

Stamp Collectors' Fortnightly. That journal, although now in a state of suspended animation, appears to be still a power in the land!

THE GUMS OF ALL NATIONS.

A most interesting, because the most novel, article in the *Bazaar's* supplement is that headed "Gum," wherein the writer treats of "the enormous difference in quantity and quality that exists in the adhesives employed in various countries." We quote the following passages:

For those who live in damp places, the very worst gum of all, in our humble opinion, from a collector's point of view, is that used by the United States. Probably most of our readers have noticed its extraordinary hygroscopic nature; so that stamps with original gum, properly mounted with hinges, after a very short sojourn in a damp place, will absorb sufficient moisture from the air to cause them to gum themselves firmly down to the page. On the other hand, the sensitiveness to damp of the U.S. adhesive material renders it an easy matter, as a rule, to peel the stamps off the envelopes to which they are attached. And thus the said material has *two* bad and opposite qualities: (1) The stamps stick when they are not required to do so, and (2) they can be peeled off when they ought to hold fast!

In some hot climates—Japan, for instance—an altogether different adhesive is employed. This stuff, whatever it is, on being wetted, swells up enormously, after the manner of gelatine, without becoming particularly sticky, and we have often wondered what this adhesive can be if it is not gelatine.

The other day, in removing some native Indians from the paper to which they were attached, we were struck by the filthy nature of the gum and the quantity of foreign matter in it. In this case, however, we came to the conclusion that possibly the gum may have been all right, but that the person who stuck them on the letters must have been employed in the delectable habit of betel-chewing, or something similar.

As to the fault of non-adhesiveness, which keeps cropping up from time to time in various countries, as in the instance referred to in the commencement of this article, it must not be forgotten that very often it is the paper which is at fault, rather than the gum. In Austria, for instance, some of the stamps of 1890-91 are on very thick and hard transparent paper, having a strong tendency to curl up, so that it was very difficult to get them to stick. The thick-paper stamps of 1850, on the contrary were fairly tractable, but it was a different style of paper, and the gum was abundant. We fancy that if a good class of gum were employed (two coats being given), and the stamps were printed on decidedly thin paper, we should hear no more complaints as to lack of adhesiveness.

A BOARD OF TRADE STAMP!

In the same excellent publication we find a photograph of a 2½d. British stamp perforated (after the manner of the Office of Works official) with a large crown and the letters "B.T." "The cut," (writes the Editor of the supplement), "represents a stamp that has been in our possession some nine years, and we illustrate it in the hope of eliciting some information from English specialists. It is the current 2½d., perforated with a large crown and B.T., and is on an official letter to H.B.M. Consul-General in Berlin. We have received (in England) one or two letters from the Board of Trade, but so far as we remember they bore no stamps; so we presume that the official stamps (if they may be thus named) are only used for foreign correspondence. Has any one seen other values so perforated?"

Messrs. Whitfield King & Co. inform us that they received specimens some years ago from the British Consul in Tangiers, and they believe the stamps are still in use for letters from the Board of Trade to British Consuls abroad.

MORE "PUNCTURED" UNPAID-LETTER STAMPS.

A news-note in the *Philatelic Chronicle* records the fact that the postal authorities of the Argentine Republic are "puncturing" their ordinary postage-stamps in the Tunisian manner as a means of converting them into unpaid-letter labels. The amount to be collected on unpaid or insufficiently paid letters is now indicated by the use of stamps perforated "C.Y.T.," which means "Correos y Telegrafos."

FAKES.

SOME PAGES FROM AN EX-FAKER'S DIARY, NOW PUBLISHED FOR THE FIRST TIME.

(Continued from page 8).

"DOS Y MEDEO'S" next venture was the 1 peso Colombia. What an easy thing to do!—pay 1/6 for one of the illustrating blocks of a stamp catalogue, take impressions from this and there you are (or there you *were*. You couldn't do it now).

This stamp would be sold at £16 per 1000.

Another success that soon followed was the 10 pesos. Thousands of these passed through the dealers' hands. The "Little Toff" did this one same as the other. He got a dealer's illustrating block for eightpence and made the ten pesos by the thousand. Colombia stamps were more liked then than the present time.

"Dos y Medeo" was getting mighty proud of his success. He became much more independent in his business, too. He wouldn't sell less than a gross (144) of the 10 pesos, and his profit on each order was very good—namely, as following:—

Selling prices, per gross	£7 4 0
Cost of Manufacture	0 0 3
	Profit £7 3 9

Oh, good Isaac Gordon! What a percentage, ma tears!

The same little swell made the 20c. black, 1881, Colombia—another eighteen penny illustrating block. The game went on for months, he was never found out and it seemed as if he never would be. Everything "Dos y Medeo" put his hands on turned into gold. He now dressed like a regular nobleman. His hat came from Bond Street, and the gloss on it would have made one of Dunn's 3/9 turn pale. His tailor was lucky, for "Dos y Medeo" would always pay down on the nail and stand drinks and smokes. One thing in his praise, he always looked a gentleman, and always behaved as such, having a banking account and still holding an important office. He was so sharp in business that his masters always looked on him as a regular wonder, and he worked hard for the firm. At night he worked hard for the stamp collector.

About this time a lot of provisional Ceylons were coming out. Much to the delight of "Dos y Medeo" he obtained some genuine unused stamps, before they went out to Ceylon, made all the values *reversed*, and packed them off to Ceylon to be posted back on envelopes to dear old England, the land of the free. And it came to pass that the stamps did arrive safe to several dealers who could swear they got them from Ceylon first mail. Now was the time to strike—wot ho! It was many a month before the stamps were proved wrong, and "Dos y Medeo" made a great pile.

"Next please!" says he, and up comes the Victoria and New Zealand fiscal postals.

The small schoolmaster, master of them all in the stamp cleaning line, now made his appearance on the scene, and soon a great mixture of smells arose. Oh, the acids! All the cats and rats dropped a parting tear and fled from the faker's mansion.

The acids played Old Harry with everything. Candlesticks went black, rings turned blue, and all the massive furniture in the faker's drawing room wore a worried look.

(To be continued in our next).