

WHY DO WE IGNORE THEM?

BY ROY F. GREENE.

WHEN the United States, in 1878, ceased to issue adhesives for the use of the various departments of national affairs, and substituted therefor a series of so-called "penalty" envelopes, philatelists at once ignored these successors of the popular departments, and no value whatever is set upon them by cataloguers.

This has always seemed strangely queer to me, and I have sought in vain for a good reason for their being cast aside as of no consequence, and no spaces left in our albums for them.

I may seem bold in rushing into print in defence of these stamps which a popular verdict has seemed to cast aside, but there seems to be a diversity of opinion on the subject, and a great many collectors are asking themselves the question, whether these will ever be collected, hence I feel that at least a reason should be given for their unpopularity.

Of course they are not pretty, but they are a true governmental issue, they are the natural successors of the bright colored departments, they are used postally, and are certainly true postage stamps.

While I would not be accused of championing their cause, I nevertheless feel them to be much more worthy of a place in our albums than other stamps for which spaces are provided. For example there are the Bavarian return letter stamps which at best look like trade mark labels, and of the cheapest and least artistic designs at that.

Who can say that they are more worthy a place in our collections than these same penalty envelopes?

Then the insured letter stamps of Columbia, with their different varieties of borders which enthrust the advanced collectors, and the thousand and one other emissions of foreign governments that collectors and dealers seize upon and go wild over, no matter how unworthy they may be to grace our album's pages.

And then the collecting of bands and seals used by the post office department that really have no postal significance, and which in a slang sense "come high but we must have them."

After all these extremes and a seeming desire on the part of some to create enthusiasm over every bit of scrap paper which emanates from the postal department, still these penalty envelopes are ignored.

Perhaps the grand Moguls who dictate to us what we shall and shall not collect have ruled wisely in casting this particular issue into the realms of unsought specimens, but we can cite precedents where other stamps have been held up for public worship none the more worthy.

Still in arguing the *pros* and *cons* of this question I have been led to ask where this thing is ever going to stop, for if we collect these penalty stamps on the grounds that they are legitimate because used postally, why not for the same reason collect the franks of the 444 members of Congress and the 88 United States Senators, whose autographs in the upper right-hand corner of an envelope containing public documents are sufficient to insure their prompt delivery by the emissaries of Uncle Sam's postal service.

So it seems we must draw the line somewhere, and it may be that it has wisely been drawn at these same department envelopes, but since these are ignored I shall hope to see in future so-called standard cata-

logues some of the conflicting features eliminated, and the same Bavarian "return letter" stamps and like specimens relegated to the rear.

"Oh consistency, thou art a jewel."

But still, many of the younger collectors are trying to complete their sets of these same penalty envelopes, and some are even laying by a stock hoping they may some day command attention. In my own collection I have nearly a complete set of these stamps arranged on a blank page, and while they lack artistic force they are, as I think, pleasing to look upon as successors of the now so popular departmental issue.

Everyone has, without doubt, their opinions of this subject, and from them I would like to hear of the reasons why they should be ignored.

Correspondents' Column.

[This column is open to all, and we hope you will take the opportunity to express yourself on any Philatelic question. Those who want any information should send in their queries, which will be published in the following number.]

J. L. B.—We have no knowledge of any stamp paper published in Edinburgh, Scotland.

L. S., Albert Lea, Minn.—If *postally* used the stamp mentioned by you is worth about 10 or 15 cents.

G. M. W., Louisville, Ky.—(1) If you are unable to hear from the Custom authorities at Toronto, write The Minister of Customs, Ottawa, Canada. (2) Your advt. was only paid for two insertions.

St. John, N. B., April 10, 1893.
I wish to warn collectors to be on the lookout for bogus split stamps (provisionals) of New Brunswick, on "original envelopes." An irresponsible young fellow of this city (whose name I will withhold for the present) is putting these things on the market for sale or exchange. His plan is to get the common 5c. green on the envelopes (the cancellation covering the stamp only, and not extending to the envelope) remove the stamp and substitute one-half of an unused 10c., which is then neatly cancelled with a rubber stamp made in exact imitation of the old "gridiron" cancellation of New Brunswick. The forgery is difficult to detect, but in most cases the cancellation is of a somewhat deeper black, and has a fresher appearance than the genuine provisionals. I have reason to believe that this party is also manufacturing Nova Scotian as well as New Brunswick splits in the manner described. The existence of such forgeries might tend to throw discredit upon genuine split provisionals, my own for example. Persons obtaining any doubtful stamps of this kind from this city or neighborhood will do well to send them to me for inspection. I will gladly advise as to their genuineness, and in the case of forgeries will, if necessary, take measures to have the offender punished according to law.

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P. S. C., 28; S. of P., 299.

Collectors who have not as yet seen the new price-list of the Standard Stamp Co. should send for a copy at once. It consists of 64 pages, fully illustrated, with a handsome cover. A copy will be sent free upon application by addressing above firm at 925 LaSalle street, St. Louis, o. (Advt.)