

matter of stamps is treated. This statement, to be understood, needs, doubtless a somewhat lengthy explanation, but instead of attempting one, I shall rather point out some of the inconsistencies which I have encountered during my comparatively brief philatelic career, a few of the more glaring ones.

A short time ago I greatly desired to complete a few sets, each of which lacked the most expensive stamp necessary to complete the same. I accordingly sent want lists to several dealers, and was at last rewarded by receiving a stamp on approval, together with a note from the dealer stating that he regretted the fact that the stamp was a little off on account of having one straight edge; however, if I could use it in that condition, I might have it a discount considerably larger than could have been offered had the stamp been perforated on four sides. Of course I took the stamp, but it seemed to me a trifle inconsistent to give a discount off a stamp which obviously was more of a "rara avis" than one of the ordinary perforated-on-four-sides kind. As every one knows, there are fewer stamps with two straight edges. Ought not, then, the straight edge stamps to be more rare, and consequently more desirable and higher in price than ordinary stamps which are perforated on four sides? In a recent issue of the U. S. surcharged for Cuba, it happened that in printing the five cent stamps, the lower lobe of one of the "B's" became broken, thereby making the surcharge on this particular stamp in each sheet somewhat resemble "CUPA," and this so-called error or variety is catalogued in the 59th at \$1.00, while the perfect specimen is catalogued at but the usual advance over

face. By the same token, then, ought not the straight edge stamp, which constitutes but a small fraction of the entire issue be worth considerably more than the others? And ought not those very scarce two-straight edge stamps be worth as much in proportion as this "CUPA" freak? If a broken type in a surcharge makes a "variety," then surely the straight edge stamp, which is an entirely legitimate production, is equally entitled to distinction. If we are to pay attention to such unintentional varieties, let us be consistent about the matter, and give the straight edge its just deserts. Let us make philately a science, and discontinue fool's play.

The matter of the difference in price between used and unused specimens has been extensively treated by various philatelic writers, but a word more or less on the subject will not be out of place here. I am forced to confess when I turn to the pages in my album devoted to the Central American countries, and am obliged to admit that the beautiful unused specimens which adorn those pages are worth but a few cents each, and considerably less than cancelled specimens of the same stamp that philately has not yet reached the stage when it can properly termed a "science," and cannot be until there is some method of doing away with these worthless back numbers which some second or third rate governments palm off on the philatelic public at the end of each year. So long as we permit ourselves to be imposed upon in this manner, so long we cannot consistently, it seems to me, in any sense be termed "scientists," and the term "freaks" is undoubtedly more appropriate. Some one will inquire now why I do not practise what I preach, and remove