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My Experience As a Stamp Collector.

A True Story of a Collector.

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Last summer while reading the exchange notices in the weekly newspapers I saw that a number offered stamps in exchange for bicycle and watch coupons. One writer offered a three dollar and five hundred dollar documentary stamp for a certain number of coupons. As I had never seen a five hundred dollar stamp I sent the coupons and received the stamps which looked so nice that I continued to exchange with others. A short time after, I received a dealers price list which convinced me that there was something in postage stamps. I ordered several packets and also stamps on approval. Collecting then became a fascinating pursuit and as my stamps began to accumulate I conceived the idea of putting each separate country in an envelope. The unused stamps appealed to my fancy and I began to buy and exchange for them only. I was now buying from about fifty dealers. One dealer gave me fifty stamps free for buying five dollars worth from his sheets. A dealer who had mostly South Americans promised me a subscription to a stamp paper. His stamps looked so grand I bought seven dollars worth from him. Many of my stamps were perforated on three sides only

but I did not know the difference.

In the first stamp paper I ever received, I snapped at what I thought was a great bargain "One thousand stamps for ten large copper U. S. cents." In return I received a bundle with about sixteen officially sealed stamps on it. I thought I had a prize, but when I opened it, I found a lot of old torn and mutilated one and two cent U. S. present issue. Another fellow offered a bargain for a dime before 1839; this was as bad as the other lot, so I put them in envelopes and sent them back. I wrote to the publishers of the paper and the ad never appeared again. Another dealer offered a stamp catalogued eight dollars for four dollars to the one who first applied for his sheets. I sent the money and the stamp came. It appeared all right but had a little paper stuck on the back. I soaked it off and found the stamp in three parts; I sent it back and threatened to take action against him but found that he had defrauded several dealers and got away.

I had no doubt as to the genuineness of my stamps and having heard of a friend who was a collector I took my stamps to him to see if they were all right. When he saw them he laughed and explained that the majority of my South American stamps were counterfeits, and also some of the other republics. I began to think that I was a fool to waste my money—it amounted to about seventy dollars,—but after a