

HOW STAMPS ARE MADE.

THE ENGLISH METHOD HAS A GREAT DEAL OF SECRECY.

Precautions Taken at Every Stage of the Process of Manufacture—Why Certain Colors are Used—Some of the Uses of Rare Specimens.

Postage stamps are made under conditions of great secrecy. In fact, certain officials in the service of the Government, whose duties have considerably to do with stamps, have, they admit, never seen them printed. The contract for the stamps which are used in the United Kingdom is in the hands of Messrs. Thomas De la Rue and Co., whose immense factory is in Bunhill Row. Here not only are British stamps turned out by the million, but also huge numbers of stamps intended for the colonies.

Owing to the care which is exercised in the works to exclude strangers, it is a far more difficult matter to see a postage stamp printed than it is to watch a Bank of England note produced, and a visit to the Mint presents no such difficulties as those which have to be overcome before the "open sesame" is gained to the big establishment in Bunhill Row.

There are special grounds for these precautions.

In the first place, there are certain secret processes in printing postage stamps; and secondly, the whole place, for reasons which will be mentioned, is kept securely under lock and key. Moreover, always on the watch, the government maintains a staff of fifty vigilant inspectors. Their duty is to take care that no postage stamps are illicitly manufactured. A sharp look-out is kept lest water-marked paper be introduced surreptitiously, and, in addition, whenever a machine is stopped that it may be repaired or cleansed, a hood is fitted over the working parts and it is locked up. The plates from which the stamps are printed are also under lock and key in special safes, and it becomes an impossibility for any work to be carried on without the knowledge of the inspectors.

The Government is not content even with these safeguards. The contractors are not permitted to manufacture the postage stamp paper themselves. It is supplied to them in sheets, which are counted out as scrupulously as bank-notes. A sheet of paper which is destined to become 240 penny stamps is valued precisely at £1. Supposing the printers fail to return to the Government the exact number of sheets counted out to them, with a certain percentage for waste, which, too, has to be produced, they are charged at the rate of twenty shillings for every sheet that is missing. What applies to the penny stamp may be said also of all other values, the highest of which is £5—an oblong stamp, not, however, much used.

What are the protections against forgery? was the question asked of a gentleman who knows more about postage stamps than anybody else in London.

"Well," said he, "there is first the water-mark and next the color. The water-mark consists of a crown, and to each stamp there is one crown. On a sheet intended for penny stamps there are 240 crowns. There is nothing special about the paper except the water-mark."

"What about the color?"

"That is applied by a secret process, and the result is that the stamps cannot be cleaned and used over again. These fugitive inks are a strong protection, for when you try to remove the obliteration marks the color of the stamp itself will disappear first."

An inspection of stamps which have undergone this test bears out this last remark. In one example the color has faded before any progress has been made in rendering the mark of cancellation less distinct, and in another instance a work written in ordinary ink across the stamp has been cleaned off with the color of the stamp beneath it, leaving a white band.

It may not be generally known that in the selection of the designs for a new set of postage stamps the responsibility does not lie with the makers, but with the Post Office authorities, who, on the last occasion, appointed a special committee to pick out patterns from many thousands which were submitted to the survival of the fittest. Although it is claimed that the set which first appeared in the Jubilee year are not without artistic merit, this consideration alone did not govern the choice.

"What was the main point to be studied?" an expert was asked.

"The chief thing was that when a stamp had been obliterated, or cancelled, the Post Office people, by artificial light, should be readily able to distinguish the different values. It was important that they should be as well able to do this at night as during the daytime, and more especially was it necessary in the checking off of the telegraph rates. Until the Jubilee, stamps used in this country were of a single colour, but since January, 1887, the 1½d., 2d., 4d., 6d., and 9d. have been printed in two colours; and since February, 1890, the 10d. stamp has also been in two colours. Since last September the 4½d. stamp has been similarly treated, for it had been found that the two colours give a much better contrast."

A black penny V. R. postage stamp, unused, was recently sold in Edinburgh for £6.5s. The plate for printing such a stamp is still preserved. The writer recently handled another plate, from which one million of the old red penny stamps had been printed.

Of course, the British Government is beyond the suspicion of making money out of philatelists. Not so some of the colonies. Certain of them, when an issue has become rare, and in great demand at a fancy price, have not been above ordering their contractor to reprint a few specimens for sale at a premium.

As one example, a fourpenny St. Vincent stamp, bearing a Queen's head resembling the old English penny stamp has been converted into a fivepenny stamp by printing "5 pence" across it. It is alleged that this stamp was issued expressly to raise £100 to repair the post office, and it is on record that churches in Borneo and public buildings elsewhere have been built by the money similarly obtained from the pockets of people who make stamp-collecting their hobby. [—Cassell's Journal.

POEMS WRITTEN FOR "PROGRESS."

The Immigration Train.

Heard ye that sound reaching thro' wild, mountain gorges deep,
Where the Fraser and Columbia through savage canons sweep?
'Tis the Canada Pacific from the Orient's far tide,
Rushing on, o'er rivers dark and deep, o'er prairies fair and wide;
From China, Russia and Japan, and the Islands of the Main,
'Tis bringing thousands to our land,—'Tis The Immigration Train.

It is coming from Vancouver, to our own dear native land,
O'er our glorious river reaches, past mountains high and grand,
To vast Mount Stephen's sides it clings, like the lichen to the tree,
Or the petrel's nest at dizzy height above the thundering sea.
Past the majestic Selkirk range, where the deadly glaciers reign,
O'er the Occident's highway it comes— The Immigration Train.

It thunders through the Rockies grim, while a million echoes leap
From crag to crag, and the bison rouse up from his wintry sleep;
Afrighted fly the antelope, from the dazzling head-light's glare,
And in his den awakes and growls the ferocious grizzly bear.
On, on, it presses to the West its high prestige to maintain,
Onward, with all its precious freight speeds The Immigration Train.

The Chinaman, the Japanese and Scandinavian too,
Are coming to our goodly land, our gigantic piece to hue,
And bind the sheaves of golden wheat on rich Manitoba soil,
And set up homes, dear altar fires, in sweet solace for their toil.
Through tortuous rock-ribbed canon, past flower bed sprinkled plain,
They are coming! they are coming! In! The Immigration Train.

Where the grand Sir Donald rears his head eight thousand feet or more,
Hear the Illiwillwaet, through its awesome gorges roar,
Titanic glaciers slumber upon the Selkirk's mountain crest
Wrought into caves and grottoes fair of clear blue and amethyst;
On past Brandon, past Regina and Calgary might and main,
On, on, with shriek like Catamount comes The Immigration Train.

On, on, past lone romantic lakes where the loon and plover cry,
And in the dreamy gloaming time when the hawk goes screaming by,
Where the beautiful Saskatchewan and fair Bow-river glide,
And adown the hills, a thousand rills, come dancing to the tide;
On, on, young pioneer of the West on, on, and not in vain
List to the beat of its own feet— The Immigration Train.

It drives through tunnels dark as night and swift flashes into day,
Past shimmering pools where the speckled trout among the eddies play;
On past the Red-man's Tale, Tepees, on to Winnipeg on, on,
And emerald waves of Thunder bay and river Nepegoil.
On, on, it comes with its thousands, still to sow and reap the grain
On, on, it comes—Heaven guard it well! The Immigration Train.

We have both law and order in our beautiful North-West,
Of all the gifts which God has given we hold that "life" is best,
For ho! upon mount Sinai mid elemental strife
Declared that blood for blood must flow, and life alone for life.
No pestilence larks in our coasts—long may Victoria reign!
Come each and all and welcome find in The Immigration Train!

Memory's Picture:

Only a picture of memory,
As the firelights flashes, and glows,
Soothing, and lightening, life's trials,
And bringing sweet dreamy repose.

So now, as the darkness is deepening,
And twilight is fading from view,
The deep, red, glow of the firelight,
Brings out my picture anew.

Life-like indeed, I am thinking,
And drawing my chair very near,
My lonely heart, drinks in the beauty
Of the face, seen so wondrously clear.

A sweet, fair, face that I'm seeing
Tonight, in the fire's bright gleam,
And this picture, to me is the dearest,
Of any, of which I dream.

A complexion like cream, and red roses,
Brown eyes, with the soul shining through,
A sweet little mouth like a rose-bud
Fresh with the morning's dew.

But sweeter to me, than the beauty
Of the face, that is gazing at mine,
Is the love, that the soul is revealing,
Bringing back, a sweet, olden, time.

Forgotten the years that have vanished,
Again she is clasped to my heart,
Once more we're in sweetest communion,
Not mother, and child, apart.

Once more I'm rocking my darling,
As I did in that olden time;
Now, a sweet lullaby sing'd,
Then cooing some quaint, old rhyme.

Banished are all earthly crosses,
But a falling oval makes me start;
To find, I am alone in the darkness,
With a dreary ache in my heart.

Darkened, and grey as the ashes,
Are the bright rose-tints of my life;
But these dreams in the dusky gloaming,
Make me strong for life's battle and strife.

Bidding me faint not, it wearies,
More trustful, it doubting I be;
While on the bright wings of the morning,
Sweet whisperings of hope, come to me.

Moncton, April 19th, 1893. ALLIE.

Midsummer.

'Tis a balmy summer evening,
In the heart of fair July;
The sun has sunk behind the hills,
And has left a glorious sky.

And the glowing creeps around us,
Steals away the mellow light;
The stars, just peeping through the heavens,
Are twinkling with the shades of night.

And the dew in silence falls,
Like a veil on tree and bush;
The gentle rustling of the grasses,
Seems to softly whisper, "Hush!"

Edon, July 17th, 1892. F. JOSEPHINE, S.

St. John, New Brunswick.

Outstretching in an anchorage for service unsurpassed,
Where, vying with her steeples, points many a stately mast
From vessels seldom tossed, no matter how it storms,
So sheltered from the winds that a circle nearly forms.

With an artificial structure, if not a thing of skill,
Is of goodly service, to keep its bosom still;
A massive stony hedge you can hardly call a dyke,
But then it breaks the seas, so call it what you like.
And a daily rise and fall of twenty feet or more,
Near at even hourly intervals of twice in twenty-four;
Which purifies the whole, making currents swiftly run,
In continuance of the cleansing the city's sewers done.

A haven good for fish, where gaseous air abound,
Well suited for its weirs making, many a million pound,
While more are caught in nets, or what is called a drift,
And oftentimes abundantly, near a hoghead at a lift.

And raised some clever oarsmen upon its placid breast,
Who in their youthful days had vanquished then the best—
The famous Paris crew, whose prowess is her pride,
Now in honored posts of duty that are kindred with her tide.

It has its rocks and shoals that really dangerous are,
But these are signal buoy'd and a beacon on the bar
With Partridge Islands near, scarce half a league away,
Throwing light across the channel and for miles along the bay.

And has its fog at times which makes the way obscure,
Much less a fault in transit than being froze secure,
When a horn is sounding clear, unceasing but at whistles,
Which seamen plainly hear perhaps a dozen miles.
And when the frost is nipping, its face is still unrippled;
Then, as well as summer, can merchandise be shipped;
An exception all important and in merits claim the most,
'Tis the only open port along the eastern coast.

Except in southern climes where cold is not severe,
They of course are open all seasons of the year,
But are so far away that we need not make a fuss,
For their rival competition will never bother us.

Now Halifax is fine and so is Portland's too,
Both are splendid harbors and lovely to the view,
But when the icy ring exerts its freezing power
They cannot bear the sting, succumb within an hour.

Next boys put on their skates, and o'er their surface glide,
While as it ever moved, moves on this open tide;
With vapor rising high, a fog of other kind,
Yet none need lose their way, except they're very blind.

I have left her waters and betook me to her land,
Here improvements of the latest are seen on either hand;
And now within a car an electric current runs,
Sitting, musing on the genius of nature's gifted sons
And the spirit of her progress which hath metted in the chase,
Now striding in its march at such a rapid pace,
And foremost, let us hope, it she gets the C. P. R.,
To roll along their grain, and ship it from the car.

As ever in the west an elevator's there
Standing near the ferry high, towering in the air,
And the Connolly's nearly done with what they have to do
With an enterprising mayor to push the matter through.

Now let us grateful be to the great and bounteous Giver,
For these and other gifts her forests and her river,
So fertile and commodious and of staples well possessed,
By tugging at the wheel and trusting for the rest.
HENRY GASKIN.
Kingsville, St. John, N. B., April 22.

Love by Lot.

Sitting on the river bank,
Meg and Will together,
Sitting, counting daisy leaves
In the bright June weather.

Will possessed his lot no more,
Sweet Meg owned it entire,
Yet no word had dared Will speak
Though burned he with desire.

But sitting 'mid the daisies
This bright and summer day,
Trembling 'sought he saucy Meg,
To tell him yea or nay.

Meg held tight within her hand—
Three little wisps of hay;
"Now you may draw your lot sir,
The long one sayeth 'yea.'"

Said Will "This is not fair, Meg,
I've but one chance in three,
But since 'tis all you offer
May fortune favor me."

So sitting 'mid the daisies,
'Mid sun and birds and bloom,
The fateful lot was drawn forth,
The lot that told Will's doom.

'Twas long! His heart leaped wildly,
He kissed Meg's laughing lips,
Eager as the early bee
Its first sweet honey sips.

Then said "Now tell me, Meg dear,
How could you really be
So cruel as to give me,
But one poor chance in three."

Sitting on the river bank
Meg laughed aloud in glee
"Why, Will, you silly boy dear
The wisps were long—all three!" SWEET-BRIER.

The Hammock's Tale.

I heard them say my glory had departed,
And I must bid the world a long farewell;
But ere I go to grace the musty attic,
A little tender tale I have to tell.

How well I still remember my first summer—
(But here one little fact I will confide,
In those my callow days I loved romances
And easily, perhaps, was edited.)

"The only girl I ever loved" he murmured
She—"Subject your memory to a sharp review"
He—"All others dear! were merely fleeting fancies
My first and fondest love I give to you."

"I wonder"—and the maiden paused a moment,
Profoundly pained—with sad and thoughtful brow,
"How often you've rehearsed that pretty story
To say it neatly as you say it now."

The youth arose, his dark eyes flashing anger,
And gazed upon her with a stony stare,
He turned and saw the witching, pensive face,
And left the naughty maiden sitting there.

A merry laugh rang out beneath the starlight,
A tender voice called, "Do come back Dick dear;
The hammock is so dreadfully unbalanced
And I am miserably lonely here."

The haughty strides grew shorter and less hurried,
He turned and saw the witching, pensive face,
He smiled and all his anger was forgotten,
Came quickly back and took the same old place.

Discarded now, consigned to dreary darkness,
O'er vanished youth and usefulness I sigh,
The world—my world of sweet and happy summers—
I bid one sad, long, lingering, good-bye. EDELWEISS.

The Farmer vs the World.

Let the sailor boast of the ocean wave,
Of his home on the rolling deep;
Of the mermaid's song on a summer's night,
When the mind is lulled to sleep;
Of the wonderful sights he is bound to see
When on shore in foreign climes,
Of his rollicking life so wild and free,
All careless of dollars or dimes.

Or the soldier boast of the glories of war,
With its glitter and roll of drum,
Of the mighty deeds and heroic acts,
Of battles fought and won,
Let him point with pride, to the roll of fame,
Inscribed in letters of blood;
With the names and deeds of heroes brave,
Who have died for their country's good.

Let the woodman boast of the joys of life,
'Mid the forests of fire and spruce,
Away from trouble and free from strife,
'Mid the haunts of the timid moose.
Let him tell of life in the lumber camp,
When the work of the day is done,
When the music starts and the dancers tramp,
And the wonderful yarns there spun.

But give me the life of a farmer,
With its attendant toil and cares,
Though the fight is hard with the potato-bug,
And the wheat all mixed with tares;
Yes! give me the fields of golden grain,
The hills of waving corn,
Work in the fields, with the health it gives,
Till night, from dewy morn.

And as years roll on, and the ills of age
Cluster thickly around our path,
'Tis then we'll feel our choice was sage,
Our crop was the aftermath.
The sailor, soldier and woodman may,
In poverty end their days,
A farmer's life for its worry and toil,
Full interest always pays.

Miramichi, April 8, 1893. HICKORY.

Chinese Bank Notes.

The earliest issue of bank notes, so far as known, was in that country of antiquities, the Chinese Empire. As far back as B. C. 2697 the Chinese treasury issued bank notes, some of which are still in existence. The treasury then did a banking business, which, however, it soon turned over to private enterprise, the Chinese banks being then, as now, under government supervision and control. So far as essential particulars were concerned the notes issued at that remote date did not differ from those of to-day, each bearing the name of the bank, the value of the note, the place of issue, the date and signatures of the bank's officers. The Chinese called the bank notes "flying money," and regarded them as superior to the precious metals on account of the greater facility of handling. Many of these early notes are still in existence and may be seen in various European museums.

An Ocean of Beer.

The output of the monster breweries nowadays is so stupendous that it takes time to realize or picture it. For instance, Messrs. Bass' breweries last season figure out nearly 1,400,000 barrels. Now, the greatest of the Egyptian pyramids is 763 feet square at the base, and this firm's butts, bulge to bulge, alone would supply bases for ten such pyramids, while the other casks would suffice for a superstructure 500 feet high. End to end in a line, the year's casks would about reach from London to Glasgow.

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