

Stamp Collecting.

BY PHIL ATELIC.

The Greek combination term philately, applied to stamps, is, as representing a tax for work done by the State, and therefore some collectors claim that fiscals and telegraph stamps are equally collectable. The modern tendency is, however, to specialise, as it is impossible to keep pace with all kinds of stamps. Therefore it is that there are Australasian, African and British Empire collections, as separated from universal ones. Fiscal collections are now growing in favour. What is now wanted is a Victorian album, with spaces for all the stamps issued bearing representation of the late Queen.

The Uruguay new issue have been surcharged diagonally, with the word "official," to the number of 445,000.

The "Post Office" Mauritius 1d and 2d stamps are estimated to be worth from £2000 to £2500 the pair, at present.

While unused postage stamps look well in the album, still nicely post-marked ones are really of greater interest to the man or woman who collects not merely for money-making purposes. There is something pleasant re reading names of well-known cities on the stamps in an album, but these remarks do not in any way apply to the three-ring dinner plate device that usually obliterates all the beauty from stamps passing through New Zealand central post offices. Samoa, on the other hand, has a neat obliterating stamp, showing the word "Apia" clearly. Occasionally German postage stamps may be obtained with Apia on them, owing to their being used by the Consul in bygone days.

It having been definitely decided not to surcharge any more United States stamps for use in Guam, the following list of the quantities of each value printed, given on the authority of "Mekeel's Weekly," may be of interest: 1 cent, 35,000; 2 cent, 105,000; 3 cent, 5000; 4 cent, 5000; 5 cent, 20,000; 6 cent, 5000; 8 cent, 5000; 10 cent, 10,000; 15 cent, 5000; 50 cent, 4000; 1 dollar, 3000; and special delivery, 5000; making a grand total of 207,000 stamps. Dealers will no doubt be able to supply Guam stamps at reasonable rates for some time to come.

For the benefit of young collectors it may be explained what is meant by collecting "entries." That is the term used by philatelists to denominate envelopes, wrappers, letter and post cards, and telegraph forms, with stamps officially impressed thereon, as sold to the public at the post offices of the country, each being entire or complete in itself, as well as in an uncut condition, and of course either unused or postally used. Some fine specimens of entire envelopes with interesting post marks have been obtained during the South African war.

India is to shortly issue stamps, it is stated, in which King Edward VII.'s features will replace those of Queen Victoria. Otherwise, it is understood the general design will not be much changed.

Belgium has issued the 10 cent unpaid letter stamp in a new colour.

On the 2nd of July the new Italian stamps bearing a portrait of the head of the present King were issued.

A 50-cent unpaid letter stamp has been issued by the Netherlands Government in the later type.

The 50-cent or 20-cent Fernando Po is surcharged in blue as well as black.

The Sultan of Turkey has ordered that henceforth stamps on letters leaving Jerusalem are to be cancelled in Hebrew characters.

At recent auction sales in London an English 2d blue stamp of the year 1840, with no lines, realised £4 5/, and a South Australian local print 6d blue of the year 1855, imperforate with large margin, sold for £14 10/. An Orange River Colony mint frame of 1860, surcharged V.R.I. on 2d blue, with 4d variety also realised £23.

The greyish green 50-pfenning German stamp of the year 1880 has been found to have a variety in which the outer frame design on the right-hand side shows a large V-shape notch in the centre, where there should be a small double notch like a W. Only one stamp in each sheet has this variation.

Occasionally good stories are told of bargains obtained by stamp collectors from dealers, but the "Australian Philatelist" recently published the following excellent account of how a customer missed his opportunity: "Amongst some good Australians, our publisher purchased a pair of New South Wales 3d Laureates; these were a few hours later offered to a customer for 9/. He, however, refused them. When the salesman turning them over saw they were water-marked "2," the price was then £50, about the quickest advance in price on record, we think, and the esteemed customer for several days was like Rachel mourning for her children."

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Shadowing the King.

It is a popular belief in this country that the head of the reigning house moves about with a greater amount of freedom than is the case with monarchs of other countries. While in a measure this is true, the life of the King is as jealously safeguarded as that of any other crowned head, not excepting the Czar of Russia.

It must be remembered that however loved a monarch may be, it is that very love of the subject for its rulers which incites the madman or the conspirator to attempt their dastardly work.

The recent case of the wretched boy Sipido is one in point. The first thoughts of the homicidal maniac and the anarchist are to direct their destructive incentives against the most popular personages. The deaths of Abraham Lincoln, of Czar Nicholas of Russia, of Empress Elizabeth of Austria, of the Shah of Persia, and King Humbert of Italy, point to these facts. No matter how popular, how highly esteemed, how good the monarch may be, he is not safe from the assassin's bullet or dagger without the constant vigilance of a huge force of protective police.

It is true that King Edward the Seventh moves about more freely than many other emperors and kings, but though his comings and goings may be unostentatious, though he may not surround himself with huge numbers of armed men, he is nevertheless well protected, his every movement scrutinised, and every possibility of his being molested carefully taken into consideration.

As Prince of Wales, King Edward was protected by what are called the Marlborough House Special Police; picked men from the Metropolitan Police, each man of which had risen in the service by virtue of the development of detective attributes, and to whom was known every item of the Prince's forthcoming movements.

The late Queen enjoyed the protection of the Windsor Castle Police, men similarly selected and appointed; and upon these two bodies, numbering in the aggregate some hundreds of men the protection of the Royal Family rests.

Some idea of the magnitude of the work undertaken by these special police may be gathered from the publication of the fact that although the King himself may be unaware of the presence of one of his police near him, he is never left except when he retires. Should the King desire to visit a place of entertainment, it is the duty of one of the courtiers to inform the inspector of the special police of this determination.

The route for the King's passage from the palace, wherever it may be, to the place of entertainment is then carefully selected. All sorts of matters have to be taken into consideration, the character of the buildings lining the route, the feasibility of mines being laid beneath the street, the presence of suspected foreigners in the district, and in many cases certain streets are avoided so that by no possibility can the King run unknowingly into a possible danger.

Further than this, an hour or so before the King departs, a large number of men of the special police assemble at various portions of the route. By mingling with the crowd, by more or less aggression forcing their way to the front, they generally manage to be within a few feet of the carriage as it passes, and on hand to prevent any attempt which might be made on the part of the would-be assassin to fire a revolver or to spring forward dagger in hand.

While Prince of Wales, the King had a singular abhorrence of this detective work. Undaunted at anything as he is, and believing in the love of his people, it was inconceivable to him that anybody would attempt his life, and on several occasions he tried to give the detective police the slip. Many times our King has had to laughingly admit himself defeated in his object. His inspector, an almost affectionate friend one might say, would not allow his Royal master to enter upon any such freak as this without having something to say in it, and it is a fact that the inspector of the Marlborough House Police has on several occasions

driven in a cab behind the Royal carriage, and by a dexterous movement been at whatever rendezvous before his august master and seen him safe.

In the passage of the Royal train from point to point most elaborate precautions are taken. In Russia it is the rule to line the whole of the railway with soldiers, but the English authorities do things in a different manner. Apparently the whole route is unguarded, but appearances are deceptive. Every culvert, every bridge, every tunnel is zealously guarded, and all the way from the starting point to the finish is a long line of men within shouting distance of each other, but who to the ordinary observer present no appearance out of the common. Dressed as navies, as railway employees of every grade, they are in their appointed places, and woe betide any suspicious looking individual who may venture within fifty yards of the railway track hours before the Royal train has to pass.

In addition to this, various dodges are resorted to to prevent an outrage. It is well-known that a pilot engine precedes the Royal train. As a rule, the times of both pilot engine and train are known to everybody, but it is the manner in which the train is worked from point to point or block to block that the skill of the detective force comes in.

It is safe to say that the Royal train never passes over one particular section at the particular time it is scheduled at, and the working out of this complex system is one involving many hours' hard labour between the detective staff and the heads of the particular railway company over whose lines the Royal train passes.

It is a singular fact that the attempt by Sipido was made on an occasion when the King, then Prince of Wales, insisted upon travelling without one of his protective police, and amongst this body of men it is asserted that had one of their number accompanied the Prince, the wretched youth would never have been allowed to attempt his dastardly act.

It is at places of public assembly, such as the racecourse, the theatre, and similar gatherings, that the utmost vigilance has to be maintained. With a personality so gracious, and one who mingles with everybody with affability, the possibility of an attack upon the King's person is apparent to all. Little do the fashionables who may crowd around their sovereign know that perhaps rubbing shoulders with them is one of King Edward's detectives, whose lynx eyes are upon their every movement, whose iron hands are ready for every emergency, and who would willingly spring forward to receive the blow which might be intended for the King.

One of the most important duties of the King's secret police is to arrange for every function. If it is a public building to be inspected, the laying of a foundation stone, or any of the hundred and one obligations which His Majesty accedes to, the police must first of all assure themselves of the safety of their royal master. Of course, it is impossible to detail in an article of this character the hundred and one duties which devolve upon this singular body of men. The very names of the individuals composing the corps are kept secret, although Inspector Fraser was well known as being Her late Majesty's chief of the staff, and Inspector Winkler the head of that of the Prince of Wales.

The antecedents of every man are carefully enquired into. He is put to innumerable tests, amongst those keenness of perception, fleetness of foot, strength, courage, and, above all, the attributes of the born detective. It may be said that every member of His Majesty's protective force is an embryo Sherlock Holmes, without the ostentation of the famous detective of fiction; content to do his work without his name by any possibility ever appearing in public print, or to be known even to his most intimate acquaintances as one possessing the powers he does.

The selection of such men is naturally a heavy undertaking, but the immunity which our Royal Family has enjoyed from outrages against their persons may in no small measure be due to the earnest and indefatigable work of this body of silent watchers.