

The Brattleboro Stamp.

By H. I. S. TORIAN.

"Not to know it argues yourself unknown." Its history has been so thoroughly and frequently treated by able writers that I hesitate to continue for fear my remarks may prove but feeble repetitions of their ideas.

However it may be of interest to some, to learn that the second postage stamp issued to the United States, was engraved by Thomas Chabuck at Brattleboro, over fifty years ago. Mr. Chabuck was in Brattleboro from 1845 to 1848, and had an office directly over the post office, by which he became intimate with F. N. Palmer the postmaster. At that time it cost five cents to send a letter, and prepayment was optional. Postmaster's salaries, more over, were graded, as they are now to some extent, by the amount taken in at the office and the postmaster at New York, thinking that people would be more apt to prepay their postage if they could do so by means of stamps, had some struck off at his own expense. One of these reached the Brattleboro post office, and commended itself to Mr. Palmer's judgement, and he determined to increase the revenue of his office if possible, by the same means.

Accordingly he employed Mr. Chabuck to prepare a copper plate for him, containing ten stamps, and had 500 sheets printed or 5000 stamps in all. It is thought however that only one-tenth of these were used. They were printed in black upon buff paper, and were about the size of those now in use. The design was very simple; an octagonal shape, differing from the border in the direction of the tinted lines. The center contains the initials of

the postmaster, "F. N. P." in fac-simile of his own handwriting; above it, was "BRATTLEBORO," below "FIVE CENTS," and on the sides, "P. O." Before the 500 sheets were used, the Government began to issue postage stamps and the destruction was ordered, both of the stamps on hand and the dies. Hence has happened the extreme rarity of the stamps, which has led some to doubt their existence.

Mr. Chabuck had a single sheet of the stamps in his book of samples of his work for a number of years, but finally sold them about 20 years ago, to a gentleman who gave him a dollar a piece for them leaving the engraver chuckling over his bargain. Meeting with the gentleman afterwards, Mr. Chabuck learned that he had disposed of the stamps for \$15 a piece "but the man I sold them to," said he, "got \$30 each for them." This gentleman wrote an account of the stamps which was published without Mr. Chabuck's knowledge. In consequence of this being published, Mr. Chabuck has received many letters inquiring about the stamps, and offering as high as \$300 for one of the stamps; another offered to give \$500 for the original plates, if obtainable. The plate, however has been destroyed, and the stamps are never seen except in the album of some Philatelist who has been fortunate enough to secure a copy of this rare stamp.

The adoption of an international stamp would make a radical change in philately. Either it would be the means of greatly prospering our fair goddess, or else it would be the means of trailing philately's banner in the dust.—I. E. Patterson.

This paper on trial 3 months for a two cent stamp.