

Written for THE CANADIAN PHILATELIST.

HOW TO DETECT COUNTERFEITS.

BY WILLIAM B. HALE.

IN THE early eighties—eighteen eighties—when the counterfeits came thick and fast, as rain will fall, and would cling to one "like sea weed 'round a clam," a Philatelist found it necessary to keep his eyes open else he would have them palmed off on him, whether he would or no.

At this period, nearly every beginner had a lot of the S. Allen Taylor supply of counterfeit pence issues of the British Colonies, with a sprinkling of Hamburg locals and Confederates. Even the duplicates that the youngsters would offer for trade were of this class of trash. I remember that as a dealer, I was offered many collections, which were for sale, and nearly every one would contain counterfeits, and in purchasing these collections, my first thought would be to pick out those which I mounted in my album of counterfeits, which I use continually for reference and comparison.

Now there are several general rules for detecting counterfeits, which are easy to remember and are worth hundreds of dollars to any collector who does promiscuous trading, or buys up old collections.

The essentials of paper, color and perforation are important, and equally as much so as the engraving, for many counterfeits are heavily cancelled so that as a result the imperfections in the design are not readily apparent, and we have to fall back on the others to enable us to detect the fraud.

The counterfeits of Vancouver's Island and the early British Guiana's, should have the small perforation, but in most of the counterfeits they have large perforation and imperfectly done at that, and frequently half-torn, showing that the machine must have been dull. This same large perforation appears on all the Taylor and Paris counterfeits.

The paper in a genuine stamp is, as a rule, thin, tough and not glazed, but in the counterfeits the paper is usually so thick that you cannot help but notice it, and further it is usually well calendered, which is to say, smooth, with a glazed surface; yellowish tint may also be frequently noticed, and on its face, the paper has a cheap appearance, which is suggestive of something cooked.

The colors of counterfeits are often an indication by which they may be detected. Take red for instance: I never find a light red, vermilion scarlet or cochineal, the usual shade in the counterfeits being a dull brick red. The yellows and oranges appear to be a greenish yellow, the blacks, blue; while the greens appear thick and lumpy and do not give a clear impression. In the counterfeits I find the brown colors to be imitated the best of all.

In engraving, the lettering is nine times out of ten imperfect in the imitation, and I have observed that some of the letters will appear shorter than others, or wider, or perhaps imperfect. Even in the short words, "pence" and "cents" it is seldom that you will find that the counterfeiter has been successful in making all the letters perfectly. Very often the profile, the figure, or the border will look all right, but when compared with the original, they will be found sadly deficient, but as

very few have genuine specimens of the rare stamps for purposes of comparison, and it is for such these few elementary rules are penned.

Look well, then, that the paper is not too thick or smooth, that the perforation is not too large or roughly made, that the color is not different in shade from that indicated in the catalogue, and finally, be sure that the engraving has not the defects referred to above.

I have been shown some remarkably clever counterfeits of the U. S. Columbian issue, which were made in Germany by photographic process. These stamps all have the word "facsimile" printed over the face, and they are sold as such.

The rules I have mentioned will not always answer, but as a rule they serve the purpose for which they are intended.

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HOW COLLECTORS BECOME DEALERS.

BY GEO. B. KLEBS.

PHILATELY creates a very business like taste among its followers, so much so, that we find the majority of Philatelists business men. It is peculiar and amusing to see how soon this power, as it may be called, is imparted from Philately to the youth or student. I have often made it my business to watch a collector fourteen years old, and see his business talent gradually developing, for it is not acquired in an electric style, but slowly and surely. Give the boy a book and a hundred stamps, and he will begin collecting as naturally as the chicken raised by means of the incubator, will pick up grains of corn a few minutes after it has been born. There is nothing forced or unnatural about it, he takes to it at once, without so much as waiting to be versed in the ins and outs. No duck takes to the water more naturally than does this school-boy attach himself to a stamp album, 100 stamps, a trading book and a pot of gum arabic. Give him these and you will see a happy youth, perfectly content to let his arithmetic go, not troubling himself to read even those high literary productions, known as "Dime Novels," giving the history of the brilliant "Dick, the Indian Killer," or the "Terror of the Western Plains." He will go out to school and commence the business of trading. Presently he finds he has reached the high standard of being the owner of 100 different stamps. To a young stamp collector, this moment in his collecting career, corresponds to the moments when a young man reaches his majority. He gradually secures by exchanging the common stamps held by his school-mates and he then begins to feel a sense of his power and importance, which is delightful to him. One day, showing his duplicates, or "snappers," as they are called in Boston, he finds another would be Philatelist, craving a certain stamp, while he has none our potentate has already. Presently our boy is struck with a bright idea; he offers to sell it to his school-mate. This transaction having been accomplished, I may well say the turning point has been reached. He goes home with that five or ten cents feeling that he has begun life in earnest—he is making his own money. On the morrow he takes more of his duplicates, and begins selling them, still unconscious of his