

# Stamp Collecting.

Mauritius was the first British colony to follow Britain's example in issuing adhesive stamps. She was also the first to over-print an issue.

The British-Somaliland stamps with the King's portrait are to be over-printed O.H.M.S. for "service" use. The values range from one to 12 annas. They are inscribed "Somaliland Protectorate."

The evils of aniline inks from a stamp collector's point of view is that some of the colours are very volatile. For instance, it is asserted that green, if exposed to the sun's rays for a length of time, will become grey. This opens fine possibilities for collectors of shades in the future.

Postage parcels in Italy must be very heavy, judging by the fact that 50 lire yellow and 100 lire blue postage due stamps have just been issued. As 100 lire equals £4 in British money, one would imagine that excess of postage would not often be required.

Special stamps are, of course, to be issued to commemorate the St. Louis World's Fair. The 1 cent is to bear the portrait of Robert R. Livingston, the Minister to France, who negotiated the purchase of Louisiana; the 2 cent, Thomas Jefferson; 3 cent, James Monroe, who assisted in the purchase of Louisiana; 5 cent, President McKinley; 10 cent, map of the United States, showing the area purchased from France.

"Mangaia" is the most southerly island of the Cook Group, situated about 116 miles from Raratonga. The area is 30 square miles, populated by 1641 natives and 10 Europeans. As New Zealand has appointed a magistrate, Customs officer and postmaster (one individual) at Mangaia, philatelists are now wondering whether a special issue of over-printed stamps will follow, as in the case of Niue, Aitutaki and Penrhyn Islands.

W. T. Mark in S.C.F. tells a good story illustrative of the uses to which a postage stamp may be put. He was in Italy and had entered a large open space by means of a small door, when he was pounced upon by a sentry who wished to take him before the captain. Opening his pocket-book he took out a penny Queen's head English stamp, and sticking it on his own forehead waited to observe the effect. He could not speak Italian, and the sentry could not talk English, but he knew the stamp, and bowing courteously showed the visitor the way out by a very handsome gate.

The fine colouring of the recently-issued penny New Zealand stamp is a great improvement. For some time past now the lady that adorns the penny universal has had a washed-out appearance that ill accorded with the idea of such a vigorous young colony as New Zealand, and some English philatello

journals have not hesitated to suggest that the plate was beginning to get worn. The fresh prints are, however, sharp and clear, and the colouring excellent.

A few weeks ago there appeared in the "New Zealand Graphic" an article that was practically a reply by the New Zealand Postal Department, and also from the Postmaster-General, to the articles that have been appearing in the "London Philatelist" headed "The Disgrace of New Zealand." "The Australian Philatelist" for March has published the article in extenso and, of course, duly acknowledged it.

It is gratifying to note that at length a feeling is arising against the minute differences that are made much of by some philatelists in their desire to possess a rarity. Writing in "Stanley Gibbons' Monthly Journal," Mr C. J. Phillips has the following, which will receive the approbation of a majority of stamp collectors:—"Without, however, in any degree abandoning our belief in the superiority of the fine unused stamp, we are glad to see signs of a revolt against the fetish (for fetish it is) entitled original gum. To gravely discuss the difficulty of distinguishing genuine gum from false, really seems to us a reductio ad absurdum. If the stamp is a beautiful mint copy, it matters nothing what sort of gum it has on the back; if it is a poor copy the gum can make it no better."

## New Hebrides and the Panama Canal.

### A QUESTION OF VITAL IMPORTANCE.

Recent cables announcing that the United States Senate had ratified the Panama Canal treaty, and that Great Britain and France had agreed to a joint commission to proceed to the New Hebrides, possess unusual interest for Australia (says the Sydney "Daily Telegraph"). There is a connection between the two events which should not be allowed to escape notice. The financial, political, and international difficulties which have delayed the construction of the canal being now removed, and the United States being about to take the work up, there can be little doubt of its successful completion—possibly within the estimated period of ten years. A glance at the map will show that the new route, as has been previously pointed out, will shorten the voyage to and from Australia by some thousands of miles. This means lower freights and cheaper passages, and it is, therefore, surely to be largely, if not generally, availed of. This fact alone has an important bearing on the future of Australia.

But the essential fact for present consideration is the connection of the opening of the new route with what is known as the New Hebrides question, since the route will pass through that archipelago. The terms of reference between the British and French Governments are still under negotiation. It is

stated that they will include the settlement of land disputes between the British and French settlers, which are now both serious and frequent; but it may fairly be supposed that the scope of the joint commission will be more extended, and that it will pave the way for a settlement of the greater and real difficulty—the national ownership or sovereignty of the whole archipelago. The two Governments are now more friendly than they have been for many years, and the desire to prevent embroilment in the struggle now taking place in the Far East may possibly induce England to grant concessions to its astute Gallic neighbour which otherwise it would not do. The wish for conciliation may even lead England to not properly safeguard Australian interests in this matter.

It is evident that France places a high value on the New Hebrides, whilst there is little proof that England does. French settlers in the islands and in New Caledonia are making strenuous efforts for France to obtain possession of this important group of islands, and recent discussions in the French Parliament show that their claims are being well supported at Home. The great inducements held out to emigrants is causing French population and influence in the New Hebrides to extend rapidly. Australia ought surely to make its voice heard in the deliberations and work of the joint commission, and no time should be lost in seeing that it has the opportunity of doing so.

A French newspaper published in the New Hebrides was the first to point out the increasing importance of the islands, owing to the fact that, when the Panama Canal was opened, they would be on the direct route to Australia, and to urge this as one of the chief reasons for endeavouring to secure French sovereignty over them. The opening of the route must largely enhance the commercial value of the islands, besides possibly making them points of strategic importance in naval and military operations in the Far East. In the hands of an unfriendly Power they would be a menace to the Commonwealth. Having regard to all the circumstances the New

Hebrides question assumes great seriousness, and momentous results may depend upon the terms of its solution. The interest of Australia demands that its consideration and settlement should be taken up in real earnest.

## "The Guild of Courtesy."

### CHAPEL-STREET BRANCH.

Last week Mrs. Neligan, wife of the Bishop of Auckland, inaugurated the Chapel-street school branch of the new "Pupils' Guild of Courtesy," which has already obtained root in the Parnell school. There was a big attendance of children and visitors, among the latter being Mr Hobbs (Chairman of the Education Board), Mr Crowe (Chairman) and members of the City Schools' Committee, Mr and Mrs Leo Myers, Mrs Coleman, Mr and Mrs Mitchell, and Messdames Hill, Eastgate and Draffin. Mrs Neligan made a warm and affectionate address to the children, who cheered her loudly. The certificates, numbering 127, were afterwards distributed to the children, who have taken up the movement enthusiastically. The objects of the guild are expressed in the title, "Courtesy," which includes generosity, gentleness and all the virtues which go to make life tolerable, and need to be inculcated young. The boys promise to abstain from swearing, smoking, disrespect and disobedience, and the girls to be obedient and respectful, and to encourage others to be so also. Badges were presented to the boy and girl who were regarded by the children as the most courteous and gentle, and were won by Oscar Stephens (with James Barry second) and Gladys Bathurst (with Gertrude Dobbs second). The badges were presented by Mrs John Mitchell (a gold one for the girl) and her husband (a silver one for the boy), and they showed the monogram "G.C." The guild, which has been introduced by the headmaster, Mr Draffin, is a purely voluntary affair, and is perfectly free.

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