



ITS EDUCATIONAL VALUE.

Stamp collecting is a hobby which should be encouraged by all parents, if only as a means of educating the young. It is simply wonderful what a varied knowledge is obtained by the careful study of stamps of various countries, and different periods. Until the pictorial stamp craze set in, the postage labels were really the record of the changes of rulers of many countries. For instance, it is by the portraits on the stamps of the United States that the features of the various presidents are so well known. Then, too, the stamps of France show the changes of Government from Republic to Empire and back again to a Republic. Now, however, stamps have, in many instances, practically become a means of advertising the scenery of different countries, also the particular birds and beast, fishes and plants that are found in special localities. The stamps of Australia show the emu, kangaroo, lyre bird, and platypus; New Zealand, the kiwi, huia, and kakai; Canada, the beaver, and Newfoundland the seal and codfish. As for the stamps of Japan, they are a miniature menagerie, showing the crocodile, Malay stag, Argus pheasant, orang-utan and honey bear.

Apart from these are, however, the illustrations of physical features of various countries. Thousands upon thousands of people have become familiar with the scenic wonders of this colony by means of the pictorial issue of stamps. Just the same other countries are being advertised by means of the stamps issued

from time to time, and in the meanwhile, every boy and girl who collects, is in a pleasing way imbibing an extended knowledge of his own and other lands. Even the Commemorative stamps are useful in their way, always provided that they have something to commemorate. For instance, how could the progress of America be better illustrated to a boy's mind than by means of the envelope stamp illustrating the changes made from the days of the Pony Post, to the mail train across the Continent. Then, again, President Kruger's jubilee stamp illustrates the progress of the Transvaal from the old bullock team to the railway train over the veldt. The present issue of stamps of the Transvaal, bearing King Edward's portrait, further impresses upon the child the fact that the Republic has passed away. A great amount of knowledge of Africa is gained from the pictures on the stamps of the various colonies. Art is also taught by the famous paintings reproduced on the Colombian Exhibition issue of the United States. Unfortunately the New Zealand Exhibition issue cannot be classed as works of art, although it is not the fault of the designs. In the United States St. Louis Exhibition series of stamps the 10c, showing the Louisiana area purchased from France, impresses forcibly upon the mind of collectors how near the America Continent was to being off, as at present, being held by people speaking the same language, although very distinct forms of government. To those who think a little more on the matter, that stamp calls to mind how cleverly Napoleon played checkmate with England, when, finding he could not hope to hold a colony in America, he sold his rights to a British colony which had separated from the Mother Country after a war that left bitter memories that are only now beginning to die out.

Stamps have also their record of human suffering to tell. Surely it is pathetic to see in the change of stamps evidence of the time when the free Finns were forced into the Russian Empire, and their distinctive stamp replaced by that of the Czar.

Then there is the old issue of Alsace

and Lorraine, which reminds one how Prussia resumed what France had stolen from Germany. Just the same, the most recent issues show the regrettable separation of Norway from Sweden, regrettable, because it may yet mean the absorption of both by the Colossus of the North, once the house is set in order sufficiently to allow the old policy of aggression to be resumed. Foiled by Japan in the East, Russia may yet spread the other way, and two countries divided by jealousy will be more easily dealt with than if they were united as of yore. Had Denmark, Norway, and Sweden remained united, probably Schleswig-Holstein would not have been taken from the former country.

Turning to Egypt, we see once more how modern history is taught by the stamps. First, there are those of the Khedive, then those indicating the time the French had so much influence, on which appears the inscription in that language. Now we have the English occupation shown in the stamps, while the Camel stamps of Sudan indicate that the work of extension goes on.

The progress of the world may also be studied in the stamps. The completion of that wonderful engineering feat of bridging over the Victoria Falls is well depicted on a recent stamp, while one Exhibition issue of the United States shows the bridge at Niagara Falls, the automobile, and the great Atlantic liner. The end of Spain's Colonial Empire is recorded by the over-printed stamps of the United States for use in Cuba, Porto Rico, and the Philippines, also the seizure of the Hawaiian Islands, and the Panama Canal Zone, by the upholders of the Monroe doctrine. The history of Germany's first entry into the Pacific may likewise be read on the stamps of Samoa and New Guinea. It is not often that Great Britain loses any part of its Empire across the seas, but the stamps used in Heligoland (once a British possession) are now German. Whether the fact that the island is being steadily washed away had anything to do with its cessation it is hard to say. In fact, from the above brief sketch it will be seen how as men make history the stamps record it, and their collection by young people is really an education as well as a pastime, which

as the years roll on may also become a profitable speculation.

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A French journal states that a scandal has occurred at Hanou, it having been discovered that 200,000 francs' worth of stamps have been fraudulently surcharged with a view to increasing their philatelic value. The only trouble is that similar scandals are not raised in all places where systematic surcharging goes on. The only real cure is for collectors to collect distinct stamps, and not those disguised by overprints.

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