopes for constituents.



Cartoon from Harper's Weekly, *1860*

CONGRESSMAN (WHO FRANKS HIS LAUNDRY HOME TO WISCONSIN AND HAS IT DONE CHEAPLY): "SEVEN COTTON SHIRTS, THREE FLANNEL, SIX PAIRS OF SOCKS, ONE COLLAR, FIVE POCKET-HANDKERCHIEFS, THREE PAIR OF DRAWERS, TWO LINEN COATS—THAT'S ALL, I GUESS; AND AS THE MAIL'S JUST CLOSING, THAT MUST DO FOR TODAY."

The franking of the heavy freight and baggage was brought to an end on July 1, 1870, but that of purely political letters and propaganda continues to this day. Not only are the assessment and collection of political contributions and orders to vote this way or that promulgated by mail,

but all sorts of private matters of the privilegees. The writer of these lines received a request from the dean of a great, richly endowed state university in 1933 for the gift of one of his books for the university library—one of those gimme letters with which authors are continually pestered—and it was franked in an envelope of the National Recovery Administration—"Penalty for private use, $300."

A frequent writer for the *American Journal of Philately* who signed his articles as "Cosmopolitan," suggested in 1869 that the collection of franks would make an interesting new branch of philately. Whether he took his own advice we do not know, but the fact is that almost nobody else did for forty years and more afterward; in fact, nobody went in for it seriously until well into the twentieth century, and even today good collections of franks are few. The neglect of it during those intervening decades has caused us to lose many valuable specimens—some of them in those holocausts put on by a certain type of mind dominated by the notion that anything old, anything that accumulates in attic or cellar, ought to be burned and gotten out of existence. It has also caused us to lose the autograph franks of some Presidents who served in the period from the '70's onward; for in 1873 stamps were issued to the various government departments, including the executive, each in its own design, with which to post letters at the regular rates; so from that day it was no longer necessary for President Grant to autograph his envelopes. The stamps were superseded in 1877 by the present "penalty envelope." A President might still frank a letter by writing his name on the corner, but this became less and less common. Twentieth-century Presidents haven't been doing it at all save rarely in these latter years for collectors.

Two of the greatest collections of franks are those of

Edward Stern of New York and Philip H. Ward, Jr., of Philadelphia. Both are finer essays in a certain fixed category than you may find in most historical societies. Mr. Ward seems to have started it first. He began collecting autographs—just any big-name autographs—when he was a boy of eight or nine, living in Washington. Those were Spanish War and Philippine pacification days, and he ingratiated himself with newspapermen and government officials who helped him to get many war-hero autographs, including that of Aguinaldo, the rebel leader. Along with the correspondents he even got into the White House, which wasn't so hard to do in those days as now, and wangled President McKinley's autograph and Mrs.—but we'll tell that later.

In fact, from what he says, life must have been pretty jolly for a boy in Washington then, who knew his way around and had a little nerve. Why, you could even go into the State, War and Navy Building, just across from the White House—or 'most any other government building —and make the rounds of the offices, saying, "Mister, kin I have a few rubber bands?" until finally you had your pockets full, enough to make a rubber ball. You started with a bottle-cork for a center and just snapped the bands on around it until the ball was as big as you liked (some boys had them larger than baseballs); and Mr. Ward assures us that they would bounce yards higher than anything you can buy in the stores now. Or when the need arose, you went into an office and said, "Mr. Smith, you got a pencil to spare?" and there was your nice, new, unsharpened pencil. Great days, those were.

Anyhow, little Phil Ward soon found that autographed letters were more valuable than mere signatures on a piece of paper, and he began gunning for letters. Among others,

he solicited former President Cleveland, then living at Princeton, and received from him a charming little note, all written in Cleveland's small, angular script:

Princeton, Jan. 5, 1900.

MASTER PHILIP H. WARD, JR.

MY DEAR BOY:

I am not sure that a letter written and signed by me will add to the value of your collection. I am, however, rather partial to boys, and quite apt to do what they ask of me.

Yours truly,

GROVER CLEVELAND.

Sixteen years afterward, when it was too late, Mr. Ward used to kick himself around the block because it hadn't occurred to him to ask the statesman to frank the letter. But a collection of Presidential franks was something he had never heard of; in fact, there wasn't any such thing then. Ward caught the idea when he ran across an envelope franked by President Lincoln while he was shopping for autographed letters in 1916. Already a stamp collector of long standing, he said to himself at once, Why not a collection of these? And so it began. Mr. Stern took it up a few years later, and by his tardiness missed getting franks of Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt, which Ward has.

Both these collections have franks of Presidents' widows, as well as Presidents; for from Martha Washington's time to the present it has been the custom for Congress to grant the frank to the widow of a former President. But Stern also goes after Vice-Presidents, all cabinet members from the earliest times, signers of the Declaration and members of the Continental Congress. He quails, however, before

the thought of trying to collect the members of Congress since the setting up of the republic. Getting the hundreds of cabinet officers is tough enough, what with thirty or forty of them sometimes in one eight-year Presidency. Jackson, for example, had in fairly rapid succession seven or eight Secretaries of the Treasury.

Mr. Stern also collects Presidents at all stages of their careers; for a President must come up through an ascending scale of political offices or from the army after a war; navy men, apparently, are not eligible. So, if you like to toil at that sort of thing, you begin collecting him when he first received the frank, that is, as a member of the national House of Representatives, Auditor or Register of the Treasury, Comptroller of the Currency or some other political primer grade; then—if he went through those stages—as Senator, cabinet member (all capacities), Vice-President. Timothy Pickering, for example, was Postmaster-General, Secretary of War and Secretary of State under Washington and Secretary of State under John Adams; and if you are a real thirty-third degree collector of franks, you will get him under all circumstances. If he was a military hero, he would have had the frank in peace time as Adjutant General, Commissary General, Quartermaster General, real General; in war time, at much lower rank. Mr. Stern has one of Zachary Taylor, "on service," while a mere lieutenant-colonel. Lincoln also had the distinction, unique among Presidents, of having been postmaster—at New Salem, Ill., 1833-36; and postmasters in those days had the franking privilege. Years ago there was a letter-sheet, franked thus by Lincoln, in the hands of a New York collector; but it passed out of his possession, and philatelists do not know where it is now.

Finally, you collect the frank of the President after he has retired; for he has the privilege to the end of his days; and in the case of John Quincy Adams there is another stage, for he went back into Congress after leaving the Presidency. So did Andrew Johnson, but by that time the inscribed frank was no longer necessary.

Of some Presidents these collectors have several franked covers. Mr. Stern's picture of John Adams's career is particularly noteworthy, for of our second President he has no less than eight franks, covering fifty years of his lifetime —two as signer of the Declaration and member of the Continental Congress, four while President and two after retirement; the first dated 1776, shortly after he had signed the Declaration, the last only four months before his death, when he was ninety years old, and when his poor, palsied old signature was almost illegible. For some years before this, someone else had been writing the letters, Mr. Adams contributing only the signature within and the frank without.

At last accounts, Mr. Stern had four franks of Washington—two while President, and two after retirement, in 1798 and 1799, all addressed in his own hand. Some who have not gone into the matter might think that Washington's franks would be the most costly of all. But not so; price is usually fixed by scarcity. Washington was a voluminous and tireless correspondent, and today we can scarcely comprehend how he found time and energy to do all the writing he did. Mr. Stern says that the franks of at least six other ante-1873 Presidents *while in office* are rarer than Washington's; namely, those of William Henry Harrison (who lived only one month after inauguration and was ill a part of that time, making his frank the scarcest of all),

next, Lincoln's, then in the order named, Zachary Taylor, Andrew Johnson and James Monroe. Franks by most of these while in other capacities are not so rare.

Mr. Ward has the only frank of William Henry Harrison while President that the author has heard of. It is dated March 10th, 1841, just six days after he took the oath. Stern so far has had to be content with a frank of Harrison as a Congressman. Lincoln's frank is rare because in his administration, for the first time, the President's secretary was by law given the right to frank the Executive's mail; and Lincoln was too much occupied with the cares of the war to spend time in addressing and franking many envelopes. These now began to be printed with "From the President of the United States" near the top, then a space, and the word, "Secretary," over which in Lincoln's time one usually found the signature, "Jno. G. Nicolay" or "John Hay." A variant of this envelope had the words, "Executive Mansion" above the "Secretary." In Grant's time came the envelope with a printed address to the Secretary of State or other department head, and up in the corner in plain Roman type, "From the President."

Envelopes were introduced into the United States in 1842 as "the latest European novelty"; at first with ungummed flaps, though Yankee ingenuity soon added that. They were not liked at first—were considered a freakish fad which wouldn't last. Stationers wouldn't push their sale, fearing that the trade in wax and seals would be injured. For a long time the use of envelopes in private correspondence was considered as showing a lack of respect to the addressee.

So up to 1842 all letters, and for some time thereafter many letters, were just written on one side of a sheet of

paper which was then folded over so as to enclose the writing, and the edges sealed with wax or wafers. Therefore, the person who has a Presidential frank dated before 1845 or '50 is apt to have the whole letter of the great man as well. Some will be interested in those bearing upon political or governmental subjects; but most of us turn quite as eagerly to the ones which deal with private and family affairs, the minutiae which comprise so large a part of the mosaic of life. For example, one of Mr. Stern's letters from Washington, while the national capital was at Philadelphia, written to his overseer at Mount Vernon, reveals anxiety over the following summer's mint juleps:

> My letter of yesterday's date, was closed, and sent to the Post Office, before it occurred to me, to enquire whether you have taken advantage of the present frost to store the House with Ice. Do not neglect to have it well filled, and well pounded, as it is filling.—Ice, put in whilst the weather is intensely cold, keeps better than that which is taken up in more moderate weather —and still more so, than that, which is in a state of dissolution—But if you have not already embraced the present spell, you must take such as you can get, or you will probably get none, as it is not likely, that there will be a hard freezing spell, after the middle of this month.
>
> I am—Yr. friend &c.
>
> G. WASHINGTON.

A frank of Washington in Mr. Ward's collection covers a letter written by Tobias Lear, his private secretary after the President's retirement, and shows us how, in those days, you read your newspapers and magazines first and

paid for them afterward. The letter is addressed to Colonel Biddle, Washington's banker at Philadelphia:

DR. SIR:

General Washington requests you will be so good as to pay Mr. Fenno's account for Newspapers which have been furnished him, whenever the same shall be presented, and charge it to the General's account.

With very great esteem
I am dear Sir
Your most Obt Servt
TOBIAS LEAR.

Mr. Stern has a letter of Jefferson's to a functionary at Monticello, specifying the disposition of a check for $360 which he encloses, and warning that some other bills must wait, for he can send no more money next month, "no matter how pressing the demands may be. I shall be glad to hear," he goes on, "how my horse's lameness is, and your progress at the milldam. When that is done, Maddox must begin his work & will want attendance. I presume by that time you will have the other waggon from Bedford," and so on.

A pleasant little letter from President Madison to his mother is one of Stern's treasures:

MY DEAR MOTHER:

Sister Rose informs me that you wish a remittance of $400. I enclose a check in favor of Capt. Eddows who will save you all trouble by endorsing and negotiating it. I presume he will be able to convert it into cash readily on the usual terms.

Dolly is again pretty well. She has been several times latterly & for some continuance, much otherwise, more

than once seriously sick. We learn with great pleasure that your health has been but little affected throughout the winter, and hope this will find it remaining good.

Yr. Affc. son,

J. MADISON.

Feb. 25, 1816.

Individual forms of franking are interesting. While Washington was in the army he added "Public Service" to his signature in addressing governmental officials. Evidently he didn't relish that word, "Free," and in earlier years never used it in franking, as so many others did. Franklin playfully welded it into his signature, "B. Free Franklin." While President, Washington merely wrote "President U. S." in the lower left hand corner of the letter. After his retirement he wrote "Free. G. Washington" or with the variant of his signature, "G Washington," though sometimes instead of "Free" he wrote "By Post."

One finds Franklin addressing a letter to "Mrs. Franklin, Philadelphia," in perfect confidence that the signature in the lower corner would tell the Post Office which Mrs. Franklin was meant. John Adams, with equal nonchalance, addressed letters to "Mrs. Adams, Quincy," blandly assuming that that was the only Quincy in the nation. True, it is probably the only one called by the natives "Quinzy," as if it were a disease. On one occasion, however, old John did condescend to give the Post Office a tip, naming it as "Quincy, near Boston."

The postal service was expected to be very intelligent and alert in those days. One of Washington's letters in his later years is addressed just to "Maj. Harrison, Loudoun County." Undoubtedly the major was a big enough man

to warrant such confidence. But a man who wrote to Jefferson and gave his address as just "Richmond" was less prominent, and the great democrat was much puzzled over where to send the reply. He might have exclaimed with Richard III, "I think there be six Richmonds in the field," had he not found upon investigation that there were already fifteen Richmonds in the United States. After much study of the letter, he decided that it had probably come from Richmond, Vermont, and so directed his reply there. But he had guessed wrong. The addressee was "not known" there, and notwithstanding Jefferson's frank in the corner, a stamped notation on it shows that the letter was sent by the automata who drew salaries as postal functionaries to the Dead Letter Office, from which it finally limped back to the sage of Monticello.

Funny little incidents come to light as one pores over a collection like this. President Pierce (1853-57) was once vacationing in Bermuda and, writing a letter to a friend back in the States, just wrote his name in the upper corner from force of habit and dropped the missive into a mail box. Back it came from the Post Office. Sorry; Mr. Pierce's mere autograph might have considerable postal influence in the United States, but the laws seemed to prevent its having any potency in a British colony. So the President stuck a portrait of Queen Victoria over his signature and sent it back to the Post Office, perhaps with his face as red as on that day when he and Mrs. Pierce and a lady guest, driving on the Virginia side of the Potomac, came to a toll gate and found that neither the President nor the ladies nor the coachman had one solitary sixpence in pocket with which to pay toll.

Years after President Tyler retired from the Presidency—it was in 1858, to be exact—an admirer wrote to him, ask-

ing for his autograph, enclosing a self-addressed, stamped envelope—as everyone should when asking authors, *et al.*, for favors—either forgetting or being unaware that ex-Presidents have the frank. Mr. Tyler was aware of it, however, and when he very courteously replied from Sherwood Forest, his country estate—you may see it today, down on the Virginia Peninsula—he carefully steamed the stamp off—its serrate mark is still there on the envelope in the Stern collection, as plain as can be—wrote his frank, "J. Tyler," across the former place of the stamp and sent the letter on. Now, whether Mr. Tyler thought the man would be still more gratified by having a frank from him, or whether he just wanted that three-cent stamp, is a question that can never be settled.

Mr. Stern, by the way, has more than twenty of Tyler's franks—most of them on letters addressed to kinsmen and in-laws.

One finds Presidents and former Presidents before 1850 writing upon all sorts of paper; and of course, as explained, the letter-sheet became also the envelope. Not only white of various grades, but queer grays, yellows, browns—some of it palpably off a shopkeeper's counter—blue, green and what not. A letter of President Van Buren is written on a deep-green sheet, while one of John Adams when he was President, addressed to Benjamin Stoddart, Secretary of the Navy, is scrivened upon honest brown wrapping paper.

How many of the earlier Presidents used just the single initial in franking!—J. Adams, M. Van Buren, J. Tyler, Z. Taylor, M. Fillmore, A. Lincoln. Jefferson signed "Th. Jefferson, Pr. U.S." John Quincy Adams used only the initials of his Christian names, and his "J" looks so much like an "I" that one is reminded of a popular, semi-scientific indoor sport of today. J. K. Polk's tiny signature winds

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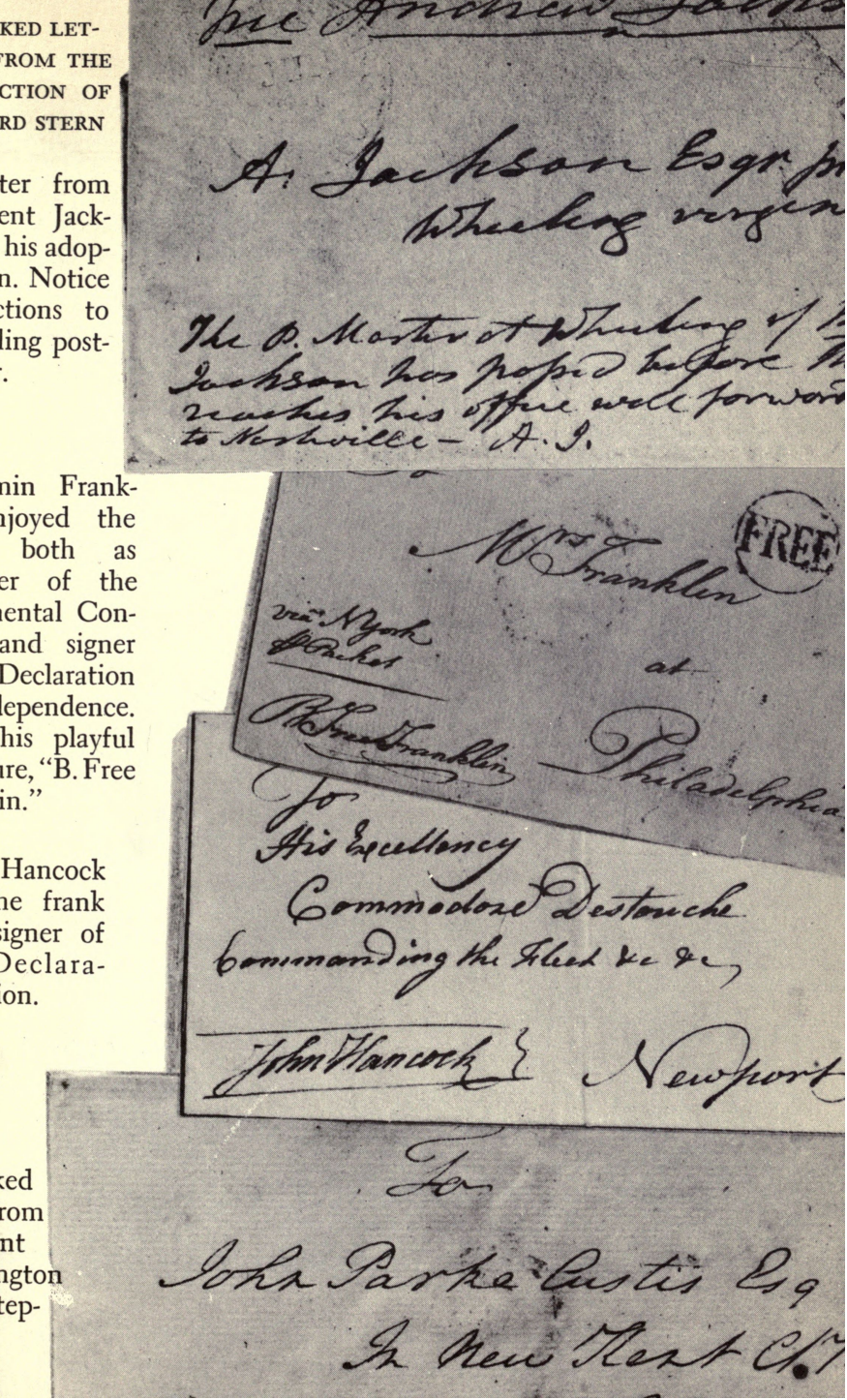


Ulysses Simpson Grant

Eighteenth President

1869-1877

From the President of the United States.

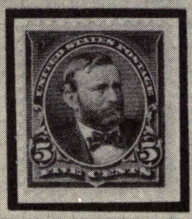


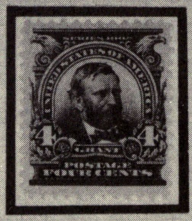
U. S. Grant

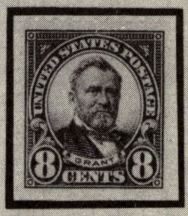
Hon. C. Bowen, Jr.

No 3 Park Pl

New York C







A page from Philip H. Ward, Jr.'s, album of presidential franks. He mounts stamps which have carried the president's

up in a little paraph like a coil spring. Pierce signed in three ways—Franklin (rarest), Frank., or Frank[n]. Johnson was the only one to sign in retirement, "Andrew Johnson, Ex Pres U S." It is noticeable that Lincoln's franks and the signatures to the great majority of his letters read "A Lincoln," while in state papers, proclamations, and official writings he wrote the "Abraham" in full. Old John Adams, with characteristic bullheadedness, usually plumped his signature down almost in the middle of the cover, a little below the center, where it was mixed in with the address. General Taylor seems to have franked some envelopes ahead of time and left them with his secretary, for at least one has been seen lately, unused.

With the autograph frank rendered no longer necessary in Grant's latter years, only the White House envelope being needed to carry the Presidential mail free, there came an hiatus, dreadful to present-day collectors, when franks practically vanished from the political scene. You may find plenty of franks of Hayes and Garfield as members of Congress, but try to find one of either as President! Benjamin Harrison and McKinley entered Congress too late to use the personal frank, and Cleveland held no office before the Presidency which entitled him to the privilege. A Long Island collector, Sidney A. Hessel, has a frank of President Arthur which is probably unique, and one of Theodore Roosevelt which is almost as rare. Ward also has Roosevelt. Stern has him as Vice-President, but not as President.

By that time the autograph and stamp collectors were swinging into action. Ward, then a youth, though he had actually begun his frank collection, induced his friend, Senator Philander Knox, to obtain President Taft's frank, and it appears in the Ward collection on an envelope ad-

dressed to Knox. Mr. Ward next went after President Wilson and wrought upon him for more than two years before attaining success. When you ask a twentieth-century President for his frank, he—or more likely, his secretary—doesn't as a rule know what you mean, and is apt just to have an ordinary White House envelope addressed and sent to you.

President Wilson was offish, and seemed to suspect that Ward wanted the frank for some commercial purpose. Finally, Mr. Ward sent his collection of franks, as far as it had gone then, down for the President's inspection. When it came back, try to imagine the collector's joy when he found with it an envelope which had duly gone through the mail at Washington, addressed to Secretary of War Baker, bearing the President's frank and addressed in the small type and greenish-black ribbon peculiar to Mr. Wilson's own personal machine, so it would appear that he even tapped out the address with his own fingers. Mr. Ward assumes that the President looked over his collection with Secretary Baker, and observing that Taft's franked letter was addressed to a cabinet officer, decided to follow his example.

Incidentally, Mr. Stern also has Taft as Chief Justice. Later Presidents have obliged the collectors upon request, though the present one is said to be very difficult.

After Washington died, the desire to honor him was so great that a proposal was made, among others, to extend the franking privilege to his widow, and this was done by Congress on April 3, 1800. This set a precedent, and ever afterward the privilege was extended to the wives who survived Presidents or former Presidents. No blanket law to this effect has ever been enacted, a special Act of Congress being required in each case. But for generations, Congress

waited dignifiedly for each widow to ask for the privilege—which she usually did immediately—before granting it. Two widows of earlier days refused to ask it—Julia Gardiner, second wife of President Tyler, daughter of a proud New York family whose manorial domain, Gardiner's Island, at the east end of Long Island, has been in the family for 300 years—and Eliza McCray Johnson, whose feeling toward the legislative body which had tried to unseat her husband was apparently such that she could ask no favors of it.

No collector, so far as we know, has ever succeeded in laying hands on a franked letter of Martha Washington, but there are fine specimens of Dolly Madison's correspondence, franked in characteristically original, business-like fashion, "Free. D. P. Madison." An interesting peculiarity of her signature is the straight, horizontal, basic line with which each letter is joined to the succeeding one, so that the writing looks almost as if a ruled line had been drawn along the base, giving it the strong individuality which might be expected from the hand of one of the finest, most original personalities among the ladies of the White House.

Mrs. John Quincy Adams also used only initials in franking—"L. C. Adams." Her letter in the Stern collection is addressed to the scholar-orator, Edward Everett, whose florid two-hour address at Gettysburg so overshadowed Lincoln's that some of the newspapers merely remarked that "The President also spoke a few words." Most earlier widows did not write or indicate by an initial their maiden names, as is done now, but just wrote in many instances, Anna Harrison, Sarah Polk or Mary Lincoln—though Mr. Stern has also a cover franked "Mrs. J. K. Polk," and Lincoln's widow sometimes signed, "Mrs. A. Lincoln" or just "Mrs. Lincoln." The simple "Grace Coolidge" shows a

return to the earlier style, though with Mrs. Benjamin Harrison came the fashion of signing the name in full—Mary Lord Harrison, Edith Bolling Wilson, Florence Kling Harding.

The rare franks of Ida Saxton McKinley are a curious study—the writing almost microscopic in its smallness, an uncertain scrawl crowded against the upper edge of the envelope. Mrs. McKinley was in such feeble health that she could scarcely hold a pen and therefore seldom franked a letter, preferring to use stamps instead. In this connection Mr. Ward tells an interesting incident, already hinted at. When he was an insistent autograph hunter, aged ten, he got into the White House during the McKinley administration, and found there Mrs. Grant, the General's widow, calling on Mrs. McKinley. Mrs. Grant gave him her autograph at once, but Mrs. McKinley would only promise to send him hers by mail. Within two or three days there came a photograph of the McKinley home at Canton, with inset portraits of the President and his wife—probably a campaign picture—and her name inscribed across the bottom; but she hadn't written it. It had plainly been done by the faithful husband, that great exemplar of wedded love and loyalty, who took every possible care and burden off her frail shoulders.

Which reminds us that George B. Sloane of New York has an envelope of Mrs. Harding's, sent out during her last illness, in fact, only two weeks before she died in 1924, and bearing the unique wording, "Private Frank, Florence Kling Harding," written by another hand than her own. The post office at Marion was evidently aware of the circumstances and passed the letter through. Mr. Sloane also has a franked letter of Mrs. Grant's which proves that the receiving post office either did not know

who Julia D. Grant was or had never heard of the franking privilege, for it stuck a postage-due stamp on the envelope and made the recipient pay up.

Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt's franks are not hard to obtain, for she writes many letters and uses the frank extensively. When she sends a check down to her butcher or grocer in Oyster Bay, he opens the letter carefully, for he has a salable article there. In these cases she always writes her name "Edith K. Roosevelt"; but finding that on certain rare occasions she has written it "Edith C. Roosevelt"—her name before marriage was Edith Kermit Carow—the alert Mr. Stern wrote to her, asking if he might not have a cover franked with the "C," to which she retorted that she franked that way only when writing to her own personal friends. Speaking of little eccentricities—

Mrs. Woodrow Wilson is in bad standing among collectors, for she is the first President's widow to obtain the right to have a rubber stamp facsimile of her signature made for franking her letters, and that isn't considered cricket. Collectors complain that when you send a self-addressed envelope to her, asking for the little boon, sometimes she ignores the request, sometimes the cover comes back with that damned rubber stamp on it, maybe put there by her secretary—who knows? It just isn't nice, that's all! Some collectors are even beginning to doubt that Mr. Wilson was the great statesman he was supposed to be.

In the present century, widows never ask for the frank, and Congress has fallen into the habit of granting it unasked. But it took the lawmakers some time to get the notion, for Mrs. Benjamin Harrison, who proudly though privately declared that she wanted nothing from the government, neither frank nor pension, stamped her letters for eight years before Congress granted her the privilege.

It was given to her and Mrs. Cleveland on the same day in 1909, and they have now used it for thirty years. Incidentally, it may be pointed out that the latter must of course be collected both as Mrs. Cleveland and Mrs. Folsom.

Several widows of Presidents have long outlived their husbands. Mrs. Madison had the use of the frank for thirteen years, Mrs. Lincoln for more than sixteen, Mrs. Grant nearly seventeen, Mrs. William Henry Harrison—though in such poor health that she did not go to Washington during her husband's brief span of office, and consequently never presided in the White House—had it for twenty-three and a half years, and Mrs. Polk—tall, stately, brunette intellectual who was not only a social queen in the White House, but the only President's wife who was also his secretary—lost her husband immediately after the end of his single term, and for forty-one years and seven months thereafter franked her letters from the old mansion on Capitol Hill in Nashville, dying at last in 1891, a relic of another age.

Collections such as those of Messers Ward and Stern are real museum pieces. The title pages and the data on each subject are beautifully hand-lettered and decorated. In the Stern collection, a portrait of the President or widow, either one of those fine old steel engravings of the past or a photograph, is on the upper part of the page, with the franked letter below it. In the Ward albums the portraits and franks are on alternate pages; while underneath the frank are mounted some of our stamps bearing the portrait of this particular President, made from the official or authorized portrait which, until the recent "Presidential series" came out, usually prevailed in stamp making.

Can anyone present identify Ralph Izard? Or Jonathan

Blanchard or John E. Howard or Nicholas Van Dyke or Alexander White? Well, they were all members of the Continental Congress, and Mr. Stern has their franks, as well as those of many of their fellow members—not to mention signers of the Declaration, and in later periods, Vice-Presidents, cabinet members by the hundred, army officers and other functionaries of government too numerous to catalogue.

Away back in pre-stamp days, before 1845, all the postmasters in the country had the privilege of not only sending letters free, but receiving them free, too—for you could send letters C.O.D. then—and right lavishly some of them used it. If you wrote a letter to a postmaster, you just tossed it into the mail with no thought of expense, either to yourself or anyone else. If away from home, the postmaster could frank his mail just the same. J. W. Longnecker of Hartford, who collects these franks of Connecticut postmasters, says that he has followed Zolman Wildman, postmaster at Danbury around 1813-1828, on a long journey all through the South, just by letters he wrote back home—sometimes franking them "Free, Z. Wildman, P M of Danbury, Conn.," sometimes just with his name. It is interesting to speculate upon how many impostors may have gone about the country, representing themselves as postmasters and sending mail free.

A postmaster at Canandaigua, N. Y., once made a nice thing out of his franking privilege. He was dismissed in 1829 for running a lottery and using his frank to promote it. In one year he had sent 3,080 free letters and received 1,397, all with regard to his lottery business alone!

THE PAGEANTRY OF THE POST

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

"Tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones"—these can all be found in stamps, too, just as in the scenery of the Forest of Arden in Rosalind's time, and collectors are finding new ones every year. The seemingly endless flood of pictorial stamps which most of the countries of the world are pouring upon us now—celebrities, living, dead and legendary, historical and perhaps-historical events, scenery, industry, science, animals, human types and what not—has one virtue, at least; it has supplied subjects for scores of new stamp collections—not by countries, but by other categories, all of them charming to look upon, and many with very interesting and informative connotations. The pleasure found in assembling them is enhanced by their physical beauty.

And here, for the first proposal of such a hobby, we must go back once more to 1869, when the *Stamp Collectors' Magazine* of London suggested collections of postage-stamp portraits alone—for many stamps had already been issued without portraits. Strange how many suggestions were made in that year which were absolutely novel, which were not accepted at once, but which collectors took up long afterward!

One of the most elaborate and most famous collections of this sort is that of Theodore E. Steinway on the subject of music. A study of his collection will show how the enthusiast leaves no stone unturned in his search for something pertinent to his subject; sometimes pulling in by the ears something which to the lay eye appears to be a little off genus, but no matter. A perfectly legal example of this meticulous care in Steinway's collection is a view of the study of Camilo Castelo Branco, the Portuguese novelist, on Portugal's series of 1925 in his honor, for a prominent item of the furniture is a piano. In somewhat similar vein, our two-cent George Rogers Clark centenary is included because it shows the rolling of drums at the surrender of Fort Sackville. It took a watchful eye to see the implication in the Barbados stamp picturing Britannia driving a team of sea horses, which of course illustrates the song, "Britannia Rules the Waves," and another of Germany, with an eagle frowning across the Rhineland—"The Watch on the Rhine" of course. Laymen may wonder at the Russian stamp honoring Pushkin, the novelist, until reminded that from his works were drawn the librettos of no less than five great operas—*Boris Godunoff, Le Coq d'Or, Eugen Onegin, Pique Dame* and *Russlan and Ludmilla.*

Numerous are the stamps issued in memory of composers. One of the handsomest pages in Mr. Steinway's album contains the series of oversized charity stamps issued by Austria in 1922, bearing portraits of seven great creators of music of the past who made their homes in the then gay and liberal Vienna. Under each stamp is drawn two or three bars of music from one of the particular composer's best-loved works; under Beethoven, for example, a bit of the "Moonlight Sonata"; under Schubert, the "Unfinished Symphony"; Johann Strauss, "The Beautiful Blue

Danube"; Bruckner, his "Third Symphony"; Mozart, "Alla Turca"; Haydn, a sonata; Hugo Wolf, the song, "Secrecy." Topping it all, most appropriately, is the thousand-kroner stamp bearing the distant view of Vienna, long the musical capital of the world.

On another page, the Czechoslovak stamps honoring Smetana and Dvorak have bars respectively from *The Bartered Bride* and the "New World Symphony." In similar fashion, the German stamps commemorating Bach show "Passacaglia," and Handel, the popular "Largo"; under Poland's Paderewski is drawn a fragment of the famous "Minuet," under Chopin one of his polonaises; with France's Berlioz in *The Damnation of Faust*, with Italy's Pergolesi is *La Serva Padrone* and Spontini, *La Vestale*; Hungary's Liszt, a piano sonata; and so it goes.

There is another page devoted to Liszt; the 20f Hungary stamp of 1934 bearing his portrait has underneath it some bars of the popular "Liebestraum," and below that is an autographed letter written by Liszt from Weimar in 1881 to William Steinway, introducing a pupil who wished to buy a piano from the manufacturer. Elsewhere there is an autographed letter from Richard Wagner to the same Mr. Steinway, written at Bayreuth in 1875, complimenting his piano; and there is also the title page, all inscribed in Wagner's own hand, of a "Grand Festival March," which he wrote in 1876 for the "Opening of the Centennial Celebration of the Declaration of Independence of the United States of North America." Why do we never hear that march nowadays?

Germany, as may be expected, has paid lavish tribute to Wagner with a scene from each of ten of his greatest operas in one series, in another with Nibelungen scenes only.

A specimen of the 1919 Paderewski stamp of Poland stands alone on one album page, with the slashing signature of the great pianist-premier across it. In 1934 Czechoslovakia issued sheets of stamps, marking the centenary of the Czech national anthem, framed above and below by bars of music from the song, and the sheet in the Steinway collection is autographed by President Benes. Brazil in like fashion issued in 1936 sheets on the hundredth anniversary of the birth of her composer, Antonio Carlos Gomes, the frame containing passages from his opera, *Il Guarany*, perhaps the greatest music that Brazil has yet produced. Many small countries honor their own composers, some not widely known elsewhere; among them Switzerland, which reminds us of Hans Georg Nageli and his song so long beloved in the old beer halls and universities, "Life Let Us Cherish." When Queen Liliuokalani of Hawaii placed her portrait on her country's stamps, she had no thought of immortalizing herself as a composer, but one of them is in the Steinway collection because she wrote that wistful and famous Auf Wiedersehen of the Pacific, "Aloha Oe," said to have been inspired by seeing her sister, Princess Likelike, bidding farewell to her lover.

Venezuela remembered her great pianist, Teresa Carreño, in 1938, on the occasion of the removal of her remains from New York, where she died in 1917, to her native land. Italy brought out two Stradivarius stamps in 1937, one of them a reproduction of Hamman's famous painting, showing the master thoughtfully gazing down upon one of his finished violins. France eulogized Rouget de l'Isle and his "Marseillaise" with at least three stamps. Bellini must be a favorite composer of Premier Mussolini's, for Italy has produced a whole series of stamps in his honor.

The musical instruments pictured on stamps are legion.

Several countries show the old-time post horn; some have heralds with trumpets, on others, military or boy-scout scenes include bugles and drums. Ireland of course has its harp, Russia a whole collection of stringed instruments, Esthonia an ancient bard with his harp, Ukraine a Cossack strumming a guitar, Tripoli the native flageolet and bagpipe, Peru a man sitting beside his llama, playing the quena; France a Muse with lyre; Italy Pan playing his pipes; Czechoslovakia, a baby being soothed by a violin lullaby; Abyssinia, the Empress Waizeri Zauditu entertained by a woman with a guitar, North Ingermanland, two peasants doing a duet on the zither. Even the lyre bird of Australia is not inapposite. The Belgian Congo introduces savage music—tom-toms, drums, flutes and curious stringed instruments.

Bells are brought in as musical instruments, which gives opportunity to include the many stamps carrying pictures of famous campaniles and cathedral towers, the bells of the Kremlin, the same which rang for the coronation of Boris Godunoff in 1598, and finally, our own Liberty Bell. Even in cancellations and cachets, music plays a part. Lyres have been mentioned as among the old cork-cut cancellations of the nineteenth century in our own country. The Wagner festival at Bayreuth always brings a portrait of Wagner on the postmark. A German cancellation of 1935 shows a bar of triumphant music, "Deutsch ist die Saar." The Saxon Sängerfest of 1935 at Leipzig portrays an old chorister in his robe. On others marking current Festspiels, Liederfests or Sängerbundfests there are pictures of instruments, composers and so on. Even the Steinway, N. Y., post office (now in New York City) has had two cancellations picturing a piano.

An album such as this is a promoter of knowledge, for

it compels research such as some of us would not willingly undertake otherwise, and not the least attractive feature of it is the information so acquired, carefully lettered on the pages.

Mrs. Hugh M. Clark's album of fashions is another notable one. The fashion plates include those of both men and women, ranging through the whole gamut of clothing down to practically none at all; in fact, the latest styles in loin cloths are shown on stamps of Raratonga, Congo, Mexico, French Guiana and French Oceanica. Congo and Ruanda natives, who occupy more than two pages, apparently spend the least on clothing. A considerable portion of the style show deals with peasant costumes. Germany pictures ten peasant women, bust or half length, from East Prussia, Silesia, the Rhineland, Lower Saxony, Furmark, the Black Forest, Hesse, Upper Bavaria, Friesland and Franconia. Austria in 1934 issued a series showing the costumes, two or more each, of Salzburg, Tyrol, Steiermark, Vorarlberg, Upper Austria, Vienna, and the military service. Turkey, Hungary, Ireland, France, Russia, Estonia and others also illustrate their distinctive folk garb.

Even in the dress of the townsfolk of Mexico and Peru, the old Spanish influence is still apparent. The sarongs of the East Indies and Indo-China are here; the pictures of Greek patriots in the war for independence show characteristic features of costume, headdress and hair ornaments. There are two pages of fine coiffures, including those of the Princesses of Luxembourg and Liechtenstein, Queen Astrid of Belgium, Queen Wilhelmina of Holland, Anita Garibaldi and a Turkish typist. On another page are African jungle headdresses, both men's and women's. Switzerland exhibits the headgear of a nurse and a nun, likewise hats from Basle, Lucerne, Appenzell, Geneva, Valais, and

Graubunden. There are pages of athletic wear from all parts of the world; a series of costumes of utility by Germany, including those of a business man, blacksmith, mason, miner, farmer, stonecutter, judge, etc.

Under men's fashions of bygone eras are found noted characters in Austria and Curaçao during the seventeenth century, sixteenth-century Brazil and the British Guiana ninety-six-cent stamp which portrays Sir Walter Raleigh. A page of beards includes that of the cantankerous Edwin M. Stanton on the seven-cent United States 1873, Christopher Columbus and Valdivia on Chilean stamps, the magnificent lambrequin of old King Leopold II of Belgium, General Maximo Gomez of Cuba, and several others of lesser fame. There are mustachios, from Jan Sobieski on an Austrian commemorative, on down, and burnsides—how the present generation ever fell into the habit of calling them sideburns is a dark mystery—of which those of Emperor Franz Josef of Austria are easily tops. A page of Austrian monarchs and musicians of the eighteenth century gives us some fashion hints as to wigs and perukes.

Not distantly related to this are the collections by others of women of the world; and when you consider that "women" includes all queens and princesses—some dogmatists even construe it as including the thousand and one portraits of Queen Victoria—it becomes quite a catalogue. Any stamp in which a woman appears in a group is apt to be considered eligible. Others collect children of the world, but Mrs. Edith Adams Brown of New York subdivides this idea and collects only the royal children.

Apparently the first instance of this sort was the appearance of Edward VII of England as the Prince of Wales in his latter teens on the seventeen-center of New Brunswick, 1860; the same portrait being used by Newfoundland in

1868. Next came the baby pictures of Alfonso XIII on the stamps of Spain and her colonies in 1889, followed by young Queen Wilhelmina of Holland in 1891. A charming portrait of Edward VIII as a curly-haired baby was used by Newfoundland in 1898; and the same country put forth a royal family issue in 1911, on which appeared all the children of George V, including Prince John, who died in 1919. In 1931 and again in 1938 Princess Elizabeth was on a Newfoundland stamp, and in 1939 she and her sister, Margaret Rose, appeared on one of the stamps of the royal visit issue of Canada.

Montenegro in 1910 recalled the past by picturing its King, Nicholas I, in his youth. Roumania showed the boy King Michael in 1928 before he was displaced by his father. Liechtenstein in 1929 had an exquisite child portrait of Prince Francis I, and young King Peter was seen on the stamps of Jugoslavia in 1933. Luxembourg has a whole gallery of comely children—two princes and three princesses—and it is hard to tell which is prettiest, some of these or the Belgian child-welfare stamp of 1935 on which are the three royal youngsters, Baudoin, Albert and Josephine Charlotte. Egypt pictured King Farouk in 1929 at the age of ten, and in 1937 on his eighteenth birthday. Even his royal wedding stamp is eligible for this collection, for his bride portrayed there is only seventeen. And finally, Mrs. Brown has included a boy picture of Lenin which appeared on a stamp of Russia, and he came so near being a king that it is not wildly inappropriate.

Lloyd Heath, one of the librarians of the Collectors Club of New York, making a talk on philately before the Men's Club of his church in White Plains, remarked that practically any subject could be illustrated by one of these special collections. The minister of the church thereupon

plumped the challenge at him, "What about the Bible?" It rather threw Heath on his beam ends for a moment, but he rallied, accepted the gage and promised to prove his point at an early date. He found that many of the places mentioned in the Bible appear on stamps of the Near East; many views of Damascus and Antioch, also the Euphrates River on the stamps of Syria; Jerusalem, the Sea of Galilee, and the Tomb of Rachel, on Palestine, Mount Ararat on Armenia, Tyre and the famous cedars on Lebanon. Portugal attempted to portray the Angel Gabriel, Abyssinia essayed pictures of King Solomon's throne and the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. Several countries show Jesus, several the Madonna and Child. Belgium has a graphic representation of the Archangel Michael's battle with Satan (Rev. VII, 7). The Saar pictures two famous Biblical stories, The Good Samaritan and the Widow's Mite. Germany on a series of four charity stamps illustrated four of Christ's injunctions to service: feeding the hungry, relieving the thirsty, clothing the naked and healing the sick.

Greece has pictures of Athens, as well as of St. Paul preaching on Mars Hill. Malta makes quite a feature of Paul, because of his shipwreck there: a portrait of him, a picture of him shaking off the viper, and also of the shipwreck, though critics complain of this that it shows two women in the water who are not in the story, and whose coiffures seem undisturbed by their violent experience. There is a fine picture of a peasant sowing by hand on an Armenian stamp (as well as on others), which illustrates the parable of the sower; and Armenia also shows a woman at a well, who might be the one to whom Christ talked. Italy, on its so-called Propaganda of the Faith issue of 1923, has a fine picture of Christ among His Disciples.



Stamps lent by Scott Stamp and Coin Co.

Suggestions for five sorts of specialized stamp collections which cost little. Reading downward, birds, bridges, children, artists, the world's work.

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Picturing or symbolizing the Ten Commandments is a tougher assignment, but these collectors attempt it. Any pictures of savage idols or the ancient Greek gods, for example, would cover the first two Commandments; our Mother's Day stamp illustrates "honor thy father and thy mother." Heath chose the slaying of St. Olav on a Norway stamp as a connotation of "Thou shalt not kill." For "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy," there were stamps made to order—those which Belgium used to issue with a little extension at the bottom on which was printed in French and Flemish, "Do not deliver on Sunday." Belgium delivers mail seven days in the week, but if you or your correspondent considered this a violation of the Biblical injunction, or there was any other reason, you just left that tab on the stamp. Otherwise you tore it off—it was perforated for the purpose—before affixing the stamp to the letter. The Seventh Commandment—well—this is rather a delicate subject, but we observe that a lady collector in the same line thinks she has pictured this admonition very aptly with one of the Goya nudes, though we cannot believe that Mr. Heath used this example before his church club.

Even pictures of the stars, clouds, lightning and rainbows are taken as having a relation to passages in the Bible, and ancient musical instruments are like those to which even Old Testament kings danced and made merry.

Heath soon found himself locally famous; other churches in the New York district and even Rotary Clubs wanted to hear the talk. Word of it spread through the country, and he received fan mail. A clergyman in far-away British Columbia wrote him, "This isn't a stamp, but it has a bearing upon the Fourth Commandment"; and he enclosed an

envelope with a cancellation "Observe the Sabbath" which Canada used for some time.

Others such as Burnes Solomon of Brooklyn, Mrs. Edith Adams Brown of New York and John J. Gelbach of Philadelphia, broaden this category to religions in general, which includes what we call the pagan creeds. It also includes the Catholic calendar of saints, most of whom the Protestants do not recognize. Here are old temples and statues of the gods and goddesses of ancient Greece and Rome. Both these countries show the chariot of the sun, and ancient veneration of that great orb is indicated by the pictures of it on stamps of Persia, Peru, India, the Philippines and Uruguay; Mexico has the Pyramid of the Sun; Egypt, the eye of Ra the Sun-god. Old Egypt also displays its pyramids and gigantic statues, Persia a conception of Ahura Mazda, the lord of light and wisdom; Mexico, of Tlaloc, the god of water, the French Indies of Brahma; Nepal of Siva, while French Oceanica and the New Hebrides display native idols. Of course the pictures of Mercury the Messenger, an early symbol of the post, are numberless. Argentina uses a picture of the famous border statue, the Christ of the Andes, and France the smiling angel of Reims Cathedral.

There are collections dealing with saints alone—and how many of them are on stamps!—not only the Biblical ones already mentioned, but Publius of Malta, Martin of Tours (dividing his cloak with the beggar), Wenceslaus, Olav, Ursula, Elizabeth of Hungary, Stephen, Gisela, Cyril, Laszlo, Emery, Joan of Arc, Benedict, Rose of Lima and many others. Italy has a whole series on St. Francis of Assisi, and both she and Portugal have series on St. Anthony of Padua, while Portugal has another on St. Anthony of Lisbon; and there is also Italy's series on the monastery of Monte Cassino, which brings in its founder, St. Bene-

dict. Cyprus shows the discovery of the tomb of St. Barnabas.

A collection of religions naturally includes all churches, cathedrals, chapels, temples, mosques and shrines, and these are by some enthusiasts collected separately. Probably the most superbly mounted of all these is that of Henry Wood Salisbury of Brooklyn, who calls it "Houses of God." Each album page is framed in a Gothic arch of blue and gold, with circular ornaments in the upper corners like the rose windows in a cathedral, intricately designed in all the rich colors of stained glass, while a much larger and still more gorgeous one is painted just under the center of the arch. Each stamp has a rectangular frame of black and gold painted behind it, the black forming the outer border, the gold next the stamp to set off its bright colors.

Here Christian and non-Christian houses of worship have an equal part—the ruins of the ancient temples of classic mythology, Shinto, Buddhist and the two great Catholic sects of today, for Protestant temples are almost non-existent on stamps. Belgium pictures St. Gudule's Cathedral at Brussels, Sts. Rombaut, Baron and Wandu, churches at Bruges and Dinant, and two views of Orval Abbey. Italy has the monasteries already mentioned, likewise all the greater churches of Rome, and the Pope opening and closing the Holy Door. The Netherlands shows Gouda Church and a church ship; Roumania presents Alba Julia Cathedral and King Charles at the shrine of St. Nicholas in 1904; Lebanon, the great temples of Baalbek; Nicaragua, its Leon Cathedral; Palestine, the Mosque of Omar; Spain, the Mosque of the Moors at Cordoba; Monaco, St. Devote; Norway, Trondhjem Cathedral; Estonia, the nunnery of St. Brigitta. Panama shows its old churches on three stamps. Mexico honors Christian and pagan alike

with the Cathedral of Mexico and Mayan temples. Even North Ingermanland brought forth the ruins of an ancient church.

Overlapping this at some points, and yet a distinct category, is the archaeological colection of Miss Cornelia C. Ward of New York. Here again are scores of stamps covering not only temples but other ruins in old Rome and Greece, in Baalbek; Mexico's pyramids, Aztec and Mayan relics, similar wonders of Guatemala, Honduras and British Honduras; Peru's reminders of the Incas; in Bolivia the marvels of Tiahuanico and in Armenia, of Ani. Here are some thirty stamps of Egypt, picturing her pyramids, the Sphinx, rock temples, colossi, the ruins of Karnak, and ancient statuary. The crumbling handiwork of Imperial Rome is found also in the stamps of Fiume, France (that great aqueduct, the Pont du Gard), Algeria, Libya, Tunisia and Tripolitana; of the Greeks in Crete, Cyprus, Cyrenaica and Eritrea. Among the great cities of ancient history whose glory departed two millennia and more ago, Ctesiphon is in Iraq, Bosra in Syria and Persepolis in Persia. Malta has some megalithic ruins. In the Far East, China pictures the Temple of Heaven and the Great Wall, Manchukuo an old pagoda and a mausoleum at Mukden, Ceylon the Temple of the Tooth of Buddha, Indo-China that mighty mystery, Ankor-Vat. If you wish to include the early Middle Ages, France, Spain and other countries will have entries; and finally, in our own land, there is that fine view of the Mesa Verde cliff dwellings in our National Parks series.

Dr. Otho C. Hudson is one of several who have slightly varying collections dealing with medicine, surgery and health. Health, by the way, is every year boosted as a good idea on stamps by New Zealand. New South Wales in 1897

issued two stamps combining Queen Victoria's jubilee celebration with the fight against tuberculosis, it being the first country to take such action. Since then, anti-tuberculosis societies in many countries have been aided by stamps. More than twenty countries have thus honored the Red Cross; charity and child welfare issues have appeared in twenty-five more. Single stamps or whole issues picturing hospitals and their functioning have been issued by such far-flung countries as Norway, Roumania, Luxembourg, Guatemala and the Belgian Congo. Peru and Lebanon show medical colleges, the Middle Congo a Pasteur institute. Luxembourg pictures a consultation of surgeons in an operating room, and again, a scientist examining a culture under a microscope. Egypt in 1928 had a Medical Congress issue, Roumania in '32 the Ninth Annual Congress on the History of Medicine, Poland in 1927 the Fourth International Congress of Military Medicine and Pharmacy.

Among personages, China has honored Dr. Sun Yat Sen; Cuba, Dr. Charles J. Finlay; France, Pasteur and M. Berthelot; Germany, Dr. Gustav Nachtigall; Dahomey, Dr. N. Eugene Balay; Lithuania, Dr. Jonas Basanavicius; the Canal Zone, Dr. Gorgas. Austria had a whole series of physicians. As for nurses, Edith Cavell appears on a Canadian stamp, Queen Marie on Roumania. Congo in 1931 portrayed a witch doctor, and Hudson even includes the "Lagoon of the Marvelous Cure" in Peru. Latvia has "Mercy" assisting wounded soldiers, Hungary, St. Elizabeth ministering to sick children, the Saar from 1926 to '31 ran general medical subjects for special charities. With the calm detachment of a physician, Dr. Hudson considers death scenes, such as those of St. Francis, St. Benedict and St. Anthony, as appropriate to a medical collection. And these items so rapidly sketched are only the beginning of the story.

Close alongside this is the general subject of science, which includes many other things than medicine and chemistry, though each of the other branches are specially collected. Here, among the portraits one finds, in addition to the medical and chemical scientists already mentioned, such people as Copernicus (Poland), Popoff (Russia), Volta (Italy) and the Curies (France and colonies). Engineers collect stamps covering all engineering structures, and there are so many bridges on stamps of the world that many collectors, both lay and scientific, have fine albums of bridges alone. A few collectors just go in for buildings—of which there are many on stamps other than churches and hospitals. And not only are portraits of scientists sought for, but there are those who feel impelled to collect philosophers, artists, authors, musicians or journalists. Postmaster-General Farley is hastening to do something in behalf of these folk as we write.

Incidentally, there is even one man, Kasper E. Bruckmann of Chicago, who collects foreign stamps picturing Americans—United States Americans, he means. One recalls that as far back as 1909 Brazil, on the occasion of a Pan-American Congress, placed a portrait of Washington on a stamp. Since then, several others have done so; in fact, our recent sesquicentennial has been commemorated as ardently by some other countries as by ourselves. Lindbergh has been honored by several more. In 1928 Paraguay portrayed President Hayes and a town down there which was named for him in memory of his settlement of the Chaco boundary dispute with Bolivia fifty years ago. In similar fashion, Brazil has just laureled President Cleveland for settling her boundary dispute with Argentina in 1895. President Franklin D. Roosevelt is appearing on foreign stamps now, and Panama has honored all our canal build-

ers, including Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Wilson and William H. Taft, Secretary of War when the project began. Nicaragua issued a series for Will Rogers in gratitude for his aid in her time of trouble. Turkey placed Jane Addams and Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt among its "Famous Women." Pictures of the Capitol at Washington and our World's Fair buildings at San Francisco have been far more numerous on foreign stamps during 1939 than they ever were on our own. There are many group pictures including Indians and others which come into this category.

The familiar stamps of France which began issuing in 1876 and continued for many years thereafter have a globe almost concealed behind the numerals and the hands of the standing figures. This was the first of the map stamps which have since become so numerous. Belgium had a pair of little globes in the corners of the twenty-five-cent stamp of 1884; then Colombia used a map of the Isthmus of Panama in 1887. Canada's beautiful three-colored map of the British dominions in 1898 is a milestone in this department. Another was the Dominican Republic's of 1900, showing the whole island, with its own country almost covering it and Haiti only a nail-paring along the western edge. But the storm that arose over this was outclassed by the later uproars when Honduras and Nicaragua each issued map stamps claiming the same province; in fact, war was narrowly averted. Thus the album pages of a map collection are spiced with lively history, amusing and exciting. Several maps have appeared on our own stamps—on the Louisiana Territory series of 1904, Jamestown in 1907, the Oregon Territory Centennial of 1936, the Northwest Territory Sesquicentennial of 1937. Of course globes of all sorts must be included, and they are numerous.

The food and drink of the world is an intriguing subject. Nearly a dozen countries of Latin America and Africa picture their coffee culture, the tree and the berries. As many more present scenes of sugar production. Three advertise their cocoa and no less than ten their fish—and this includes Newfoundland's seal and the Falkland Islands whale, which aren't really fish and not universally eaten, though we've seen whale steaks sold in New York. Five countries have sheep on their stamps, six have cattle, three have bears, and seven, deer or caribou. Tannou Touva, the little pseudo-nation maintained in Asia by the Soviet, principally for stamp-issuing purposes, is in all four animal categories. France publicizes its champagne, Samoa its kava, Jamaica its cassava, Liberia its pineapples, Cuba its mangoes, Colombia its bananas, Ecuador and the Cayman Islands their turtles, Tannou Touva its capercaillie and Newfoundland its ptarmigan. The Philippines and Ceylon have splendid views of mountain-side rice terraces. Some collectors include the iguana and other big lizards of Ecuador and New Zealand, on the general theory that some people will eat anything.

All these fruiting trees and plants enter into Mary K. Piercy's Garden in Stamps; likewise the many countries showing palm trees; Canada's maple leaf; Germany's oak stump of 1919 with the new shoots symbolizing the new Germany and its hope for the future (alas, that there were no real prophets in Germany then!); the Charter Oak on our Connecticut issue, the rice and indigo on our Charleston stamp, the tobacco on our Jamestown. The many trees on our National Parks series are considered eligible. Liberia displays its cedars, Mozambique its hemp and cotton, Japan, conventionalized chrysanthemums.

And there is the world's work, which includes all the

agriculture, fishing, sugar-making and fruit-gathering just mentioned, as well as tree-felling (as on a Cameroun stamp), paper-making (Newfoundland), pottery (Ruanda), mining (Newfoundland, Saar), cotton-planting (Egypt), cotton-spinning (Liberia), gold-washing (French Guiana), basket-making (Belgian Congo), gold-mining (New Zealand), and the first shipment of frozen mutton from New Zealand. Transportation forms the greater portion of this genus, but is also a subject for special collection, and is again subdivided into railroads, ships, airplanes, Zeppelins, yes, even automobiles and busses.

A Swedish enthusiast, Frederick Arsenius, collects portraits, painstakingly adding the biography of every person whose postage picture he has. The trouble he must encounter in gathering the life sketches of some persons who have been dug out of obscurity by some countries in recent years to supply subjects for new stamp issues is probably what deters many others from attempting such a collection.

Again the infinite variety! Our commemoratives supply material for a pleasant tour of the United States; and you may extend it to foreign countries as far as you like. One woman goes in for fishing scenes; some for naught but historical scenes. Sculpture is a large subject, and heraldic designs on stamps is another important classification. Three or four people we know of collect just waterfalls; animals and birds there are in infinite variety (one man wants only elephants); two women specialize in purple stamps; others in black ones. You may find most of these fans and perhaps some others, too, in the *Philatelic Bluebook*, which the author likes to pore over because he occasionally finds in it such things as the address of J. Mohammed, Lot 2, Sandy Babb Street, Kitty Village, E. C., Demerara, British Guiana, S. A.

LUCIFERS AND LIVER REGULATORS

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE INGENIOUS brain of "Cosmopolitan," the anonymous writer in the *American Journal of Philately*, made another of those suggestions in 1869 in which he seemed to have been entirely original—namely, that collectors turn their attention to revenue stamps. "It would be impossible, almost, to find designs of greater beauty and variety than at present exist," he said. "Produce me, if possible, a more beautiful or better executed stamp of any country than our $3,000 manifest or charter party." After getting the general revenues, he suggested going on to match, playing-card, and shoe stamps, then to medicines. Collectors did follow his suggestion as to general revenue stamps, but not a great many became interested in the proprietary match and medicines until after they had ceased to be issued in the early '80's, with the result that some have never been found to this day.

There was one class of stamps to which "Cosmopolitan" made no reference, but which now claims a number of devotees—our stamped paper of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, our first fiscals. These begin with a Massachusetts tax on newspapers in 1755—quaint designs embossed in the paper without color. That of the half-penny shows the device of a bird; the tuppence has the

Sacred Codfish; the threepence a pine tree and the fourpence a schooner in sail, with the motto in a ring around it: "Steady, Steady." The British stamp tax of 1765 on paper, documents, almanacs, etc., which caused such a fuss in this country and brought the Revolution a step nearer, also the Tea Party stamps of the same year, are items which no collector can overlook. The United States began in 1791 issuing "supervisor stamps" for certain ports, and in 1797 stamps for legal documents. Another issue appeared in 1800. All these continued to be embossed and colorless. The War of 1812 brought on more stamp taxes, including $12 to $15 for retail liquor dealers in the country, and $20 to $25 in the city. Virginia issued state stamped paper (for documents) in 1813, and other states took it up later. After the Civil War, New York City, Philadelphia, Boston and St. Louis had stamps of their own in color for documents. Among the few notable collections of the earlier stamped paper are those of Morton D. Joyce of New York, Colin McR. Makepeace of Providence, and H. E. Deats, the veteran but still youthful Jerseyite, who has been through practically every other branch of American collecting and now likes to remark that he is interested in nothing later than 1816.

E. B. Sterling of Trenton, New Jersey, who left a bank to go into the stamp business, was a pioneer in promoting the collecting of this old stamped paper, and included it in the first American catalogue of revenue stamps, which he issued in 1888, embellished with a frontispiece portrait of himself, with his magnificent beard—parted just below the chin to give a good view of the big cameo pin in his Ascot tie—sweeping this way and that in two long, undulant banners to his armpits. Mr. Sterling that year sold to the youthful Hiram Deats the already celebrated Carpenter and

Goodall collections of revenue stamp proofs for $7,000, which excited awe at the time as a record-breaking private sale in American annals.

In 1890 the Messers Sterling and Deats embarked on another enterprise hitherto unprecedented; they bought from the Treasury Department no less than ten carloads of old papers; the figure has hitherto been given as eight, but Mr. Deats assures me in black and white that it was ten. Their chief object was liquor stamps and coupons of a particular type, but they also found others, including many fine departmental stamps in twenty-four-, thirty- and ninety-cent denominations on official letters. The stuff was shipped to New Jersey, storage space rented, and a staff of helpers toiled for two years on it. In addition to the twine salvaged from the mass, the promoters had to buy another ton of it with which to tie up the waste for shipment to paper mills. They didn't quite come out even on the speculation, as Mr. Deats admits with a rather wry grin.

But one of the reasons why they didn't was this: the Treasury sent two observers up to watch the sorting and see that the buyers didn't get away with any skullduggery. Before the job was completed, they seized a quantity of the material, including some desirable stamps, and took it back to Washington, alleging that it was too recent to be permitted to escape from the records—it had got into the waste inadvertently. But nothing was said about any refund of money to Messers Sterling and Deats for the seized material. Those two gentlemen filed suit, and the case is in the United States Court of Claims to this day—nearly fifty years later. Which goes to prove that in dealing with the Government—as the Government itself tries to point out to criminals—You Can't Win.

Such costly governmental fun as war must always be paid

for by the citizen; so the Civil War was scarcely a year under way when the United States Treasury planned a series of stamp taxes, some of which endured for two decades and more thereafter, and which produced, as "Cosmopolitan" remarked, some of the most interesting and beautiful stamps in history. In August, 1862, the Commissioner of Internal Revenue, George S. Boutwell, closed a contract with Butler & Carpenter, engravers and printers of Philadelphia, to produce revenue stamps for the government at the rate of thirteen cents per thousand. But the commissioner had overestimated most appallingly the number of stamps that would be required yearly, with the result that for years Butler and Carpenter wrangled with the Department, demanding new contracts at higher rates and indemnity for past losses—some of which they obtained, and some of which they didn't. Anybody who has had any experience knows that the government is the worst of debtors, unless the creditor has a personal pull somewhere. Finally, in 1875, when Butler and Carpenter were receiving twenty-three cents per thousand for the work, the National Bank Note Company snatched it away from them with a bid of nine cents per thousand, and continued to do it until the Bureau of Engraving and Printing took it over in 1880.

When they first began the work, in the fall and winter of 1862, Butler & Carpenter couldn't get the stamps perforated fast enough, and at Boutwell's request, many sheets were delivered to the Revenue Office imperforate—whereby some nice varieties ensued. That first issue covered all sorts of legal and business documents, telegrams, playing cards, photographs, medicines, matches, perfumery, cosmetics, and by 1866, some canned goods—meats, fish, shellfish, fruits, vegetables, sauces, syrups, prepared mustard, jams and jellies and pickles in glass. In the following year canned

and preserved meats, shellfish, fruits, vegetables and pickles were exempted. Liquors and tobacco were already being taxed.

In the first issue, the imagination of the government went no higher than a $200 stamp. In the second issue, it rose to the height of a $500 token in three colors—red, black and green—of which, in three years, 204 copies had been sold. This issue came about largely because of the washing of cancellations from stamps which had been going on. The second issue, begun in 1871, was printed on a "chameleon" paper, which would turn all sorts of colors at the touch of acid or alkali, making washing very difficult. Moreover, the printers were ordered to use "fugitive, soluble inks," and a herringbone cancellation which cut into the paper was introduced, which reduced the washing hazard to the lowest possible minimum.

In the third issue, which began late in 1871, Uncle Sam made his most magnificent fiscal gesture in this genre—a $5,000 stamp which was designed for printing in black, green and orange. The plates were made and proofs taken, but the stamp was never issued. A letter from Joseph R. Carpenter (now in sole charge of the printing business, his partner, Mr. Butler, having died in 1868) written July 14, 1872, is significant: "I send you the $5,000 stamp approved in the colors in which it is to be printed in case we have an order for this stamp—a very improbable contingency."

Some time ago Joseph L. Bopeley, a revenue-stamp collector of London, Ohio, wrote to George B. Sloane, columnist in *Stamps*, that there could scarcely have been any possible use for so large a stamp in the 1870's. He figured that it would take a $5,000,000 mortgage or bill of sale, a $2,500,000 conveyance, a $1,999,800 lease, to require such a tax, all transactions larger than were likely to take place

in that era. He had seen a $1,000,000 trustees' mortgage for bondholders of that period, with a thousand dollars in stamps affixed, but nothing larger. Mr. Sloane agreed, but rejoined that the big stamp would be useful at times to present-day giants of finance. He had handled in recent years a certificate of stock transfer of several large corporations in a holding company, which bore forty copies of the thousand-dollar stamp of the issue of 1917, and several hundred dollars more in odd values, aggregating nearly $41,000 in total tax.

The only time in history when anybody ever got a discount from the government on anything came during these stamp issues. For several years there was a discount, or more properly a premium given on purchases of more than $500 worth of stamps. The rate was changed whimsically every little while. When it was at its peak, ten per cent: if you bought $600 worth of stamps, you received $660 worth, for the premium was always paid in stamps, not cash. This opened the way to stamp brokers, who gave smaller discounts on smaller amounts. A circular of the time quotes one per cent discount on $15 purchases; two per cent on $30; three per cent on $50; four per cent on $100 and over.

Scarcely had the printing of the proprietary stamps for patent medicines begun than certain manufacturers began to question whether they couldn't have distinctive stamps with their own design or trademark on them. The first to propose this seems to have been Dr. Herrick, who made pills and plasters for man and condition powders for beast. His request was granted, and on October 15, 1862, Carpenter wrote to him, "Your stamp will be the first proprietary die printed; and in this respect, you will enjoy an advantage over your equally afflicted brethren in the trade." Herrick's stamp, like others at the beginning, was of about

the size of a two-cent revenue stamp; but within a short time, imaginations expanded, stamps became larger and of all shapes and sizes. Frequently the stamp was incorporated in the design of the wrapper of bottle or pill box. They became beautiful examples of the engraver's art, with whorls and flourishes and solemn portraits of the benevolent, whiskered gentlemen who sold drug-flavored alcohol and powerful clean-out pills, guaranteed to make a new being of you, whether in earth or heaven, if you took enough of them.

But though you could incorporate your stamp design in your wrapper—in fact, sometimes, almost the whole wrapper was a stamp—that was as far as you could go. In 1874 the Government seized and destroyed ten thousand almanacs of a patent-medicine concern because the cover bore—probably quite innocently—a facsimile of its stamp. But there was a match concern which forged a stamp and had to go out of business. For the match makers had taken to the private design idea, too, and their stamps were many and various. Many of them are rare or unknown today, because the business was feeble and short-lived.

That there were collectors of these private stamps even in 1874 is revealed by a letter in the *American Journal of Philately*, in which the writer says that the match stamp of John J. Macklin of Covington, Kentucky, is one of the greatest of rarities. He found one in possession of a small boy, glued tightly in a book and very dirty. He bought the boy's whole book for $10, boiled the Macklin stamp in soap and water for ten minutes and it came out fairly clean. It was rare because Macklin had tried to use a phototype stamp not made by Butler & Carpenter, which was against the rules. When this was made clear to him, he said that

Ohio.

Engrave One Cent Match Stamp.
Gov.t Size

C E O.

John Bull No 2.
Louisville Kentucky

Engrave One & Four Cent Stamps
Proprietary



Approved
Jany 31, 1866 E.T. Rollins

Byam Carlton & Co. Boston.

On wood –
Engrave 1ct. Match. Smoke Head
" " " Style.

Wm & Doolittle, Hayesville Ohio
"Matches"
Approved Jany 23. 1866.



Approved
Jany 23/66 E.T. Rollins
Commr

Vignette: Portrait of Dr Bull
General appearance of stamp & like
above portrait leaves distinct:

Sarsaparilla.
Cedron Bitters
(expectt)
Worm Destroyer
Smith's Tonic
Syrup.

The stamps to be as near as
possible to obtain the above.

Dr Bull
Louisville
Kentucky

Dr Letter dated Nov 14/65 & letter from
Phila Post'd. Director Louisville Ky.
Com. authorizing Int. Rev. Bureau.
Revenue Letters &c 13/66.

Draw for amt of Bill on Wilson & Peter, Louisville Ky.
& per Letter dated Dec 8 & 15 from Rhiel & Head Esq.
March 5. 1866. Print 40 on Blue { Gum and
1 " Black } Perforate.



Approved Jany 31. 18

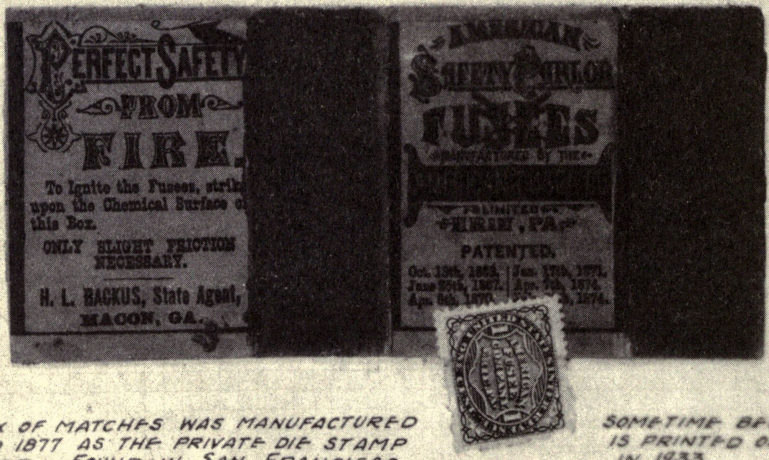
Two pages from the order book of Butler & Carpenter, revenue stamp printers to the government, 1862-75. The book is now owned by Hiram E. Deats.

American Fusee Co.

HIS COMPANY BEGAN BUSINESS IN 1874 AND THE BUILDING WHICH HEY OCCUPIED AS A FACTORY FOR ABOUT TEN YEARS IS STILL STANDING AT THE CORNER OF 21ST AND PLUM STS., ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA.



THE FIRM WAS CAPITALIZED AT $100,000, EMPLOYED 25 TO 35 PEOPLE, AND HAD A CAPACITY OF 43,000 BOXES PER DAY. IPETITION WITH SWEDISH MATCHES AND THE REDUCTION IN THE D AND FOR MATCHES WHEN ELECTRIC LIGHTS CAME INTO USE MADE THE BUSINESS UNPROFITABLE AND IT WAS DISSOLVED IN 1884.



BOX OF MATCHES WAS MANUFACTURED AND 1877 AS THE PRIVATE DIE STAMP PAPER. FOUND IN SAN FRANCISCO

SOMETIME BETWEE IS PRINTED ON SIL IN 1933.

A page from Henry W. Holcombe's albums of match and medicine stamps: this showing not only the stamp but an original match package of the 1870's, and some of the actual

he couldn't afford a private die and went back to using the regular government stamp.

Messers Deats and Sterling bought the office records, proofs and associated material still owned by Mr. Carpenter in his old age, and the information thus obtained was of much value in preparing the *Boston Revenue Book*. Among other things there was a sheet of the sixty-cent orange and black revenue, third issue, with the central medallion inverted, which was such a treasure that Mr. Deats had it framed and it hung on the wall of his home for years. Deats, too, fell heir to the greatest nugget of all—Butler & Carpenter's order book, covering the whole period of their stamp contract, 1862 to 1875. Here the orders were entered with special instructions, usually with the approved sketch or a proof or both alongside the entry. It contains more than two hundred such originals, the majority of them unique, and interesting little supplementary notes as to the designing: "Vignette head of Mr. Scheetz. Style is subject to artist's taste." "The ends to be lightly filled in with scrollwork. Be careful to give the same expression to face."

Here is the only known proof in any form of the six-cent orange proprietary, the last stamp of the first revenue issue, which was created because of the irate complaint of Charles Osgood and Company, a Connecticut medicine concern, that there were many companies selling a $1.50 article (the tax was four cents per dollar), yet no six-cent stamp for their use. Osgoods couldn't afford a private die, they said, so this stamp was turned out, for use largely on their "India Cholagogue," a malaria nostrum sold largely in the South; and as there were few stamp collectors down there in 1871, this stamp even in used condition is very rare; for it was

replaced, after four and a half months, by a two-color six-center.

Here is also the die proof of the Thomas E. Wilson four-cent black, the rarest of the medicine stamps; rare, so it is said, because Dr. Wilson had a partner whom he ignored in ordering the stamps, and had his own facsimile signature placed on them, as if he were the whole works. When they were delivered and the partner saw them, he flew into a rage, seized them and threw them into the fire, destroying all save a few which the Doctor managed to clutch.

Medicine stamps do not roam at large today in any quantity. The most fun for collectors is to go still-hunting for them among old village drug stores, where some bottles or packages have stood on dusty shelves for forty, fifty, sixty years, until the liquids have half evaporated, the salves have dried into thin, hard cakes, the pills shrunken or crumbled apart. Some druggists have forgotten that they have the old stuff. Some good-natured old fellows, if they like the collector's looks, tell him just to rummage around in the nooks and corners and see what he can find. Not many village dealers seem to realize that the stamps have any value. Some donate the packages to the collector, others will accept a half or a quarter of the selling price, yet others demand the full figure, no matter if it's a dollar or a dollar and a half, and won't abate a cent. And incredible as it may seem, even an old package of matches of sixty years ago is on rare occasions still found in some little, out-of-the-way New England store or other unpromising nook.

After acquiring the package, there may be hours of fun in getting the stamp loose from bottle or box without mutilating it. If it is on a wrapper, the latter must be slowly and carefully unsealed and opened out, cleaned, and it and the stamp ironed flat, ready for album mounting. The bot-

tle, usually with name of medicine or manufacturer blown in the side, is a collectible article; often the philatelist has a friend who collects old American bottles, and the two work hand in hand.

Henry W. Holcombe of New York, whose match- and medicine-stamp collection is one of the most fascinating things we have ever seen, can show you all the different types of match boxes and packages; flat, rectangular boxes of wood or pasteboard, cylindrical wooden affairs roughly turned on a lathe, heavy paper packages similar to cigarette packages of today. When such a paper package was made up, its base was touched to liquid mucilage, then to sand, and when it dried, there was your match-scratching surface. Some of the old matches were nearly twice as long as those we use now. You may see everything save the heavy wooden boxes on Mr. Holcombe's album pages, even samples of the matches being glued there. There is always a photograph of the package as it appeared in the store, and below that, the package itself, opened and mounted on the page.

Lettered on the pages is practically all the information worth while about the various manufacturers. Actually, histories of the patent-medicine and match businesses could almost be written from these albums. Here one gets a picture of little known phases of American industrial and social history. Ambitious amateurs started little match factories in town or country with only a few dollars capital, often with only the vaguest notions of formulae for making the match heads. Sometimes these beginners produced matches so sensitive, so easily ignited that they couldn't be shipped; sometimes the compound took too long to dry. To obtain the services of an experienced man from a larger factory was a rare boon. At these small factories there might be only two or three supervising adults; the workers would

be mostly boys and girls. The paper or pasteboard packages, meanwhile, would be produced at piecework rates in the neighbors' homes. There was one small factory, that of Ives & Judd, which was located in Rag Hollow, a little cleft in the Connecticut hills—Mr. Holcombe draws a miniature fragment of a map on his page to show you just where it was. On another page may be mounted one of the "combs" of matches, just a thin piece of wood, only partly split apart, and the split ends dipped; when you needed a match, you just broke it off the comb. Other manufacturers made up their matches in square blocks, likewise only partly split off.

Some of the little match concerns have never been located, and less than ten years ago there were still a half dozen of the medicine men whose history wasn't known, but Mr. Holcombe tells us that practically the last one has now been driven to earth. His research upon them is tireless, never slackening. His albums are dotted thickly with their collateral material—advertising pamphlets and cards, envelopes, letters, recipe books, bills and invoices. He reveals curious stories, such as that of the Reverend Edward A. Wilson—was he a preacher, after all?—who in the latter 1860's was running ads, purely in the interest of humanity, in such magazines as *Harper's* and *Leslie's Weeklies*, telling how he had once been given up to die with consumption, but that he had been cured by a marvelous prescription, which he in turn would send free to any sufferer who would just write to him and ask for it. But when you received the prescription from him, you found that there was one ingredient which you had to buy from a man named William J. Minshull in New York. How was anyone to know that Minshull was the Reverend Wilson's partner? The ingredient was rather expensive, too. Finally, in 1871 Wilson had

to come out in the open, and a stamp for "Rev. E. A. Wilson's Remedy, Wm. J. Minshull, Agent," was designed. All this time, Wilson had been writing from Williamsburg, N. Y., a suburb which is now part of Brooklyn; but in 1872 he suddenly disappeared from the correspondence and from the directory; and although Holcombe, with his usual patience, has searched almost every city directory in the country through the years that followed, he has never found any further trace of him. Did he just evaporate, or had he ever existed? His remedy continued to be sold, at least until 1882.

There are other curious stamps of those years which are collected by the more ardent enthusiasts; lock seal stamps, for example; the brass cotton tax stamps of the '60's, just an embossed brass tab with a long, tapering point to stick into the bale of cotton; hydrometer stamps—the hydrometer is an instrument for determining the specific gravity and purity of certain liquids, and was used mostly on liquors—which, at the one factory in New York which made them, were glued into the glass bulb at the end of the instrument, as proof that it had been government-inspected and approved; beer stamps—nothing in all revenue history has produced anything so uniformly gorgeous and brilliant with fancy designing and engine turning as the beer stamps of those days. Don't ask us how to obtain them, for we don't know. Mr. Holcombe might tell if he would. And there were private tobacco stamps which began to issue about 1878, printed on the wrappers, which were usually tin foil. By 1882 it was said that there were three-hundred of these tin-foil tobacco stamps. Most of them have vanished entirely now.

The Spanish War of 1898 of course brought another

crop of revenues, including—at the start—the first surcharges in our history, just the letters "I R" on the two-cent postage stamp. From that day to this, special taxes and tax stamps have never ceased to be with us. It makes one's head swim to look over a catalogue of those in force in recent years, and most of them still with us—not only national, but state imposts—food, liquor, tobacco products, oils and gasoline, oleomargarine, cereal beverages, playing cards, malt, mechanical games, secured debts, hunting licenses, those potato stamps of 1936 which the government peddled about the philatelic market after the potato-stamp experiment collapsed; inspection stamps of a thousand sorts —inspection of liquors, of oil and gasoline, of peat, humus and untreated phosphates, live-stock remedies, paint, varnish and stains, feedstuffs and cereal seeds, milk, bedding, egg classification—but why be tiresome? And then there are —but there's no use in reminding the citizen unnecessarily of his taxes. . . .

Here is another byway which you may never have heard of. Back in the 1870's and '80's, if you patented an article and licensed some concern to manufacture it, you sold them royalty stamps of your own design, one of which they must attach to every article made under your patent. These stamps are not, of course, of government issue, but they are collectors' items and interesting as revealing what curious things were patented and used sixty years ago. Collars, for example; about the only sort of detachable collar a man could buy then was made of paper. You wore it until it collapsed, then threw it away. Women's hats were patented, overalls, even men's clothing—an adjustable waist feature, a new idea for buttoning trousers; likewise the saddle-seam boot, the dirt-excluder shoe, a patent plow

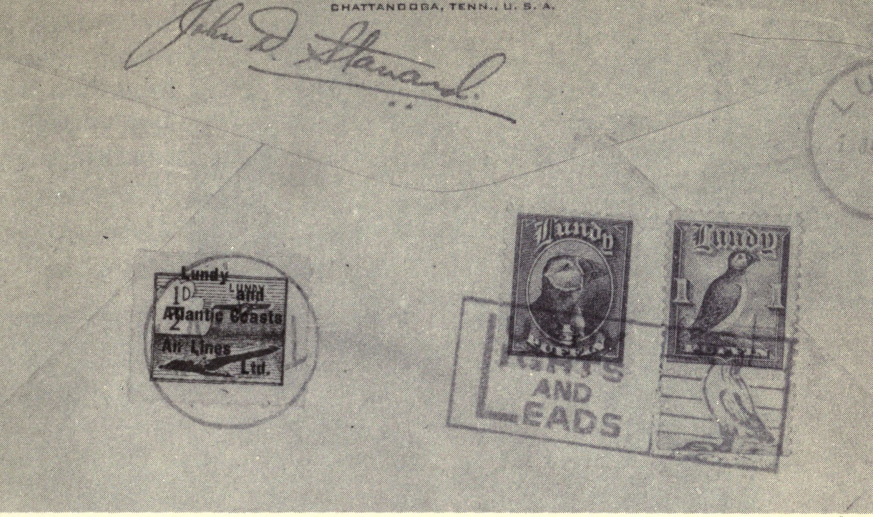
shoe, the ventilating waterproof shoe and others. If you applied American quilted wire soles to your shoes or put them together with Oliver's waxed shoe pegs, you had to buy royalty stamps. There were other articles besides, all listed in the pamphlet which Holcombe has compiled on the subject.

THE BYWAYS AND HEDGES

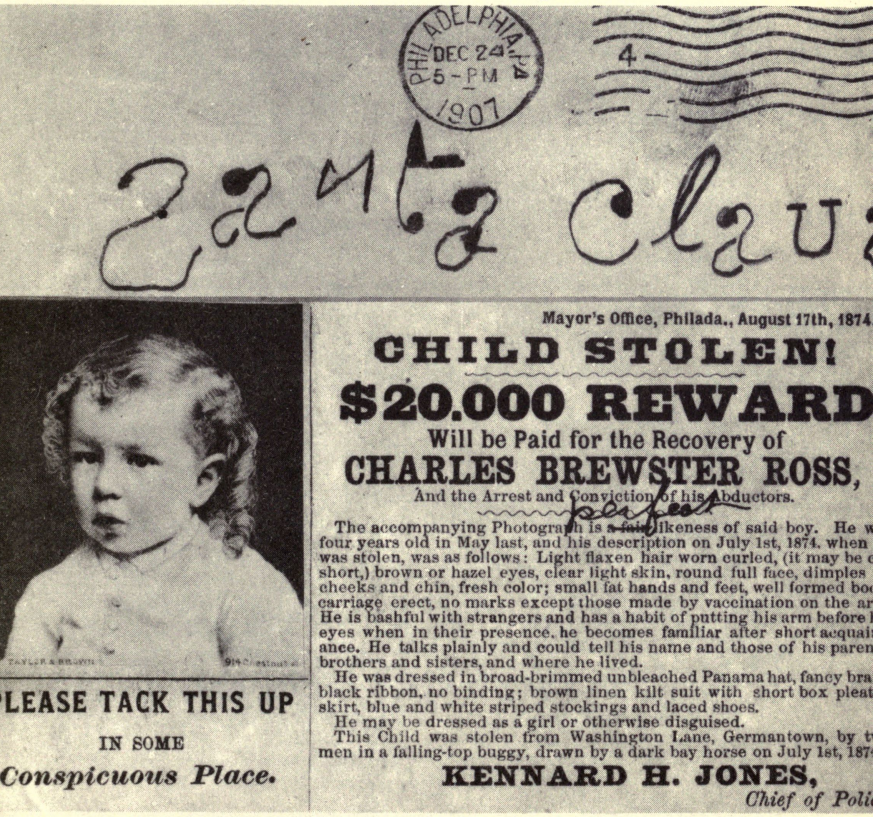
CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THERE are a thousand ramifications of philately; a thousand byways which are as pleasant to those whose feet wander there as any orthodox collection of postage stamps. Undoubtedly the most important of them all is air mail in its various branches. There are exclusive air-mail dealers, air-mail catalogues, even crash catalogues; for air-mail collectors of course want envelopes which have been through disasters of one sort and another, and some persons specialize in them, to the exclusion of other air-mail items. An envelope with its edges burned and a sticker from the Post Office Department, notifying the addressee that this letter had passed through a disaster in the Pennsylvania mountains, in which the pilot and seven or eight passengers were killed, is a souvenir with more sorts of value than one. The collector who has a damaged envelope from the crash at Alhambra, California, December 22, 1930—when but little more than a third of the 1,445 pounds of mail was saved—an envelope with burned lower edge and end and a spot of blood near the address, has a rare treasure indeed!

These letters, when badly damaged, are forwarded to the addressee in a special large envelope—christened "ambulance cover" by Seymour Dunbar, noted transportation his-



Above—Back of an envelope from Lundy Island, with its curious local stamps.



From the Collection of George B. Sloane

Left—A tiny ter (natural which esca from Paris by loon during German sieg 1871.

—One of letters rolled the bed Seine Paris in a all during erman n 1871.



All from the Collection of Norman Sanbee

torian and air-mail hobbyist—and these envelopes, too, are subjects for collection. It was Dunbar, by the way, who remarked in *Stamps* in 1933 that the "good will flight" of Lindbergh to Latin America in 1927 was "the inspiration and motive cause of more diversified philatelic items in the shape of different postage stamps, envelopes, post cards and cachets than any other famous figure of history, perhaps excepting George Washington."

If you wish to go back right to the root of things, of course you must get one of the special messages on pelure paper sent by balloon in 1850 to Sir John Franklin, who was then lost in the Arctic; but it may cost you what is laughingly called a pretty penny to wrench this rare item away from somebody else. Next you must get envelopes sent out by balloon from Paris and Metz while they were besieged by the German armies in 1870-71. The ones from Metz, tiny ones on thin tissue carried out by small balloons mostly of paper, have neither postage stamp nor sending cachet, and only rarely have they a receiving cachet; so they must be well authenticated and are very rare. Then there are the miniature newspapers sent out from Paris by balloon, sometimes with colored maps of Paris and environs printed on thin tissue; also the microscopic film carried into Paris by pigeons. Dr. H. E. Radasch of Philadelphia and Norman Serphos of New York have wonderful collections of this material, including telegrams, both private and military. There are other such collections, of course; it must be remembered that when we mention a particular one, it is usually because we have seen that one and mention that one either as typical or as one of the finest of its kind.

There was a balloon flight from St. Louis in 1859, when the American Express Company forwarded a bag of mail intended for New York City. The balloon came so near

falling into Lake Ontario that the aeronaut threw out all his ballast, including the mail bag, into the lake, and himself managed to reach shore safely. The mail bag was washed up on shore a few days later and the letters, little the worse for wear, were forwarded to New York; but none are now known to survive. There was another balloon flight in 1877, this time from Nashville, for which a five-cent stamp was engraved, bearing the picture of a buffalo and the words, "Balloon Post." In 1897 and '98 there were flights in Germany, from Leipzig and Munich, with a cachet for each. Others followed in England and elsewhere during the next ten years. In 1897 a pigeon post was started between Great Barrier Island and Auckland, New Zealand, about sixty-five miles, and in the following year a triangular stamp was designed, which is now a philatelic treasure. A little later, one of these stamps was overprinted for service between Marotiri and Auckland.

Finally, in 1908, an airplane carried some mail between Rome and Turin, via Milan—covers now exceedingly rare. In 1909 Glenn Curtiss, barnstorming in Italy in one of the crude biplanes with which the Wright brothers were then experimenting in France, took Gabriele d'Annunzio up one day and planted the germ of flying enthusiasm in the soul of the poet-dramatist. Curtiss also had some post cards made with a picture of the plane and his own portrait thereon, and carried some of them, duly postmarked, on flights from town to town. One bearing his scribbled autograph in pencil was in the collection of Dr. Philip G. Cole, and at Cole's sale in 1939 passed into the hands of Norman Serphos, who has heard of no other autographed copy.

Also in 1909 the first Zeppelin post appeared in Germany. On September 23, 1911—curiously enough, the anniversary of the first balloon mail out of Paris in 1870—a

few letters and cards were officially carried by a plane from Garden City to Mineola, Long Island. And so through the several years of experimental flights, the spanning of the continent by Macready and Kelly, the notable flights of Maughan, Hawks and others, the attempt of the *Maud* expedition of Amundsen to reach the North Pole in 1922, the spanning of the ocean by Brown and Alcock and by Chamberlain and Levine, all these carried a few letters which are "musts" for the collector, if he can possibly lay hands on them.

And of course the Government's first real, regular mail service flight between New York and Washington in 1918, the first flights between New York and Cleveland, Cleveland and Chicago, the gradual extension by plane-and-railroad relays across the continent, the first all-plane day-and-night flight from New York to San Francisco in 1923, the first daily transcontinental service in 1924, the first-day flights to every American city, to Canada, Cuba, Mexico, South America, first-day flights in all other countries, all these keep the air collector on his toes constantly. At each new venture in cross-ocean service—England to South Africa, England to Australia, Europe to South America, China Clipper, and so on, the load of first-day covers grew larger, until when the Yankee Clipper left New York on May 20th, 1939, for the first eastbound flight across the Atlantic, it carried 112,574 of those prized collectors' items.

Air-mail carrying has also brought about, as we have already shown, no little racketeering and some stiff exploitation of collectors, usually with the co-operation or actual design of some government. In the flight of the Balbo air squadron from Rome to Chicago and back in 1933, surtaxes were laid on the stamps to the extent of from about four to nine times their face value. The old *Graf Zeppelin*,

LZ-127, was the greatest private mail carrier in history. It collected far more than a million dollars from philatelists for the privilege of having covers decorated with its cachets. Many of the nations of the world, including the United States, co-operated with it. Its profits have been handsome. For example, when it cruised to this country via South America in 1930, the United States issued sixty-five-cent stamps for post cards and $1.30 and $2.60 stamps for letters to be handled by it, according to distance carried. Of these sums, the United States collected only its usual share of three cents for sending post cards and five cents for letters to the ship's base at Friedrichshafen; the Zeppelin got the rest. Uncle Sam sold $314,324 worth of these stamps, and the majority were not used, but went into albums, giving Uncle a nice little profit himself. Of the stamps used, the government received less than $3,800 for carrying mail to the Zep's starting point, while the Zeppelin company's share was $106,310.

On one trip over Germany, the airship dropped mail at fourteen cities. Usually it did not descend at such places, but just dropped the bag from the air. On two occasions, bags came open as they fell, scattering mail over the landscape and gloom among collectors. On at least two other air-post trips, bags fell into the ocean and were not recovered for some time—in one case many of the stamps being soaked off the letters. This caused some heartburning, but the cachets remained on the covers, and it was discovered that the sea bath and rescue gave them an added distinction. The late Dr. Victor M. Berthold, famous New York collector, had a large and magnificent album containing, we believe, a cover from every mail bag dropped by the Zep in its flights, as well as dozens of photographs of the big dirigible, inside and out, in many positions and

places, and photographs of Count Zeppelin, Dr. Eckener and much other data.

When our dirigible *Akron* fell into the ocean in 1933, a portion of the rubberized fabric which formed the outer covering of the helium gas cells was recovered from the Atlantic off Barnegat Light, New Jersey, and F. Hambroch made it into post cards which were franked with a three-cent stamp and mailed at Lakehurst on Memorial Day, making an unusual collectors' item.

And speaking of Paris during the Franco-Prussian War, has any reader an envelope from the first "submarine mail?" You see, the French outside Paris, torturing their brains to think of means of communicating with their countrymen inside the German ring of steel, hatched the idea of hollow balls of thin sheet copper or zinc, which were to be filled with letters and put into the Seine above the city, thence to be rolled by the current downstream until they were caught by a net stretched across the stream within the city. Of the many balls launched, only one got through but, strange as it may seem, some of the envelopes which traveled in it are still in existence.

In mid-nineteenth century, not only was the carrying of letters in the larger cities done by privately owned "letter expresses," whose stamps are now a collector's joy, but one also finds gay little stickers on some envelopes in the 1840's and '50's which show that these letters traveled across country from town to town by the hands of private concerns. Such was the origin of express companies, which conveyed letters, money and documents before they thought of handling freight. The bright red, blue, green and yellow stickers of Hill's, Jackson's, Pomeroy's, Favor's, Gilman's, Gay, Kinsley & Co.'s, Davenport & Mason's and other expresses carry the story up to the time when they merged into

greater companies—Adams, National, American, United States, Southern, Wells, Fargo & Company; some of these carried mail in defiance of the Post Office, up to and even after the Civil War. Their covers make a colorful and instructive collection.

But it was 'Forty-Nine that brought the greatest mass of such material into existence. The Pacific Coast became populated more rapidly than a slow-coach government could bring itself to extend postal facilities, and hundreds of expressmen—individuals and companies—sprang up out there to carry letters, packages of money and valuables among towns with such names as Red Dog, You Bet, Jackass Gulch, Fiddletown, Gouge Eye and Hell's Delight. Just as soon as the busy job printers in the little town of San Francisco could give them service, they began using envelopes with their corner cards thereon, thus preparing for the future happiness of many a collector. Through three decades thereafter, as new Eldorados were found—in Nevada, Idaho, Montana, Colorado, the Black Hills, Arizona—new expresses sprang up to serve their public. W. W. Phillips, a collector of Stockton, California, says that he has identified 775 of them west of the Mississippi River. Henry C. Needham of New York, Ernest A. Wiltsee and W. Parker Lyon of California, did notable work in searching out the history of these concerns and collecting their covers.

The most enormous collection of these western franks of which the author knows is that of Alfred Lichtenstein—some twenty-five huge albums full, the envelopes set thickly overlapping each other in pockets running across the broad pages. There are twelve albums full of Wells, Fargo alone! What pungent whiffs of Bret Harte color and whimsy one finds in the very names as one turns the pages—Indian

Creek Express; the Noisy Carriers; Langton's Pioneer Express; Hogan & Co.'s North San Juan and Humbug Express; Zack's Express; A. M. Hinkley & Co.'s Isthmus of Panama Express; Loon Creek Express; English & Wells' Moore's Flat and Eureka Express, connecting at Nevada City and Emigrant Gap; Dietz & Nelson's British Columbia and Victoria Express; M. Fettis's Oro Fino Express; Cheyenne and Black Hills Express; Tombstone and Patagonia Express Line.

There are stories connected with the finding of some of these things, too. Mr. Lichtenstein shows you a little sheet of twelve type-set stickers on once-green paper, rumpled, faded, partly washed out by dampness, and tells how, in a half-ruined cabin far up the Fraser River in British Columbia, whither a gold rush began in 1858, a man found an old table minus one of its front legs and with face turned to the wall for support. Turning it around, he discovered that there was a drawer in it. In that drawer was a rusty tin can, tightly covered; and in that can were these stickers of Barnard's Cariboo Express, which carried letters to those miners eighty years ago. Another of Lichtenstein's chief treasures is the cover of a letter which was in a mail bag stolen by the Indians in Nevada from the Pony Express in 1860, recovered and delivered to the addressee two years later.

Edward S. Knapp of New York is said to have been the pioneer in the collection of corner cards—envelopes bearing mere printed names and addresses or advertising on front or back of businesses, hotels, schools, cults and anything else that feels the need of publicity. This sort of thing began in the 1850's. His collection of hotel envelopes is particularly notable. Here one finds all the hostelries famous in our history—the Parker House in Boston, where

our favorite rolls originated, the old Astor House in New York, built by the first John Jacob himself in 1836, the old Tremont in Boston, at whose opening banquet in 1829 Daniel Webster and Edward Everett ate and declaimed; the National in Washington, opened in 1827, closed in 1930, operated by John Gadsby until 1844 and called Gadsby's until then, where Andrew Jackson and James Buchanan stopped at times, where Thaddeus Stevens and Henry Clay lived for years (Clay died there), where John Wilkes Booth lived, in whose room the plot against Lincoln was probably contrived; the Palace in San Francisco, creation of the spectacular William C. Ralston, where California gold and Nevada silver millionaires had their headquarters, destroyed in the great cataclysm of 1906; the Union Square in New York, where Richard Canfield, America's most famous gambler, was night clerk for several years in the 1870's; Delmonico's, into which a ship captain came one day and showed the maître d'hôtel how to prepare a new dish which was christened Lobster Newburg; the Broadway Central, still functioning, once the Grand Central, in whose lobby Ned Stokes killed Jim Fisk in 1872; the Hoffman House, headquarters of politicians, promoters and sports, which had the finest collection of barroom nude art in America, whose "Hoffman House Perfecto," a ten-cent straight cigar, had a copy of one of the paintings, "Nymphs and Satyrs" on the lid (of course Mr. Knapp has a specimen of that cigar-box label); the Palmer House in Chicago, whose proprietor is best remembered as the husband of the beautiful and brilliant Mrs. Potter Palmer—and hundreds of others.

Mr. Knapp likes to ask you, "What is your native town?" and when you answer Oskaloosa, Iowa or Shamokin, Pennsylvania, he plucks one of his albums from the shelf with



Some of Hugh M. Clark's Civil War "patriotic" envelopes. Notice the one at the bottom glorifying the Federal General Rosecrans, but bearing a portrait of Jefferson Davis.



From the Collection of Norman Serphos

Four noted air-mail covers. Reading downward, Amundsen Arctic flight of 1922; first continuous transcontinental mail flight, 1923; one of the earliest pieces of mail carried by plane in America, 1911; and a letter damaged in the crash and burn-

eager expectation, and is usually able to show you an envelope sent from a hotel which in childhood you regarded as a triumph of metropolitan elegance. If he hasn't it, you can detect a slight depression in his manner; he feels that his life has not quite measured up to the achievement which might reasonably be expected of him.

From hotels Mr. Knapp drifted into the corner cards of schools and colleges, another enormous category. Here are letters of all periods from all the most famous institutions of the country and from many of which the casual observer never heard; many, in fact, now long dead. Here are not only classical but scientific and professional schools, business colleges galore, "female seminaries," "young ladies' institutes," academies—one finds the term, "high school" applied away back in the 1850's to an academy at which tuition was paid. There are many delightful names: Music Vale Seminary in Connecticut, the Providence Conference Seminary, the Commercial, Chirographic and Telegraphic Institute of Oberlin, Ohio, the Society of Friends of the New London Literary and Scientific Institute—only this New London was in New Hampshire and the dates are far back in 1854-55. In some of the envelopes from New London are reports to Mrs. Clarissa Griffin, printed forms on blue paper, of the absences, excused and unexcused, from chapel, recitations and church service, as well as scholarship standing—note that the absences came first in importance—of her daughters, Miss M. W. Griffin and Miss J. Griffin. We are gratified to observe that neither of the young ladies had any unexcused absences and that their standing in scholarship was high.

One discovers how extensively envelopes have been used for propaganda purposes when one looks through a collection like this—for Knapp collects corner cards of almost all

kinds. Religion and temperance, as it used to be called—later prohibition—are the two principal causes found promoted on envelopes of the past in peace times. One envelope shouts, "2,480,000 Drunkards in the United States, of whom—120,000 die annually, while—120,000 sober youth are yearly doomed—to replenish the ranks." Another cover has practically a whole history in small type on its face, with the suggestion in larger letters, "Have this published in your local papers." Of course the political envelopes are legion; and the earliest propaganda cover of any sort that Mr. Knapp has been able to find bears simply the portrait of General Winfield Scott when that old gentleman was running for the Presidency in 1852, as all generals used to do sooner or later. There were letterheads boosting William Henry Harrison for the Presidency in 1840 (Knapp has one, of course), carrying his portrait and his trademarks, the log cabin and the barrel of cider, but that was before envelopes came into general use, and this letter, folded over and sealed, became its own cover.

What isn't in this fascinating collection! Here are envelopes from livery stables elegantly designating themselves as "Horse Mansion" and "Horse Hotel"; several from Barnum's American Museum in New York, 1857-60 (with much other Barnum material); from the management of the Seven Sutherland Sisters, whose hair trailed upon the floor; from little forgotten railroads, some of which never got anywhere; from Tex Rickard's prize-fight promotions at Goldfield, when that boom town was in its heyday; several very ornate ones issued by Elihu Burritt, "the learned blacksmith," who yearned for international peace and understanding, but whose principal object in these envelopes was the carriage of letters across the Atlantic for a British

penny. "Britain, from Thee the World Expects Penny Postage" is flaunted on a banner across several of them.

There are other specialized collections of corner cards; that of Stephen G. Rich of Verona, New Jersey, for example, of old schoolbook publishers; surprising to find how many of them are still in business after sixty or eighty years. And there is Theodore E. Steinway's collection of piano makers and dealers; all the early Steinway, Chickering, Mason & Hamlin, Knabe and other names, together with many now almost or quite forgotten—Haines Brothers, Hallet & Allen, Carhart & Needham, manufacturers of melodeons, John Farris of Hartford, Joseph Foster, maker of organs and melodeons at Keene, New Hampshire, in the '50's. There are many modern dealers' envelopes, too, ranging from the most dignified all the way down to "Popple's; See Si Before You Buy. Grand Forks, N.D." and "Redewill Music Co., One Blok West of Cort House Water Hole since 1881, Fenix, Arizonny."

By far the most enormous group of propaganda envelopes in our history was that of the so-called patriotics, issued mostly during the Civil War—for it is only in wartime that we grow really patriotic. The war with Spain in 1898 and the World War produced much smaller crops. There are many collections of these, but that of Hugh M. Clark of New York, containing somewhere near ten thousand varieties, practically all of Civil War vintage, and filling ninety albums, is the most remarkable one within our acquaintance.

These began with pictures of the flags, Union and Confederate (in colors, of course), pictures of soldiers in camp and out, of men rushing into battle, of the American eagle, Miss Liberty, and Miss Columbia (often you can't tell which), liberty bells and caps, cannon and bits of verse,

patriotic or satirical, some of them the worst doggerel that ever crawled from a pen. Both sides flaunted emblems of freedom and cheered for liberty. In addition to the printed envelopes, there were stickers bearing all these emblems and scenes, which were pasted on an upper corner of the envelope.

Some of the earliest of the Confederate specimens are mailed in United States three-cent stamped envelopes, this being before the Confederate postal service had gotten into operation. The Confederate flag appeared with numerous mottoes—"The Flag of the Oppressed," "Bully for C.S.A.," "We Ask no Favours," "A Bitter Pill for Lincoln," "Invincible!" "Prodigious!" On the Northern side, eagles clutched the Serpent of Rebellion in their claws, while the same pudgy infant clutching a snake appeared on both Northern and Southern envelopes, in one case the reptile being "Secession," in the other "Abolition." The identical aspect of the child seems to argue that the two batches were turned out in the same shop. As a matter of fact, most of the Confederate covers were produced in Northern shops, and the South was able to get them from New York by water for several months after the war began—fancy that! But with the clapping down of the blockade this was stopped, and before long, people in the South were making envelopes out of wrapping paper, wall paper, the backs of advertising circulars or just taking used envelopes apart and turning them inside out.

Portraits of the leading Confederate generals, the Cabinet, and other statesmen are found with the imprint of Charles Magnus, 12 Frankfort Street, New York. How many of these actually reached the South, we do not know; for Mr. Clark tells us that less than half of the alleged Confederate envelopes were actually used in those states;

the others were printed in the North for sale to collectors! But there are some bitter and satirical ones which are identified as genuine, some of them actually turned out in Southern printeries. When a Northern envelope pictured an aristocratic Southron in bed with a Negro woman, a Southern printer retorted with a picture of a depraved-looking Yankee reformer with a fat colored woman on his knee, and the legend, "This is how the Abolitionists loves the negro."

There was an interesting tendency to represent public men as animals; smart, likable animals if the men were on your side, the lowest of all fauna if they were on the other. The Southern President Davis was naturally the favorite target, being pictured variously as the Devil, as a snake, wolf, fox, monkey, rat, cat, chicken, crow or weasel. A favorite Northern cartoon showed a big bulldog in cocked hat, supposed to be General Winfield Scott, while a smaller, slinking cur was "Jeff Davis." Between them was what was intended to be a rib roast, marked "Washington." "Well, why don't you take it?" growls Scott. One of the few zoological sneers from the South is found on a picture of a cotton bale, with the vaunt, "Cotton defeated Packenham, and cotton will defeat APE LINCOLN."

Both sides pictured and claimed Washington, Martha Washington and Charles Carroll of Carrollton, and the North even enlisted old Ben Franklin, as "A Northern Man with Union Principles." Each side showed opposing celebrities dangling from the gallows. Lincoln was pictured in scores of ways; in company with every important Federal general; on many campaign covers, with and without Hamlin in 1860, with and without Andrew Johnson in 1864. He is pictured splitting rails, and one cover has a crude rail fence along the top and one end, labeled, "The

fence that Abe built." Another combines his portrait with the fence and a flatboating scene, explained as "Honest Abe Lincoln on his flatboat." Mr. Clark actually has a whole album full of envelopes inspired by the killing of Colonel Ellsworth of New York at Alexandria in the first days of the war—portraits of Ellsworth, pictures of the hotel where the episode occurred, numerous versions of the tearing down of the flag and the death scene itself, pictures of Zouaves, and one cover containing a terse alleged letter from the real hero of the affair: "FATHER: Col. Ellsworth was shot dead this morning. I killed his murderer. FRANK."

Some comic stunts by the printers are revealed. All the eminent Union generals were given envelopes to themselves, with their names in huge letters, often in red and blue. One of these bears the caption, "Rosecrans, the Hero of the West," but the portrait is unmistakably that of Jefferson Davis. This might have been a genuine error of the printer, or it might be explained on the theory that it was a rush job, the printer had no cut of Rosecrans and could lay hands on no photograph immediately from which to make a cut, and that he thought so few were acquainted with Rosecrans's aspect that he could get away with the substitution.

One interesting discovery made by Mr. Clark has to do with a picture of a standing small boy in sailor costume, supporting with his right hand the staff of a United States flag, its base resting on the floor. This appeared on two types of covers. Clark has recently found that the picture was a faithful copy of a portrait, at the age of two and a half years, of Perry Belmont—still alive—painted by Eastman Johnson at The Hague in 1853.

As usual, there is some delightful reading in the letters

sent in these envelopes. Of two of Mr. Clark's gems, one is from a Federal private at Hilton Head, South Carolina, in 1862, in which he tells the home folks, among other things, "Tomorrow morning at 11 oclock, Private Lunt of the 9th Regiment Maine volinteers is to be shot in presents of the whole command. He deserted from said Regt some time ago and went over to the rebells in florida but was so mean they would not keep him they came with a flag of Truce and gave him up."

On a note-head with a Lincoln portrait and the caption, "The Nation mourns his loss," a private still marooned on Lookout Mountain on July 8, 1865, "having a few lesure moments, thought I would right a few lines" to father and mother. His principal news was, "The 3d of July my pay was $63 20/100. The forth was very dul exept about the hole of the Brigaid was drunk and four men was killed and about 300 deserted."

Among other collectors of patriotics, Dr. Thomas O. Gamble has a fine collection of the Spanish-American War —Rough Riders, "Remember the *Maine*," Cuban flags, battle scenes, camps, regimentals, sentimentals, comics, advertising (even "Hood's Sarsaparilla" sneaked in on some of them), and all the heroes—McKinley, Roosevelt, Dewey, Hobson, Schley, Sampson, Clark, Shafter, Watson, Sigsbee, Miles, Lee, Evans.

There have been times when revenue stamps were necessary on telegrams; and there have been telegraph companies whose customers paid for telegrams with the company's own specially designed stamps. Furthermore, the big companies to this day hand out yearly to close friends and insiders sheets of stamps for the free franking of their telegrams. All these combine to make interesting collections, of which that of Frank E. Lawrance of Jersey City is the

most notable one we have seen. But once the first false step is taken, anyone can see to what this may lead. The first thing you know, the besotted enthusiast is collecting the telegrams themselves and the envelopes of all companies (and there were still 217 of them in the United States in 1886), regardless whether they have stamps on them or not. And Mr. Lawrance has yet another interesting sideline—a large assortment of the courtesy cards which the many telegraph companies fifty years ago passed around yearly to the presidents of all the other companies, so that no executive ever had to pay for sending a telegram.

This drifting into quiet byways becomes at times an irresistible thing. Edward Stern, when once he had started on his collection of Presidential and other governmental franks, found himself powerless to stop. He went right on to picking up autograph letters of the Presidents, autographed photographs of them as far back as he could go, then their bank checks—there seemed no end to it! His greatest prize in this line is a check drawn by Washington on the Bank of Alexandria in 1797 for $500. We learn from his collection that President Wilson once drew a check for one dollar and President Taft one for fifteen cents. Finally, Stern found that he had to collect ribbon badges, mostly Presidential campaign badges with portraits of the candidates and slogans, but also badges of patriotic celebrations, anniversaries and memorial celebrations for great statesmen and generals.

Collections of postal miscellany or oddities are lots of fun for the owner. Here you will find letters sent during great disaster periods, such as epidemics—when the envelopes might have holes cut in each end so that fumigation might be blown through them—floods, fires, train wrecks, shipwrecks, plane crashes. When San Francisco, post office

and all, was overwhelmed by earthquake and fire in 1906, no stamps were procurable there for days afterwards, and by an emergency ruling, people simply paid the cash to transmit the letter, which was postmarked and sent on without stamp. Stationery was hard to get, too, and people wrote letters on collars, cuffs, shingles, mere scraps of paper and pieces of glove and sent them through the mails.

In the oddity collection of George B. Sloane of New York you may see some of these curiosities. He has one of the stampless San Francisco letters, on which the Philadelphia post office, which apparently hadn't heard of the emergency ruling ("Always slow!" the New Yorkers point out), stuck a postage-due stamp. He has the cover of a letter which sank with the mail steamship Oregon off Long Island in 1886, and was recovered four months later, as attested by a post-office label; another, from Japan, damaged in the wreck of the Twentieth Century Limited on the fourth trip eastward of that famous train, June 21, 1905, when nineteen persons were killed. He has eight stamps which passed through the Equitable Building fire in New York in 1912, showing the effects of water and chemicals; some darkened, some lightened, one, a blue five-center, almost faded out.

He has the large envelope which carried a letter to President Harding from a crank who thus announced himself on the back: "From God Almighty, who comes to judge the living and the dead. Woe be unto him who heeds not my voice and does not as I will." Along the top and down the ends of the envelope he had affixed seventeen stamps of all denominations from one cent up to one dollar; nearly four dollars' worth, all told. To our eyes, one of the gems of Sloane's collection is a post card sent out in 1874 to sheriffs and police chiefs the country over, carrying news

of the kidnaping of little Charley Ross—the first kidnaping for ransom in our history and the only one for several decades thereafter—and offering a reward of $20,000 for his recovery. Space is lacking to tell of all of Mr. Sloane's oddities, and it may be said that no collection is more thoroughly explained and documented on the album pages. Like many another collector, the vagaries of our American post-office names have tempted him into whimsy. His is a post-office romance, and is represented by letters postmarked in succession from Liberty, N. Y., Friendship, Me., Love, Va., Kissimmee, Fla., Ringgold, Ga., Church, Iowa, Home, Ore., Bliss, Neb., and Boise, Idaho. We are a little dubious about the last item, but let it pass. Others find postal menus in the many towns in our country bearing the names of food—even including such gems as Hot Coffee, Mississippi—and Yuletide stories in such place names as Christmas, Holly, Mistletoe, Santa Claus, Jerusalem and Nazareth. Incidentally, one ought to have one of those thousands of letters postmarked from Santa Claus, Indiana, every year, whether one is an oddity collector or not.

Some foreign countries pick up pin money by selling advertising space on their stamps; and of course these things must be collected. On the back of each stamp of certain issues in New Zealand were printed (before the gum was applied) ads of soap, pills, cocoa, jellies, carpets and other commodities. France leases the white margins around whole sheets of stamps to advertisers. France, Belgium and Italy have lately had a practice of attaching an advertising stamp to each postage stamp sold in the small books such as are used in this country. The trailer is of the same size as the attached postage stamp, but carries a blurb for liquor, phonographs, radios, sewing machines, anything that will buy the space. "Macchine Singer Percu-

cire" on an Italian booklet—does it have a familiar sound?

There are many nowadays who collect Red Cross, Jewish, and Christmas seals—and these run into the thousands of varieties. Others go in for oddities, errors, misprints, cracked plates. One wants "Valentine covers with interesting postal markings." Some concentrate on a small political unit such as Surinam, that remote colony which contains so few white people. John D. Stanard of Chattanooga, Tennessee, found an odd byway and an interesting study in the local stamps of Lundy Island, a rock-bound British possession lying at the mouth of the Bristol Channel and privately owned by a wealthy Londoner, Martin Coles Harman, who practically ordered the British post off the island some years ago and installed his own mail service to the mainland, with stamps of his own design, valued at from one to twelve "Puffins"—the seabird of that name, a cousin of the great auk, being a constant resident of the island. When Mr. Harman casually remarked that he had dismissed the General Post Office from the place, *Punch* exclaimed,

> We hardly hoped that we would meet
> Such men; and yet can History show
> A speech more royal, more complete
> Than "I dismissed the G P O.?"

Harman also brought air-mail service to the islet, and there are cancellations and cachets to delight the hobbyist's heart. Mr. Stanard writes us that he was laughed at at first for his interest in Lundy, but that at present there are thirty-six serious specialists in its stamps in America and twenty-eight in Europe.

But there are yet stranger bypaths. Some large concerns keep on hand a full supply of stamps of all denominations

for heavier first-class mail, and there are those who make special collections of covers stamped with these larger values—six-cent, eight-cent, eleven-cent, thirteen-cent, seventeen-cent and all the rest. And here is another curious one. Some large companies, in an effort to prevent the private use of their stamp drawer by employees, have their stamps marked with their initials, made with pinhole perforations. The object of certain specialists is to find on covers these stamps used in an unauthorized way. For example, the collector's searching eye detects on a letter a stamp perforated "A.T. & T." But up in the corner is penned a private return address—Percy Woof, 96 Shakespeare Avenue, New York. It is evident that Percy is either an A.T. & T. employee or a friend of one, and is using a stamp filched from the company's stamp box. They say there are some considerable collections of this sort.

One of the loveliest exhibits to be seen at the New York World's Fair during the summer of 1939 was an example of what one may do if one has both an idea and great artistic ability. Mr. James T. Dye of New York, a water-color artist of superlative skill, has painted upon the fronts of large, white bond envelopes of fine quality, the coats of arms of many countries of the world in their own rich colorings, placed blocks of four of the country's own stamps upon them and asked the heads of those governments to autograph them for him. The drawings are so beautiful that the rulers have in most cases capitulated, though a few of the more stiff-necked handed the autographing job over to a prime minister. So far, Mr. Dye has the signatures of the kings of Great Britain (with the queen), of Sweden (with crown prince and princess), Norway, Denmark, Jugoslavia and Siam—the last-named first sent to

Bangkok, forwarded by the government to the little king, now studying in Switzerland, autographed by him and returned to Siam, then forwarded to New York. Mr. Dye has the presidents of France, Finland, Switzerland, Lithuania, Estonia, Liberia, Cuba, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Panama, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica and Salvador; the British governor-generals of Canada, Southern Rhodesia, New Zealand and Gibraltar, the prime ministers of Egypt, the Netherlands and Iceland; the Grand Duchess Charlotte of Luxembourg, Dictators Horthy of Hungary and De Valera of Ireland; also on separate covers, Prime Ministers Ramsay MacDonald and Stanley Baldwin.

Two of Dye's greatest achievements are, first, the envelope with the coat of arms of the United States, which bears the signatures of President Roosevelt, Governor Lehman of New York, Mayor La Guardia and Postmaster Goldman of New York City; second, the one which carries the autographs of the British monarchs. Anyone would have laid a wager with him that he would never get those latter signatures. But when the envelope reached Buckingham Palace, little Princess Margaret Rose saw it and wanted it for her stamp collection; so after some negotiation, after Mr. Dye's assurance that the cover would not be sold nor used for commercial purposes, and that he would paint another envelope just like this one for the little princess, back came the autographs of Royal George and Elizabeth.

He likewise has the autographs of the governor of every one of the forty-eight states on envelopes bearing copies of the state seal; he has painted pictures of many of our war-

ships with comely backgrounds and so won the autographs of admirals and commanders of those ships. There are other items, too, in this collection unique in the world, which, Mr. Dye says, will eventually go to the Philatelic Museum or the Smithsonian in Washington.

IS IT WORTH WHILE?

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

THE EDITOR of the *Rocky Mountain Stamp*, his face aglow with high purpose, seized his pen one day in 1899 and under the heading, "Some Benefits of Philately," wrote of the happy state of children who invest their pennies in good stamps (children's pocket money was counted in pennies then, you will notice) and are compelled to save in order to procure rare specimens. "On the other hand," he observed, "the child who spends his money for candy, chewing gum, etc., generally acquires no knowledge of saving, and at the same time, is continually undermining his health."

We have never seen the proposition better stated. The thesis is just as true today as it was forty years ago; but unfortunately, the depraved taste for candy, chewing gum and ice cream still maintains its fell clutch upon our children, and many cases are even found today among adults.

Seriously, there is no fad to which childhood is subject that is so wholesome, educational and practical as stamp collecting. Its value in teaching history and geography have been dwelt upon often enough. As to its practicality, there is nothing which gratifies the youthful urge to collect, which so maintains its market value. If the youngster invests in our commemoratives, they will at least be worth

face value for postage purposes, if he tires of the hobby. If he has the advantage of a bit of wise guidance and does not spend too much on junk, he will lay the foundation for a collection which may be very valuable some day, especially if he is encouraged to concentrate on some one or two particular objectives.

For it must be said that specialization, and intensive specialization at that, will be the chief hope for the building of collections that will be apt to sell for more than cost. We shall probably in the next fifty years see no such remarkable rise in values as has taken place in the past fifty. If elderly people now alive had from thirty-five to fifty years ago bought stamps which they could have had at from fifty cents or less up to ten dollars, they could sell many of them now for fifty, a hundred, some several hundred dollars. If they had been smart enough to lay away some sheets of our Columbians of 1893, they would have picked up a nice bit of interest on their investment.

We have told how the young Maine collector, F. W. Ayer, put some thousands into speculation in mint sheets of this series, then suffered a chill in the lower extremities and sold out. A corner in the one-dollar value was attempted soon after its issue, and the price pushed up to nine dollars before it broke. John Wanamaker decided that if the one-dollar was a good speculation, the two-dollar ought to be still better. He bought ten-thousand dollars' worth of them in sheets, and they were still in his vault when he died in 1926. Unused, they are worth twenty-five dollars per stamp today. But the four-cent, now worth two dollars, would have been a still better gamble. Try compound interest on four cents from 1893 on, and see how much better it would have been than money-lending.

Again in recent years, many persons have been misled

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Wide World Photos

An expert checking the perforations on a stamp. Wi



THE ANNUA
SPRING STAMP
IN LONDON

Left—Collecto
at a dealer's bo

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SPRING STAMP FAIR
IN LONDON

ight—Two Parisian ex-
erts discuss specimens.



into storing quantities of sheets of the commemorative stamps of this and other countries, in the hope of big future profits. There is a far greater weakness in the idea today than in '93, because it's all so overdone—both the number of commemoratives and the number of speculations. The great rush into this adventure began about 1934-35. One man of whom we heard had had five thousand pieces of glassine paper cut to the proper size to stow between sheets of stamps to protect the gum. Not only United States but Great Britain seemed a good bet, because Britain had not hitherto been so reckless with the pretty-pretties as had other countries. Certain banks and loan companies began lending money on sheets at from seventy-five to eighty per cent of face value. It became a pernicious habit to buy a thousand dollars' worth of new sheets, borrow $750 on it, take that and buy $750 worth more, borrow $500 or $600 on that, then buy $500 more—we don't know how far this pyramiding went in extreme cases, but it was sheer madness, of course, for no one could expect within his lifetime to cash in on those sheets at sufficient profit to pay the interest.

The peak of the boom has been variously estimated to have arrived with the King George V Silver Jubilee issue and with the George VI Coronation issue. The latter seems more nearly correct; for we know that with our industrial "recession" of 1937, the bull market in mint sheets began to weaken in this country. Borrowers couldn't keep up their interest payments, the bankers seized the sheets and began to unload them. Within the next two years there were many sales made at less than face value.

There was a rather silly speculation in the Typex sheet of 1936—a special sheet of 120 stamps, printed in panes of four. One pane, with a face value of twelve cents, was

pushed up to twenty, twenty-five, even to fifty cents and beyond. "It'll go to four dollars," the speculators were telling buyers and even each other. Then the bottom fell out, and today the pane can be had for about thirty-five cents. There have been attempts before to corner a certain stamp—the first crude four-skillings of Norway—which was selling for ten cents in 1897 when *Mekeel's Weekly* wondered why somebody didn't buy it up and raise the price. This was not done save half-heartedly for several years afterward; then E. T. Wallis of Indianapolis attempted a corner, and actually paid from $3 to $6.50 per copy in his effort to achieve it. He eventually accumulated a thousand copies, which were later sold to a New York dealer, doubtless at much less than what Wallis had paid for them; but the price of the stamp had been considerably raised. In the same manner two other men who thought the five-cent U. S. 1847 was too cheap at thirty-five cents per copy began buying it up, paying seventy-five cents and a dollar artificially until they had at least ten thousand copies. They lost some money, but they boosted the price of the stamp forevermore, and it has continued to rise. Look it up in the catalogues today.

The dramatist Sardou introduced into his *Famille Benoiton*, written in 1865, a shrewd little broker of eight years of age who, having a straight tip that the American Confederacy was headed for the rocks, got the better of his little comrades on the Champs Elysées Bourse by buying all the Confederate stamps they had, which he was able to sell at a nice profit a short time later when news came that Lee had surrendered at Appomattox, and the Southern nation was no more. As this chapter is being written, the best of American experts are sharply divided as to the effect

that the war now raging in Europe, or rather, in the waters around Europe, may have upon philately. Some stamp-



THE CHILDREN'S STAMP BOURSE IN THE CHAMPS ELYSÉES, PARIS, 1875

dealers' advertising shows the tendency to trade upon the situation: "Czechoslovakia his disappeared. Poland is dead. Prices on their stamps will go skyward soon. This is your last chance." There will be new countries, too, in the cata-

logues—Slovakia is already emerging—and war rarities and overprintings and unique cancellations will be promoted by some just as they were after the World War.

But what will be the effect in general upon philately? Some veterans say stamp prices will collapse. Others are quite as confident that we are due for a boom; and these point to the war of 1914-1918 as a precedent. That war created thousands of new collectors in this country; people who came in contact with foreign letters and postal service, saw curious postmarks, war tax, charity and other stamps, and became stamp conscious. That this may happen again to some extent seems more likely than the more pessimistic surmise, especially as a betterment of business may be brought about by the war. But it may be just as well to consider the opinion of the third group of veterans who are saying that no one can tell what will happen.

During the last war not only the philatelic rookies but even some old campaigners were lured into buying heavily by the flood of stamps of new governments, occupation, provisionals, surcharges and a thousand others as yet uncatalogued, often paying fancy prices which could not be realized afterward. Kent B. Stiles, philatelic editor of the New York *Times*, cites one collector who spent $6,000 during the war years on a collection of what might be called war stamps, at prices then asked, and found several years later that he couldn't get more than $300 for it. No definite information is available as this is written about the new provisional printings, and European dealers who lay hands on the stamps first are naturally going to get all they can out of America for them; some will even misrepresent them a bit in their eagerness to sell.

Mr. Stiles further observes that sixty-four Red Cross

stamps issued by twenty-three French colonies were priced in the Scott catalogue shortly after the World War at $131; in the 1940 edition they are quoted at $71, a decline of about forty-five per cent. Slightly less than three hundred occupation stamps coming from Hungary were priced at nearly $1,100 just after the great war, but only $415 now, a recession of more than thirty-seven per cent. Some occupation stamps of other warring countries, however, have held their own or increased in value; Cameroons from $550 to $830, for example, and Saar from $28 to $200. All of which suggests pretty clearly that prophesying as to future values of stamps of the present war is a futile pastime.

That great expert, Charles J. Phillips, wrote a pamphlet in 1923 entitled, *Postage Stamps as an Investment*, and therein listed the items which he considered worth buying with a view to increase in value. He believed that our Confederate States represented the best opportunity of all. Next he mentioned the United States official departmental stamps; and then he listed Argentina, 1858-72; Austria, 1850-77; Barbados, 1852-78; Belgium, 1849-61, or even down to '83—but the list of more than fifty others is too long to reproduce here; you will have to read his book if you want it all. He doesn't consider it necessarily valid now, since the new war broke out. "I'm not giving any advice at all now," he said shortly, when asked about it. "Who can tell what will happen?"

Mr. Stiles, searching the catalogues, past and present, finds interesting proof of the statement that the values of many good stamps are advancing steadily in the present century. Supporting Mr. Phillips's citation of Austria as an investment, Mr. Stiles shows that its regular issues from

1850 through 1910 were quoted at about $73 before the World War, at $93 in 1919 and $150 in the 1940 catalogue. He quotes others which Phillips did not mention; as for example:

	Around 1913	1919	1940
Bavaria's stamps, unused....	$400	$466	$726
Bavaria's stamps, used.....	56	104	307
Caroline Islands.....	12	22	107
Poland 1860, Russian occupation, unused.....	2.50	4	8

It has not been so many moons since we were being told by the best informed men in philately, "There'll never be any more prices like that $32,500 for the British Guiana '56 because there won't be anybody to pay them. Great fortunes are being confiscated by governments, and there will be no more vastly rich collectors." As far as the factual part of the statement goes, this is true; but when we come to the prophecy—ah, that is quite another matter. Who would wager much against the possibility that some physicist may find a way to throw television five hundred, a thousand miles or more, and that he and the men who back him may become multi-billionaires and stamp collectors? Who can say that some other new widget may not be discovered which will speedily become a necessity and make its producers rich? Within a week in November, 1939, remarkable new gold strikes were announced in Georgia and California. Is Nature preparing to turn kindly and create some new millionaires in those areas?

That there are still men wealthy enough and willing to pay well for fine stamps was shown late in 1938 by the purchases—already mentioned in Chapter IX—by Esmond

Bradley Martin, Jr., of the 1869 block of inverts for $25,000, and other rarities at top prices. It is reported that not only he but others are quietly building collections which may some day surpass Ferrary's, Hind's or Green's. Nevertheless, prices in general were sagging at the time of Mr. Martin's big purchase, and the publishers of the 1940 Standard Catalogue, compiled in the summer of 1939, were a bit pessimistic over the outlook; so much so that they figured a decline in the estimated value of more than 500 stamps, amounting to about $992. Some fifty stamps had been marked up a little, however, making the net reduction a trifle more than $890.

But the catalogue had not yet appeared when some auction sales in the late summer and fall sounded a more optimistic note. At the sale of the collection of Dr. Phillip G. Cole of Tarrytown, N. Y., one of the two known mint copies of the Honduras twenty-five-centavos on ten-centavo dark blue sold for $5,300 and the five-centavo blue 1925 overprinted in red brought $3,900, which proved that such items are not exactly going begging. But the sale of the American collection of the late Stephen D. Brown of Glens Falls, N. Y., early in November, was an eye-opener for the entire fraternity. A London firm of auctioneers had won the privilege of selling the collection, but the outbreak of war made the sale in England impracticable, and it was transferred to the Collectors Club in New York. The auctioneers admitted afterward that they had expected to realize only somewhere between seventy-five and eighty-five thousand dollars; instead the total sales were $106,625.50. Many prices were above catalogue quotations, and some of them broke records.

For example, a twenty-four-cent air mail of 1918 with inverted center, sold for $4,100, a decidedly different figure

from the $2,500 received for each of two copies of the same stamp by the same auctioneers at a sale in London earlier in the year, and the $2,750 paid by Senator Frelinghuysen in 1932. A mint block of four of the 1893 Columbian five-dollar, catalogued at $1,000, brought $1,150, and a similar block of the four-dollar, catalogued at $750, was knocked off at $925. A St. Louis postmaster ten-cent greenish on cover sold for $1,075, about double the catalogue price. Another envelope bearing both the five- and ten-cent 1847 sold for $1,100, which was precisely three and two-thirds times what the cataloguers thought it was worth!

A Wells-Fargo Pony Express one-dollar, tied to its cover by the pony-running-horse frank and with St. Joseph postmark sold for $520, the highest price ever known, and $370 above catalogue. When a similar cover sold for $160 in London a year before, it was thought to have done nobly. Dozens of other items sold for more than the cataloguer's figures. "Damn-fool prices!" grumbled some conservatives; but to others they were a cheering sign; they seemed to prove that philately is still on the up-grade. And then, a few days later, came the sale at Boston of the collection of Judge Robert S. Emerson of Providence, when one of the only two known blocks of four of the fifteen-dollar ultramarine mortgage revenue stamp sold for $450, a hitherto unheard-of price, and a two-cent playing card stamp, imperforate, brought $152.50, which was exactly $150 more than the catalogue price of a perforated copy. On the heels of this came the news that Colonel E. H. R. Green's collection is to be sold soon, and predictions that instead of the $1,298,444 appraisal valuation placed upon it, it will, if given favorable auction conditions, bring more than $2,000,000.

What could have brought about such buying enthusiasm at these sales and this strengthened confidence in future prices? Well, perhaps the war in Europe has something to do with it. Steel is strengthening, airplanes are building and more war orders are looked for. Even those gold strikes in Georgia and California may touch the public consciousness pleasantly; for remember that it was largely the gold and silver dug from the earth in the west between 1850 and 1900 that made this the world's richest nation, and in turn elevated many a humble little scrap of paper into a philatelic treasure worth thousands of times its weight in gold.

One point which has been made increasingly evident in these recent sales, and one which should be driven home in the mind of new collectors (not to mention the old), is that fine condition of the stamp is coming more and more to be a requisite. Creased, tattered, soiled, faded or heavily canceled stamps are not apt to bring high prices unless there is only a corporal's guard of their kind in existence.

For those who cannot compete for these greatest of rarities, the hope of the future lies, as we have said, in intensive specialization and development of a single narrow category. We have already mentioned dozens of byways, and there are yet others covered in a manner showing a degree of study and loving care such as can scarcely be found elsewhere than in the laboratory of a great chemist or physicist, or in the ivory tower of a scholar to whom study and research are more essential to life than food. Many concentrate on just one stamp—a Los Angeles dentist, for example, on the President Hayes eleven-cent of 1922, in all its forms and shades—we've forgotten how many he can count—running the whole gamut of blue and into green.

Another, Mr. Pickard of Greenville, Delaware, has spent rather more money on a collection of the ninety-cent bicolor of 1869. He has it with the several shades of red with which the printers unintentionally varied the frame; he has the engravers' tryouts on cardboard in green and brown, green and blue, brown and blue, brown and black and so on; essays of the frame alone; some with a portrait of Washington instead of Lincoln, which latter was finally used—these portraits in black, with frames of taupe, orange, brown, blue; plate proofs on India paper; proofs on cardboard with normal and inverted portrait; cancellations in black, red and blue; varieties. It is a biological history of the stamp.

Howard Lederer, a New York broker, has centered his attention on the two-cent black Harding Memorial stamp, issued just after the President's death in 1922. He has a sheet autographed by Mrs. Harding, all the position blocks of four and six, used and unused, top and sides of sheet, a double paper block, a double plate-number block of twenty-five with the Bureau employees' initials, singles, pairs and blocks with slight misalignments, plate smears, frame break, vertical imperforates, canceled covers showing the plate layout lines and position dots. There is a sample of the coil used in the Shermack stamp-vending machine; a strip of six on an air-mail cover, first flight from Los Angeles to Salt Lake; a first-day cover from Marion, Ohio, carrying a letter from the postmaster to the superintendent of the Division of Stamps; a beautifully mounted proof, one of ten made by order of Postmaster-General New for presentation to members of the Harding family; black-bordered mourning letters and envelopes from all the government departments, franked with plate-number blocks of four and six; the official Department notice of the issu-

ance of the stamp; seaport and other cancellations, newspaper clippings about the stamp, and finally a handsome, full-sized etching of the pen portrait of Harding from which the stamp was made. Here, in two or three nutshells, are instructions for making a one-stamp collection, one which will command the respect and some day the dollars of high-ranking philatelists.

There are albums in which the drawings and supplementary information lettered on the pages are culturally, scientifically or historically so important that one wishes they might be saved in some museum or library for the future use of persons doing research; for there is information here which—as we have remarked in the instance of Holcombe's match and medicine collection—is the result of years of patient research through every species of the printed word; information which others could not get without even greater labor and patience, and which, half a century hence, will be much harder to find, if, indeed, it is not lost entirely.

Sometimes these collections do go into museums; as for example, that of Alpheus B. Slater, who died in 1936, of the Providence postmaster stamps. He had them in all the possible forms—original sheets, blocks, on covers, likewise proofs and reprints. There were old pictures of the post office in Providence which was in service in 1846-47, portraits of the postmaster, Welcome B. Sayles, who issued them, even a portrait of the engraver who made the plate. Here was something as nearly approximating completion as one could get of a stamp so old; and at Mr. Slater's death, it passed, intact forever, into the possession of the Rhode Island Historical Society.

As an example of the care with which these collectors ascertain and record the facts, take Philip H. Ward, Jr.'s,

collection of Panama, all issues, including wash drawings, essays, proofs and the finished stamps in all possible groupings, constituting a history of the designing and manufacture of the stamps from the preliminary sketch to the finished article. Or, in another category, take the air-mail collection of L. Russell Albright of Newark, Delaware, in which each envelope is accompanied by an outline map, sometimes covering half a dozen states, with lines showing its carriage by air, rail and truck—blue lines for air, red for rail, green for truck.

For rare historic value, look at the Cook Islands collection of Professor L. L. Steimley of the University of Illinois, in which the pages are beautified with photographs of those lush tropic isles, of cocoa palms, of chiefs of Raratonga from old paintings, of other native types. Lettered on the pages is really a full history of the islands, telling of the attempts of the missionary John Williams to discover Raratonga, having heard of it from the Society Island natives, and of his final discovery of it in 1822, with everything of importance that followed thereafter.

The Martinique collection of Ralph Holtsizer of Philadelphia is another notable achievement. Here in nine albums is almost a history of the island, beginning back in the pre-stamp days. In addition to the varieties, overprints, errors, complete sheets, proofs, essays, postal stationery and so on, one sees here pitiful hints of the awful devastation of the island by Mont Pelée in 1902—postmarks of little towns which disappeared forever, some whose post offices began functioning again only after three, five or six years. The pages are decorated with pen drawings of scenery, palm trees, churches, ruins, native types, studies of heads, fishermen bringing their haul up from the water.

In building such collections, any document, clipping,

pamphlet or picture that has reference to any of the stamps should not be permitted to escape if it comes near enough for the collector to grab it, and certain others should be sought for until they are found. If one is making a British collection, it is desirable to accompany the Penny Black with the Parliamentary Postage Acts of 1839 and '40, either originals or reprints. Samples of the printed envelopes discussed in the commissioners' report of 1837 would also be valuable. Similarly, photostat or other copies of our first Congressional Acts for the printing and use of stamps should accompany a good collection of early Americans. And there are other things to be picked up at sight, such as an item in Mr. Lichtenstein's British Columbia collection—the certificate by a committee of the destruction of half a million dollars' worth of demonetized stamps, "this day destroyed by fire in our presence, with the exception of sixty (60) of each Denomination preserved as specimens."

The point toward which we are driving in these descriptions is that some day, when these collections are put up at auction, wealthy bidders will compete for them, with the result that the men who assembled them—or their estates—will be well paid, not only for the stamps and the complementary documents, but for the hours and days of delightful toil required in searching for them and for the historical and other data bearing upon them, for the planning of the album pages and the slow building of them into a beautiful and compendious whole. It has all been fun; one of the few varieties of hard work in this world which are also good fun; and if properly and carefully done, you get paid for it!

Unwearied vigilance and search are the price of success in stamp collecting. Arthur H. Deas, President of the Collectors Club of New York, tells how, a few years ago, he

took his little daughter out for a walk before breakfast each morning in their home town, Mount Vernon, which adjoins New York City on the north. At a corner they would, just for fun, toss a coin to see which way they would turn; and as they went along, Mr. Deas would stop at each house and ask the denizens if they had any old letters or documents from which he might buy the stamps. Not so many summers back, two other New York collectors went for a motor trip the full length of Long Island along the south shore, stopping at every old house they saw—and there are plenty of them, especially up around the Hamptons and Sag Harbor—and finding many fine old stamps ranging from 1871 back to the beginning, as well as some old foreign ones, for many of the ancestors out that way had been seafaring folk.

If you collected stamps as a youngster thirty, forty, fifty years ago and then ceased, but still have your album, it may be that you have items in it which are now worth many times what you paid for them. A little girl exhibited her album in a hobby show in New York recently, and was scarcely less amazed than were the judges when they found in it stamps worth several thousand dollars. Her father confessed that he had bought the album with most of the stamps in it at an auction years ago for a hundred dollars, and hadn't realized how valuable the collection was.

The final fact, and one of the most important to be pondered by the one who is not yet a stamp collector, is that even if you are somewhat of a dilettante at the hobby, even if you do not build a supercollection of rarities or one of the highly specialized and documented ones which we have just described, there is no hobby now engaging the attention of man which has as great a *salvage* assurance as philately.

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INDEX

Ackerman, E. R., 48, 65
Adams, John, 225, 256, 260, 263
Advertising, 22, 23, 246, 320, 321
"Affiches," 17
Air mail, 8, 9, 67, 157, 302, 321, 333, 334, 338
Albrecht, R. F., 111
Albright, L. Russell, 338
Albums, 22, 28, 32, 34, 36, 337, 339, 340
American Bank Note Company, 68, 80
American Cyclopedia, 43
American Journal of Philately, 30-35, 42, 55, 74, 107, 181-183, 207-209, 252, 288, 294; "Roll of Dishonor," 183-185
American Philatelic Association, 46-48, 111, 136
American Stamp Mercury, 31, 34, 39, 41
American Whig Review, 11
Anderberg, August, 238, 240, 241
Anti-Surcharge Association, 59
Appleton (D.) & Company, 28
Arrow pairs, 60
Arsenius, Frederick, 287
Ashburton, Lord, 11
Atlantic Air Mail stamps (1939), 133
Auction, stamp, first, 42
Australia, 62, 147, 149, 274
Austria, 56, 271, 272, 276
Ayer, F. W., 55, 143-145, 326

Bailey, John, 27
Balloon mail, 303, 304
Balzac, *Le Cousin Pons*, 17
Barham, *Ingoldsby Legends*, 13
Barrett, Sidney F., 234
Bartels, J. Murray, 236
Belgium, 16, 17, 155, 279, 281, 285, 287, 320
Benjamin, Alfred, 210, 211
Bennett, James Gordon, 103, 181, 182
Berger-Levrault, Oscar, 21, 50, 51
Berthold, Dr. Victor M., 306
Bishopp, Henry, 224
Blackwood's Magazine, 19
Blair, J. Insley, 64, 65
Bogert, Rudolphus R., 45, 46, 48, 59, 111, 112, 172
Bogert & Durbin, 117-119, 165

Booty, artist, 22
Bopeley, Joseph L., 292
Boscawen stamp, 143, 146
Boston *Daily Advertiser*, 18, 21, 28
"Boston Revenue Book," 146, 295
Bourne, Herbert, 70
Bourse, Paris stamp, 51, 52, 329
Boutwell, George S., 291
Bradt, S. B., 46, 47
Brattleboro postmaster provisional (1845), 62, 148, 162, 178, 179, 234
Brazil, 16, 205, 273, 276, 284
Brennan, dealer, 27
British American, 62, 148, 153
British colonials, 64, 68, 146, 197
British Columbia, 244, 245, 279, 339
British Guiana, 9, 42, 66, 139, 140, 143, 149, 206, 332
Brown, Mrs. Edith Adams, 276, 280
Brown, Mount, 22
Brown, Stephen D., 159, 333
Brown, W. P., 27, 28, 109-111
Bruckmann, Kasper E., 284
Brunei, Sultan of, 192, 193
Burger, A. H. E., 48
Burger, August and Artur, 113-115
Butler & Carpenter, 289-295
Bye, George W., 243
Byrd Antarctic stamp, 81
Cachets, 9, 222, 303, 306
Calman, Gus B., 108, 117, 186, 187
Calman, Henry, 59, 108, 186, 187
Camoys of Henley, Lord, 55
Canada, 48, 144, 165, 181, 280, 285; sixpence, 37, 122, 166; twelvepence, 37, 166
Cancellations, 67, 74, 226-247, 292
Cape of Good Hope, 62, 147, 151
Carol, King of Roumania, 135, 143
Carpenter, Joseph R., 289-295
Carrier stamps, 109, 117, 118
Casey, John J., 32, 33, 45
Castle, M. P., 64
Catalogues, first, 21, 22, 27, 37, 157, 331
Central America, 135, 186, 187, 190
Champion, Theodore, 198, 199
Chaney, C. B., 78
Change Alley, 23, 24
Chappell, Alonzo, 79
Chase, Dr. Carroll, 62, 63, 66
Chicago *Inter-Ocean*, 48
Chicago *Morning News*, 48
Chicago *Times*, 48
Children, collections by, 276, 277, 325, 326, 328, 329, 340
Chittenden, Dr. J. Brace, 32
City Hall Park, New York, 29, 98, 101, 105, 155

Civil War, 22, 28, 104, 291, 313-317
Clark, Hugh M., 313-317
Clark, Mrs. Hugh M., 275
Clark, Thomas, 55
Cleveland, Grover, 254, 263, 284
Cole, Dr. Philip G., 333
Collectors Club of New York, 57, 108, 277, 333, 339
Collector's Club Philatelist, 32, 197
Columbian stamps (1893), 86, 87, 144, 326, 334
Commemorative stamps, 10, 35, 49, 76-79, 81, 98, 195-198, 200, 204, 222, 325-327
Confederate envelopes, 313-315; stamps, 28, 55, 92, 142, 146, 147, 328, 331
Cook Islands, 338
Cooper, Sir Daniel, 53
Corner cards, 309-313
Corwin, Charles B., 42, 57
Counterfeits, 34, 38, 39, 41, 42, 45, 60, 117, 118, 183, 209
Crawford, Earl of, 38, 69, 75, 76, 134, 146
Creswell, Postmaster-General, 228-230
Crocker, Henry J., 66, 147-149
Crocker, William H., 66, 147-149
Cromwell, Mrs. Caroline Prentiss, 65, 146
Cuba, 214, 217, 222
Curie, Charles, 65
Davis, Frederick W., 160
Dealers, stamp (see Stamp dealers)
Deas, Arthur H., 339, 340
Deats, Hiram E., 57, 60, 145, 289, 290, 295
de Coppet, F., 42
De Pinedo, 221
De Witt, Lockman and De Witt, 102, 103
Dexter, G., 28
Diaz, Porfirio, 135, 136
Dies, 69-72, 82, 226; proofs, 79, 82
Doane, Percy, 112, 119, 120
Dockwra, William, 224, 225
Dominican Republic, 187, 188, 285
Dull, Christian, 66
Dunbar, Seymour, 302, 303
Durbin, L. W., 160
Durbin and Hanes, 45, 46
Duveen, H. J., 66, 143, 146
Dye, James T., 322-324

Earhart, Amelia, 220, 221
Ecuador, 188, 189, 191, 207
Eden Musee, 48
Edward VIII, King, 134, 138, 139, 277
Emerson, Robert S., 334
England (see Great Britain)
Envelopes, 58, 71, 72, 104, 125, 199, 202, 203, 257, 309-317, 339
Express mail, 303, 307-309

Faber, William H., 26
Farley, James B., 81, 82, 86, 204, 222, 223, 284
Ferrary, Phillippe la Renotiere von, 52-55, 142, 146, 210-212; sale, 139-141
Filatelic Facts and Fallacies, 86, 196
First-day covers, 6, 9, 202, 222
Fiscals, first, 288-293
France, 5, 6, 10, 22, 54, 55, 59, 90, 91, 282, 320; commemoratives, 198, 273; first stamps, 16, 17
Frankings, 248-269, 317, 318, 336
Franklin, Benjamin, 75, 81, 98-100, 260
Franco-Prussian War, 50, 303
Franks, 55, 224, 244, 252-269; western, 307-309, 334

Gamble, Dr. Thomas O., 317
Gatun Locks proofs, 80
Gelbach, John J., 280
George V, King, 62, 134, 136-139, 141, 326
George VI, 327
Germany, 215, 240, 274-276; music, 272
Gibbons, E. Stanley, 21, 55
Gibbons, Stanley, Ltd., 36, 55, 64, 136, 144; catalogue, 157
Ginnity, stamp finder, 116-118
Glover, Irving, 204
Godkin, Editor New York *Evening Post*, 184
Gold Rush (1849), 228, 235, 241, 309
Governmental five-and-tens, 180-205
Gramm, Charles F., 238
Grant, Ulysses S., 43
Great Britain, 2, 4, 11-25, 69, 131, 189, 210, 226, 248-250, 289; colonies, 137; first stamps, 13-15, 67; postal system (1660), 248; "Penny Black" (1840), 61, 166, 180, 206, 250, 339; stamp tax (1765), 289
Green, Colonel Edward H. R., 149, 150-159, 334
Gremmel, Henry, 111
Guatemala, 43, 135, 186, 190, 207, 208

Haiti, 136, 197, 285
Hale, W. B., 109
Handshaw, J. E., 92, 108, 190
Harding, Bertita, 42
Harding, Florence Kling, 266
Harding, Warren G., 319, 336, 337
Harman, Martin Coles, 321
Hausberg, Leslie, 62
Hawaii, 18, 120, 147, 192, 206, 229, 273
Hawaiian missionaries, 142, 143, 177
Hawkins, William E., 65, 159, 160
Heath, Lloyd, 277-280
Heinemann, Andrew, Billy and Jack, 61, 62

Hemingway, 168, 169
Herpin, G., 24
Herrick, Dr., 293, 294
Hill, Rowland, 13, 14, 40, 206
Hind, Arthur, 55, 64, 65, 140-146
Holcombe, Henry W., 297-301, 337
Holtsizer, Ralph, 338
Honduras, 186, 188, 191, 285, 333
Hoover, Herbert, 136
Hudson, Dr. Otho C., 282, 283
Hughes-Hughes, W., 36, 50
Hungerford, Edward, 235
Hunter, F. W., 111

Image, Dr. W. E., 54
Imperforates, 56, 291, 334
Indian Territory, 66, 244
Inverts (1869), 132, 135, 149, 160, 190, 196, 333
Ireland, 239, 274
Italy, 69, 198, 214, 215, 221, 304, 320, 321; Stradivarius stamps, 273

Jackson, Andrew, 76, 102, 182, 255
Japan, 135, 147, 238, 319
Jefferson, Thomas, 128, 259
Johl, Max G., 79
Jones, Gilbert E., 57
Journals, stamp, 30, 31, 38-41; first, 211

Kennett, William C., 141, 143
Kent, Philip, 17
Kilton, Hen, 123-130
Kimmel, F. K., 104
King, Beverly S., 79, 81
King and Johl, 78, 81, 82
Kleeman, John, 111
Knapp, Edward S., 309-313
Konweiser, Harry, 66, 141, 174, 177
Kroog, 119-122
Kuenstler, Hugo, 92

Lallier, Justin, 22
Lamborn, Arthur H., 146
Lawrance, Frank E., 317, 318
Leavy, Joseph, 155
Lederer, Howard, 336
Legrand, Dr. J. A. ("Dr. Magnus"), 56
Letters, folded, 257, 258
Lichtenstein, Alfred, 147, 245, 308, 310, 339
Leisure Hour, 16
Lever, Charles, 19, 20
Lienau, R. S., 87
Lincoln, Abraham, 103, 254, 255, 257, 263, 336; Civil War envelopes, 315-317; commemorative (1909), 76
Lindbergh, Charles A., 303
Lindquist, H. L., 239
London, 15, 19, 22-24, 143, 163, 210
London *Morning Post*, 95
London *Times*, 15
Longnecker, J. W., 269
Luff, John N., 59, 66, 111, 197
Lundy Island, 321
Luxemburg, first stamps, 27

Macklin, John J., match stamp, 294
McKinley, William, 75, 253, 263, 266
Madison, Dolly, 259, 265, 268
Madison, James, 259, 260, 261
Magazines, stamp, 34, 40, 41, 46, 63; first, 19, 22
"Magnus, Dr." (Dr. J. A. Legrand), 56
Mandel, Henry G., 66
Mann, 64
Map stamps, 285
Marie, Queen of Roumania, 135
Marsh, Will E., 40
Martin, E. Bradley, Jr., 148, 332, 333
Martinique collection, 338
Match stamps, 114, 294, 297-301, 337
Mauritius, one- and two-penny, 9, 16, 18, 37, 47, 142, 147, 206
Maximilian, Emperor, issues, 135
Mead, James M., 136
Mekeel, C. H., 167, 191, 213; Stamp and Publishing Company, 49; *Stamp Collector*, 64; *Weekly Stamp News*, 197, 328
Melville, Fred J., 70, 210, 211
Metropolitan Philatelist, New York, 26
Mexican Philatelic Society, 220
Mexico, 73, 135, 191, 209, 213, 275, 280-282
Milliken, Edwin, 236
"Mission mixtures," 88-97
Moens, J. B., 17, 37, 168
Mulready letter sheet, 13, 14

Nassau Street, 98-115, 116-133, 151
National Bank Note Company, 291
National Philatelic Society, 45
National stamps, five- and ten-cent (1847), 106
Needham, Henry C., 48
Negreen, John F., 132
New Brunswick, 37, 139, 276
New Orleans *Picayune*, 30
New South Wales, 195, 214, 282, 283; "Sydney Views," 147, 148, 180, 211
New York City, 57, 98-115, 225, 236
New York *Herald*, 103, 104, 181
New York Philatelic Society, 30-32, 34, 184
New York *Sun*, 35, 73, 99, 103
New York *Times*, 36, 57, 75, 145, 330
New York *Tribune*, 99, 111
New York *World*, 99, 162
New York World's Fair, 198, 205, 322
New Zealand, 282, 287, 304, 320
Newbold, Mr., 121-123, 172, 173

Newfoundland, 43, 86, 87, 139, 181, 195, 219, 277, 287
Newspapers, 12; stamps (1875-95), 173, 174, 288
Nicaragua, 87, 182, 188, 189, 213, 285
Norway, 197, 239, 328
Nova Scotia, 37, 139
Nye, Bill, 15

Obelisk, Central Park, 43, 44
O'Dowd, Cornelius, 19
Offenbach, La Belle Hélène, 35
Olympic Games series, 81, 195
Overprinting, 59, 73, 74

Pack, Charles Lathrop, 62, 139, 146
Paderewski stamp, 273
Paintings, on stamps, 76, 77
Pall Mall Gazette, 90, 91
Pan-American series (1901), 78, 132, 160, 196
Panama, 87, 337, 338
Panama-Pacific series (1912-13), 80
Paper, thicknesses, 56, 63
Paris, 14, 24, 130; balloon envelopes (1870-71), 303; Bourse, stamp, 51, 52, 329; Revolution, 244; stamp collectors, 51, 52; "submarine mail," 307
Parliamentary Postage Acts, 339
Patent medicine stamps, 293, 294-298, 337
Patent royalty stamps, 300, 301
Patriotics, Civil War, 313, 314
"Penny Black," 61, 180, 206, 250, 339
Perforations, 56, 57, 59, 63, 74
Perkins, Jacob, 68
Perkins, Bacon & Petch, 68
Perry, Elliott, 94, 95, 177, 178
Philadelphia Centennial (1876), 185, 272
Philatelic Agency, 193, 203, 204
Philatelic Bluebook, 287
Philatelic Journal of America, 187
Philatelic Library, The, 38
Philatelic Monthly, 56, 209
Philatelic World, 58
Philately, development, 28-50; name, 24, 25, 31; premier world hobby, 14; salvage assurance, 340
Philbrick, Judge, 53, 54
Phillips, Charles J., 136-138, 141, 143, 144, 149, 331, 332
Phillips, W. W., 308
Pickard, Mr., 336
Pictorials, 49, 55, 180, 181, 270-287
Piercy, Mary K., 286
Pinkham, F. H., 190
Plating, 56, 61-63
Plympton Manufacturing Company, 71, 72
Post cards, 42, 43, 57, 125, 127, 128
Post offices, 106, 107, 173, 174.

(See also United States Post Office)
Postage, early, 11-25
Postage-due stamps, 173, 203
Postal miscellany, 318-322
Postmarks, 67, 224-247; advertising, 246, 247; first, 224-226; RFD, 243; railroads and steamboat lines, 235; towns changing names, 238-241
Postmaster stamps, 106, 117, 147, 162, 163, 166, 167, 172, 176, 177, 334
Postmasters, cancellations, 227, 228; franks, 269
Potiquet, Alfred, 21
Powers, Eustace, 170, 171
Precanceling, 73, 245, 246
Price lists, 30, 32, 45; first, 21, 30; first American, 28
Proofs, stamp, 69, 70
Propaganda envelopes, 311, 312
Proprietary stamps, 293-300
Provisional stamps, 57, 106
Pullen collection, 42
Punch, 16, 321

Radasch, Dr. H. E., 303
Railroad postmarks, 235
Randall, Postmaster-General, 106, 107
Rawdon, Wright, Hatch & Edson, 70, 71
Religions, collections, 280-282
Remainders, 45, 49, 183, 186, 188
Reprints, 45, 49, 183
Revenue stamps, 55, 56, 74, 93, 119, 121, 148, 171, 288-300, 317, 334; first American catalogue, 289
RFD covers, 242, 243
Rich, Stephen G., 313
Richardson, A. J. H., 244
Ricketts, William R., 28
Ridgley, A. N., 192
Robey, W. T., 157, 158
Rocky Mountain Stamp, 325
Roosevelt, Franklin D., 81, 136, 201, 202, 204, 284
Roosevelt, Theodore, 254, 263, 285
Roosevelt, Mrs. Theodore, 267
Roumania, 183, 240, 277, 281
Russell & Company, 117, 118
Russia, 18, 35, 152, 206, 216, 238-240, 274

St. Helena, 191
St. Louis, 169, 303, 334
St. Louis *Times*, 46
Salisbury, Henry Wood, 281, 282
Salvador, 188, 191
San Francisco, 198, 285, 318, 319
San Marino, 193
Sanford, E. Harrison, 62
Sarabia, 220
Sardinia, letter sheets, 14
Sardou, *Famille Benoiton*, 328
Sarpy, J. H., 210, 211
Saxony, three-pfennige, 37
Sayles, Welcome B., 337

Scales, first stamp collector, 17
Scott, John Walter, 29-37, 48, 59, 89, 100, 107, 108, 146, 186, 189, 191; album, 28, 32, 34; catalogue, 37, 157, 331; price list, 30; first stamp auction, 42. (*See also American Journal of Philately*)
Scott, Walter S., 63, 111, 212
Scott Stamp & Coin Co., 108, 117, 186, 187
Seebeck, N. F., 187-191
Sellschopp, W., 57
Serbia, provisionals, 192
Serphos, Norman, 303, 304
Seward, William H., 82
Seybold, John F., 57, 58
Ship mail, 235-237
Silby, W. T., 70
Singer, Sam, 130-133
Sketches, and drawings, 69, 79-83
Slater, Alpheus B., 337
Sloane, George B., 77, 201, 246, 266, 292, 293, 319, 320
Smith, R. Ostrander, 75, 80, 81
Smollett, *Humphrey Clinker*, 249
Société Française de Timbrologie, 24
Society for the Suppression of Speculative Stamps, 189
Solomon, Burnes, 280
Sotheby, 42
South America, 62, 66, 135, 190
Soviet Philatelic Association, 216
Spain, 142, 184, 208, 282; war with (1898), 299, 300, 313, 317
Special-delivery stamp, 79-81
Specialization, 6, 50-67, 144, 146, 326
Stamp collecting, 9, 46, 49; early, 2-4, 15-19, 26; modern, 6-9; value, 8, 9, 325
Stamp Collector's Magazine, 19, 182, 270
Stamp Collector's Manual, 22
Stamp Collector's Review, 19, 28
Stamp dealers, first, 24-27, 41, 45, 51, 52, 64, 67, 102-115, 133, 147, 159, 163, 210
Stamp exchange, open-air, 23, 24, 51, 52, 329
Stamp Exchange, The, 40
Stamp finders, 116-133
Stamp list, first, 50
Stamp Lover, The, 210
Stamp peddler, first (1860), 105
Stamped envelopes, 58, 71, 125-128
Stamped paper, fiscals, 288-293
Stamps, 15, 16, 56, 67, 125-133, 228, 229, 335; adhesive, first, 14, 68-72, 176, 206; early, 11-25; recent sales, 333-335; repair, 130-133; stages in making, 68-70, 79, 338

Stamps, 77, 78, 141, 195, 204, 239, 292, 303
Stanard, John D., 321
Standard Catalogue (1940), 333
States, cover collections, 242-243
Steimley, L. L., 338
Steinway, Theodore E., 146, 313; music collection, 271-274
Sterling, E. B., 47, 289-295
Stern, Edward, 108, 253-256, 259-262, 268, 269, 318
Stevenson, Robert Louis, 141, 142
Stiles, Kent B., 330-332
Street-car cancellations, 236, 238
Surcharges, 45, 53, 59, 63, 73; faked, 210; first, 300
Swapper, The, 4
Switzerland, 16, 54, 273, 275
"Sydney Views," 147, 148, 180, 211

Taft, William H., 104, 263, 264, 285, 318
Tapling, Thomas K., 9, 10, 54
Taxis stamps, 27
Taylor, S. Allan, 29, 211, 212
Tea Party stamps, 289
Telegraph stamps, 174, 175, 317, 318
Tennyson, Alfred, Lord, 35
Texas Republic, 244
Thorne, William, 65, 66, 148
Thurn, stamps, 27
Tiffany, John K., 26, 38, 46, 47, 55, 146
Tiffany, Louis Comfort, 79
"Timbres postes," 17; *Catalogue*, 21
Timbromanie, 10, 19
Toaspern, Herman, 169, 170
Travers, 84-86
Trenton Match Company stamps (1881), 114
Trifet, Ferdinand Marie, 31-34, 39-41, 212
Triumph Stamp Company, 41, 42
Trollope, Anthony, *John Caldigate*, 44, 45
Turner carrier stamp, 118
Tuttle, Arthur, 112
Tuttle, George R., 63, 112
Tyler, John, 261, 262
Typex sheet (1936), 327, 328

United States, 12, 17-19, 55, 69, 142, 144, 146, 181, 195-197, 204, 222, 285; attitude toward collectors, 199-204; early stamps, 16, 70, 148, 169, 171, 224, 225; (1847), 124, 125, 166, 184; (1851), 63, 160; (1869), 93, 160, 173, 336; postmarks, first, 225, 226; revenues, 55, 56, 119, 121, 148, 171
United States Board on Geographic Names, 243
United States City Despatch Post, 176
United States Post Office De-

partment, 70, 71-75, 82-87, 125, 126, 185, 199-201, 228, 238, 260
United States Bureau of Engraving and Printing, 60, 69-80, 157, 291
United States Stamp Company, 30
Unperforated stamps, 57
Unused stamps, 65, 159
Used stamps, 6, 26, 57, 65, 88, 89; collecting a million, 88-97; on covers, 189; for decoration, 44, 90; on entire envelope, 57-59

Vanderbilt, William H., 43
Variations, 56, 59
Vaughn, L. Vernon, 140
Victoria, Queen, 14, 68, 69, 276; jubilee, 283
Victoria collection, 62
Viner, Dr. C. W., 17

Wanamaker, John, 74, 326
War (1914-18), 54, 313, 330
War (1940), effect on philately, 328-33
Ward, Cornelia C., 282
Ward, Philip H., Jr., 253, 254, 257, 258, 263-268, 337, 338
Warren, Whitney, 79
Washington, George, 75, 77, 79, 98, 124, 125, 256, 258-260, 264, 284, 336; check, 318; commemorative stamp (1755), 76
Washington, D. C., 225, 226
Waterbury, cancellations, 234
Watermarks, 56, 57, 59, 63
Watson, Charlie, 29, 32, 33
Watson, George H., 57
Watson, Harold D., 65, 89, 171, 172
Webster's Dictionary, 43
Wells Fargo, 308, 334
Western Philatelist, Chicago, 27
Wilhelmina, Queen, 134, 275
Williams, Ben Ames, 163
Wilson, Sir John, 139
Wilson, Thomas E., 296
Wilson, Woodrow, 254, 264, 318
Wilson, Mrs. Woodrow, 266, 267
Wilson's (Rev. E. A.), 298, 299
Wolsieffer, P. M., 160
Worthington, George H., 66
Wytheville, Va., 30

Young England, 2
Young Ladies' Journal, 20, 21

Zeppelin mail, 304-307; covers, 67