

FOREIGN STAMP SWINDLE.

**This Worker Supplies the Post Mark
so Dear to the Hearts of Col-
lectors.**

Recently I visited the workshop of a foreign stamp-faker. His rooms, situated in an obscure court in the city, looked like the abode of a waste-paper merchant, from the number of sacks of paper and old envelopes stowed in every corner. After a satisfactory explanation as to my business, I was permitted to enter a small room behind the shop.

The first thing noticeable was the extraordinary number of rubber and brass stamps hung on racks round the wall. These were used for post-marking stamps which had been placed on telegrams. Although these stamps are very good and clear specimens, they are practically valueless to most collectors without a post-mark. This our worthy friend supplies.

I was then shown a parcel containing about 600 sixpenny Gold Coast stamps, which had been used on bills of lading for the stamp duty and cancelled by writing the date in ink across them, as we do receipt stamps. These our dealer had bought for a nominal sum (about four a penny), and which in the course of a day or two he hoped to sell—all bearing a post-mark, and in every way identical to the legitimate postage stamps—at 4d. each showing a handsome profit of £9. 7s. 6d. on the parcel.

His process of converting the fiscal stamps to postal is extremely simple. By means of an acid

used on a fine gold pen he carefully removes the ink marks, then with a hand stamp the post-mark, date, etc., are applied, and this, when done neatly, covers any trace of the acid manipulation, and thus the stamp is ready for the unsuspecting buyer. By this means some really valuable stamps, which when used on telegrams would only realize a few pence, are converted into specimens worth several shillings.

Our dealer then showed me with pride two of the penny black English stamps, one of which had a Maltese cross in each corner, and the other V. R. in the top corners, the former being worth to-day 1d. and the other £5; yet he assured me they were both the same stamp, and before he had removed the top crosses with chemicals and etched the V. R. in their place were worth only 1d. each. The transformation had been so cleverly done that in spite of a powerful hand glass I was unable to detect any alteration.

He then showed me an old Australian stamp catalogued by the dealers when a perfect specimen at £20. This appeared in excellent preservation, and after a careful examination I pronounced it perfect. He then wetted it, when a fine line was observed running across its face. This, he explained, was caused by its being joined, or pieced together from two damaged stamps cut into pieces to fit. The joins were so accurate as to be unnoticeable until wetted.—Tit Bits.

Read the Standard Stamp Co's.
Ad. on page 8.