

The Quaker City Philatelist.

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE QUAKER CITY PHILATELIC SOCIETY AND SECTION PHILADELPHIA
INTERNATIONALER PHILATELISTEN VEREIN.

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No. 10.

REGENT SALES OF POSTAGE STAMPS.

MOST middle-aged people will remember the craze for collecting used postage stamps which about the year 1861 seemed to possess every grade of society; but perhaps few are aware how, after the mania subsided, a select few still continued the pursuit, and developed what had been the wild fancy of a moment into the science of Philately. That the collecting of postage stamps deserves the name of science will be denied by many. Yet, if careful and minute observation, research, dexterity, taste, judgment and patience are sufficient to lift a pursuit from a hobby to a science, then assuredly Philately is a science. Eminent lawyers, physicians, men of letters and even statesmen are now numbered among enthusiastic stamp collectors; and there are three collections in existence—that of Mr. T. K. Tapling, M.P., Herr von Ferrary and Baron Arthur de Rothschild—which are worth in the aggregate more than one hundred thousand pounds. This latter fact will insure the respect of many persons who would deny it to any pursuit in which considerable sums of money were not involved.

Postage-stamp collecting of necessity lacks age, as the first postage stamp was issued in 1840, and of course it was impossible to collect what did not exist. England had the honor of issuing the first stamp, which was in value one penny, and in color black. These stamps are still common; a used specimen can be purchased of any dealer for a penny, and an unused one for a shilling. Mr. Martin Wears, who has devoted some attention to the history of stamps and stamp-collecting, is of opinion that the mania, as it was then called, began soon after the issue of postage stamps. *Punch* even thought it necessary to ridicule those who devoted themselves to the pursuit. But ridicule seems to have utterly failed in arresting the progress of the new hobby, which by fits and starts continued to enlist new admirers until 1861, when the fashion received a marked impetus, or, to use an expressive Americanism, the big "Stamp Boom" took place. After the general excitement had subsided, those who remained in the depleted ranks of collectors set to work to study the subject in a scientific manner; and it was then that attention was paid to the many varieties of paper, perforation, watermark, printing, and color which stamps present. Many of these varieties are very minute; and the presence or absence of a watermark, the difference between stamps imperforated, rouletted, *percé en scie*, *percé en serpentine*, etc., often makes the difference of several shillings and sometimes of several pounds in the value of stamps.

Almost every description of paper known has been used at one time or another to print stamps, and minor varieties are infinite in printing and color. To give one example, the familiar penny red stamp, which was in use in England from 1864 to 1880, boasts one hundred and fifty distinct though minor varieties. It will be seen by this that to have a good knowledge of stamps requires some application, and to those who have a fancy for the pursuit it affords boundless occupation and amusement. In the year 1872 was held the first public sale of stamps by auction. The well-known firm of Messrs. Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge, conducted the sale; and the rooms, where some of the finest collections of books and coins in the world had been dispersed, opened

their doors to the despised postage stamp. Some of the prices realized were very good for the time, although the value of really rare stamps now makes them appear extremely small. In quoting the few lots which follow, the probable sum which the same stamp would now realize may prove interesting :

Lots 15, 16, 17 and 18, eight stamps of St. Louis, being every known variety, all very rare, brought £19, 12s. (These would now be worth considerably more than £100.) Lot 49, Jefferson Market Post-office, pink, unique (this is a local stamp of the United States), £5. Lot 109 (another unique local) fetched £7, 15s. Lot 124, Bolivia 5c., violet, £1, 3s. (Now worth about the same.) Lot 125, Bolivia 10c., brown, 17s. (It is curious that in the recent sale of postage stamps, Nov. 24, 1888, a similar stamp realized exactly the same money.) Lot 147, Mexico 1867, thin paper, set of four stamps, £1, 9s. (These would now be worth only 4s.) Lot 156, set of four New South Wales, view of Sydney, unused, £3, 3s. (Now worth £10.) Lot 159, Sandwich Isles, first issue, 13 cents, very fine specimen, £6, 10s. (Now worth about £65.)

The sale, however, was considered a very satisfactory one at the time ; and it is strange that—as far as we are aware—the next sale should have taken place only after such an exceedingly long interval as sixteen years. Still, we are unable to trace one between 1872 and 1888 in England, although New York has long had periodical auctions, and one gentleman recently held his seventeenth consecutive sale. The recent sale was arranged by Mr. Douglas Garth, Secretary to the London Philatelic Society, who, in the interest of collectors, very kindly undertook a work which must have given him a great deal of trouble. His hope, however, that this first sale—for the one of 1872 has passed into history—would prove the forerunner of a long series, seems likely to be realized, as the auctioneer, Mr. Thomas Bull, has since held several. Three hundred and ten lots were sold on Nov. 24, 1888, and the prices show that there is still plenty of money among stamp collectors. Lot 18, an envelope stamp of Mauritius, 1s., yellow, very rare, but cut round, and therefore virtually spoiled, £3, 15s. Lot 48, Afghan, 1871 issue, 8 annas, unused, £6. Lot 76, Brazil, 1844 issue, 600 reis, £1, 10s. Lot 77, British Columbia, 1869, 10 cents, very rare, £1, 3s. Lot 83, British Guiana, 1850, 12 cents, £5. Lot 84, British Guiana, better specimen, £5, 10s. Lot 94, Bulgaria, 1886 issue, error of color, 5 stot, rose, £2, 5s. Lot 103, Cape of Good Hope, 1861, error of color, torn and mended, £15. Lot 137, Great Britain, 1840, 1d., black, with V.R. in corners, an official stamp, never issued to the public, £5, 15s. Lot 186, Mauritius, 1848 issue, pair of 1d. stamps, £4, 5s. Lot 205, New Brunswick, 1857, 1s., very fine, £5. Lot 297, Trinidad local stamp, 1847, £13, 13s. Lot 298, Tuscany, 1860, 3 lire, yellow, £12, 12s.

When we find men remarkable for capacity in law, in physic, and in business giving fifteen pounds for a piece of soiled and torn paper, it seems probable there must be more in stamp-collecting than a cursory glance would lead one to believe. Before concluding it may be well to remark that all the prices quoted above are for stamps of exceptional rarity, and that common stamps are of little value. A collection of one thousand different stamps in good condition can be purchased for one pound.

GUATEMALA.—The Hamilton Bank Note Co., of New York, have prepared a beautiful set of seven values for this State. In the centre in an oval is an Indian girl holding a horn of plenty on her right arm, while her left hand rests upon a small shield containing the national arms ; at the foot of this oval are the dates 1889–1890, while around it is *Republica de Guatemala* ; at the top of the stamp on a scroll is *Timbre* ; below the dates on a groundwork formed by the word *Guatemala* many times repeated is the numeral of value, and at either side of it on scrolls the same in words. The numerals are in dark blue and the stamp is perforated 14.

THE STAMPS OF SEDANG.

BY CH. DE SOLRAC.

THE last number of the *Echo* announced the issue of stamps of the kingdom of Sedang, which had been predicted for some time by those well posted on the affairs of the extreme East.

As a result, what was expected, occurred.

The Grand Masters of Philately, whose word is law, have gravely examined into the matter and wisely decided that the many doubtful circumstances oblige them to class these stamps, at least provisionally, among the products of fantasy and speculation, declaring that they were printed in Paris, that there was no postal system in Sedang, and that the kingdom itself and its king were problematical.

The Chief Grand Master of the order not having received this novelty in advance of others, it is quite natural that he should run the goods down. Besides, this kingdom, founded by a Frenchman, near Annam, and hence one of our colonies, cannot be relegated to the shades so easily.

If the question concerned some English or German colony, like the New Guinea Company, the case would be different. This last company, for instance, has issued stamps, the sale of which is controlled by a Berlin dealer; this is a stamp of some value, and which cannot be doubted. But for Sedang!

For the reasons given above, they can be only speculative, made for the purpose of swindling the collector. This is fully understood and judgment rendered.

Allow me, although speaking without authority in matters philatelic, to present some objections to this presumptuous judgment.

In the first place it has been stated that the stamps were printed in Paris. When anyone knows so much, he should give the name of the printer, in order to verify the statement. Unfortunately the borders of the sheets of stamps contain the words, Hong Kong, P. O. (Printing Office.) No doubt it will be said that these words were also printed in Paris.

Further, it is said, that no postal service has ever been organized in this kingdom. This is evident! However, there is a decree of the king's, dated July 9, 1888, which establishes and regulates a postal service between the kingdom and Sedang, and the port of Quin Hon, and a domestic service. This service has therefore been carried on since a year.

Nevertheless, it has been said that the kingdom never existed. Even the ministerial journals, which have, of late, violently attacked this poor king, Marie I, now in Paris, threatening him with expulsion from his kingdom should he ever return there, have not dared to go so far, as they could not attack any thing that did not exist.

It is easy to verify the statements made here, by applying to the Missionary Societies, which have several missions in Sedang, and whose veracity will not be called into question, even by the *infallible* ones who gravely catalogue the one pound Trinidad, made in London by erasing the original value, the three famous Corea which have had their existence only in the fertile brain of their manufacturer, and the Bokhara stamps, which are sold at 5 francs each, used, at wholesale.

It is true that mankind may err, but truth will prevail when the evidence of it can no longer be denied.

This will be the case with the Sedang stamps.—*A. J. of P.*

READ our offer on p. 138, a subscription to this paper for one year free.

THE collection in the British Museum was originally the property of Dr. Von Volpi, of the Bavarian army. In its day it was one of the most complete in existence.

BUFFALO BITS.

I PROMISED in the last number of this paper to give the readers of THE QUAKER CITY PHILATELIST an account of the stamps exhibited by the members of the Buffalo Philatelic Society at the International Fair, and will now carry out my promise.

Most prominent among the different collections was F. J. Grenny's, of Brantford, Canada. His collection of North American stamps was exhibited. It contains a complete set of Canadian proofs, Canada complete excepting the 12p. black, the finest collection of Canadian revenues ever exhibited (to my knowledge), and the following countries were well represented, some of which were complete: New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Islands, Mexico, Nova Scotia and British Columbia.

The Turners' collection of 6000 rarities, mounted in the Permanent Folding Album, was much admired; it consists of twelve volumes of sixty pages each and on each page the stamps are arranged in some tasty design. They also exhibited a collection of 700 entire U. S. envelopes.

With the exception of U. S. locals and envelopes, U. S. complete was exhibited complete by our President, William F. Dent.

Many smaller collections were entered before the close of the fair, and a number of single stamps and complete sets attracted much attention.

The result of the exhibit is twenty-five new members of the Buffalo Philatelic Society, which raises its membership to the number of fifty-five.

During the fair an old lady pointed to Mr. Grenny's collection of Canada registered stamps (which in their shades occupied one card) and asked why we collected street car tickets * * * Water brought me to.

Guy A. Camp, of Lockport, attended the last [meeting of the Buffalo Philatelic Society.

The 2d of October is the date for election of officers for the Buffalo Philatelic Society. May the best men win.

C. J. MANNING.

An effort is being made by the Postmaster-General to popularize the monthly Postal Guide by placing in it information which will be of current use to all patrons of the post-office and will aid them in their daily intercourse with it. The first step in this direction was made in the August edition of the Guide and consists of a handy book of reference containing a summary in plain terms of the more important rules and regulations of the department with a carefully prepared index, so that any desired topic may be readily referred to. The Postal Guide has hitherto contained only matter of little interest except to postal officials.

EASILY ANSWERED.

"WHAT kills the dead letters?" inquires an exchange;
That secret is told in a breath;
For, though it appears to be fearfully strange,
They're stamped, so they are, stamped to death.

A POINTER.

If you are wise, you'll advertise,
And here are all the points essential:
First, tell your business to a friend,
Then say, "It's strictly confidential."

The Quaker City Philatelist.

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ON another page we reprint an article from *Chambers' Journal*. Aside from the information which it contains, we publish it merely to show that we continue to hold the interest and, in a measure, the good-will and respect of a high order of literary journals.

It is interesting to note how unhesitatingly the writer accords to Philately the rank of a science; and of the minutia with which he deals when he speaks of *percé en scie*, *percé en serpentine*, etc.

At the conclusion he remarks: "When we find men remarkable for capacity in law, in physic and in business, giving fifteen pounds for a piece of soiled and torn paper, it seems probable there must be more in stamp collecting than a cursory glance would lead one to believe." Yes, 'tis true, there is more, vastly more than cursory glances ferret out. But how few of us attain the implied side of our hobby; too many are content with seeing, reading and hearing. These are all well enough in their way, but without some reflection or digestion, if I may so term it, what we see, read and hear will be barren of results, and we shall take on a kind of intellectual dyspepsia, which no earthly drugs can cure.

The things which are not expressed are of more interest than those which are.

GR^EAT was our surprise and greater still was our indignation when we heard that a certain high official of the American Philatelic Association, who has been begging, yes fairly beseeching the members for their proxies, said he was going to the Convention to vote first, last and all the time in support of a certain member from New York, because he was "under obligations to him." "This is a pretty how d'y'do." Surely "something is rotten in the State of Denmark." May the Convention rid us of this rottenness.

“TO be or not to be,” that is the question which is agitating the minds of many American Philatelic Association members at present concerning an exhibition at the St. Louis Convention. We rather think it is not to be. And why? We do not know; perhaps, because the workers are too busy gathering in proxies. When St. Louis was bidding for the Convention some of our readers will remember the glowing promises they held out—alas, Shakespeare well portrays the case:

“ His promises were, as he then was, mighty,
But his performance, as he now is, nothing.”

OUT of forty-eight individual advertisers in our October number, 1886, but sixteen are still at the old trade. Just think of it, two out of every three fall by the wayside in the short space of time of three years! There is not as much money to be made in the stamp business as formerly. And there will be still less in the future. There are many reasons why this should be so. The facilities for obtaining stamps direct from the issuing countries are much better than they were ten, and even five years ago. Then too when any occupation has in it the element of being agreeable and pleasant, it must necessarily submit to a reduction of profits. This is true with all means of livelihood and notably so with the literary classes.

JOINTINGS.

THE International Philatelic Union of England was founded in 1881, but until recently has been dormant. It now has apparently taken a fresh start, for it proposes to encourage and promote the study of stamps, the detection of forgeries and frauds, and to establish an easy means of exchanging duplicates. Its exchange system is not nearly as good as that of the American Philatelic Association.

* * *

THE Internationaler Philatelisten-Verein of Dresden is the largest and most influential society in the world, having members from all parts of the globe. This society's Exchange Department is patronized by all the branches. Its system of settling for exchanges is somewhat different and much better than that of the American Philatelic Association. Every exchange lot is settled for separately, each branch or individual receiving or paying the balance due, and thus preventing individuals from running up a large account, and when settling time comes, making it much easier on the pockets of those owing the society.

* * *

THE American Philatelic Association was designed after the general plan of the Dresden Society, and at its rapid rate of increase will soon outnumber the Dresden.

* * *

ALL members of the Dresden Society receive free its two official organs—*Der Philatelist* and *Le Timbre Poste*, the best philatelic papers published abroad.

* * *

RUSSIAN locals are collected by very few Americans. Perhaps the largest collection of them belongs to W. C. Stone, of *The American Philatelist*. Strictly speaking, they are not locals, being issued by the government for local drop letters.

PATRICK CHALMERS' last circular proves that two years *after* Rowland Hill proposed the adhesive stamp, December, 1837, Mr. James Chalmers also proposed one, October, 1839. Pat must have gone to Hill's printer!

* * *

IN buying post-cards in England you pay for the cards as well as the postage; ten half-penny cards cost sixpence.

* * *

A CERTAIN American daily chronicles what it terms "the oldest postage stamp in existence, belonging to the eighteenth century." By the way, this might be valuable to Pat Chalmers, even if it does knock out his father's claim; his one aim and idea is to squelch Rowland Hill, be it at the expense of whoever it may be.

* * *

SOME one gave Georgie a very rare stamp for his collection the other day. The youngster was delighted with the treasure, but could not immediately decide upon its real value. After a cross-examination he at last attested its rarity by saying: "Well, that is one of the most seldom stamps I ever saw."

* * *

IN a notice just issued the Paris post-office recommends the disuse of sealing-wax on ordinary letters for countries over the seas. It often happens that the wax is melted by the heat under the tropics, or by the fumigations to which mail-bags are subjected. In La Plata, for instance, the letters are found to stick together, so that they cannot be separated without injury to the address, and are in this way often lost. Ordinary letters are quite sufficiently sealed with gum or wafers, and registered letters, for which wax seals are required, are carefully handled on the way.

* * *

S. G. W. BENJAMIN, our late minister to Persia, says: "The stamp mania exists among European residents at Teheran no less than it does in Europe, and the reader may be surprised to learn it is quite as difficult to make a complete collection of Persian stamps at Teheran as in London. The interest shown in the subject there is indicated by an incident that happened during my residence in Paris. A duel came near being fought on account of a rare Persian stamp. The quarrel was between a prominent member of one of the legations and a Russian colonel. Both were enthusiastic collectors, and the former accused the latter of stealing an excessively rare stamp from his album when looking it over. The Russian at once sent a challenge, which was accepted with *empresment*. The day was appointed and the hour, when the stamp was suddenly produced by a lady who said it had been loaned to her by the colonel simply to show it to her, and she now hastened to return it in season to prevent bloodshed. The explanation, unsatisfactory as it might be, was accepted and the duel declared off."

* * *

E. F. GAMBS, of San Francisco, had an interesting exhibit in the Mechanics' Fair in that city. Besides three large cases in which it is said there are over 500,000 common stamps, he has a large lot of rare ones artistically mounted on bristol board.

* * *

THE Buffalo Philatelic Society gives to every visitor at the Buffalo International Fair a card with a foreign stamp thereon, giving a mass of philatelic statistics. They have an interesting exhibit.

It has been proposed that the Quaker City collectors shall hold a reunion banquet some time about the latter part of November. All those interested in the movement should send their names *at once* to W. H. Corfield, 3609 Locust street, West Philadelphia.

* * *

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