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PHILATELIC SUB-STUDIES.

III. — METHODS OF ENGRAVING AND PRINTING.

BY THE EDITOR.

N our previous papers we have dealt with the methods of perforating stamps, and the various kinds of paper used in the manufacture of the same. Some omissions have been made, but it would not prove convenient to mention them here, so I shall leave them till the close of the series, and shall mention these omissions in an addition, which will be necessary to ensure a complete work.

In this paper we shall enter into a more difficult field of our sub-studies, one which is probably the least understood, and one which it is difficult to give a clear explanation. The preparing of our stamp, the designing, the engraving, and the printing is no small matter, and few collectors realize the amount of work that has been expended on their stamps before they are ready for public use.

The designing of the stamp is of very little moment to us, and we shall confine our attention to the methods of engraving the plates and the printing of the stamps. The term *essay* is often met with. An *essay* is a design for a stamp submitted to the authorities for their approval. In the *essay* the stamp appears as it would appear when printed, as may be seen it is a species of a *proof*. *Proof* is a common term, and one that is well known to collectors. The *proof* of a stamp is taken from an *accepted design*, and is as a rule taken in various colors in order to ascertain the color which best suits the design, or the tastes of the authorities. *Proofs* are generally printed on rice or India paper, or thin cardboard. The manner of taking a *proof*: It is not printed as the stamps are. The *die* is covered with ink, and the paper laid upon the *die* and hammered. Thus an impression is secured.

Many collectors make a speciality of collecting these *proofs*, and they are a desirably interesting branch of collecting, a branch which is followed by many of the more advanced collectors. *Proofs* themselves are in many cases far prettier than the stamp itself, and especially are they attractive when arranged on a page so as to display the harmony of their color and design. *Proofs* of rare stamps are obtainable at prices very much lower than the original stamp is. Two examples of this: The *proof* of the New Brunswick "Connell" may be obtained for from \$3.00 to \$5.00 while, the original stamp is worth \$100. The *proof* of the Canada 12 pence black is worth \$5.00 or \$6.00, while the stamp itself is worth about \$1.50. *Proofs* may generally be detected by the bright and fresh appearance of the paper used in their preparation.

Taille Douce (or line engraving) is engraving on copper plate, and the impressions resulting from a plate engraved in this manner are called line engrav-

ings. This method of printing is probably one of the oldest in existence, as it was employed by most of the early printers. The process of *taille douce* engraving differs materially from other methods. In this method the lines which are to appear in colors are cut into the plate. In the printing from the plates the ink is rubbed into these cuts, and then all ink is wiped from the raised portions of the plate. These raised portions remain white in the printing. The paper used for printing engravings of this nature is generally dampened slightly, and great pressure is used, which forces the paper into the hollows of the plate, thus absorbing the ink. Stamps printed by this method can easily be distinguished, for on careful examination these lines of ink will be found to exist in a raised condition on the paper. At times the paper has the appearance of *ribbed* paper, owing to the great pressure against the raised lines. The majority of the adhesive postage stamps of the United States are made by this method.

Probably the commonest method of printing is that called *typography* or *surface printing*. In this method, and which by the way is 50% simpler, a process is adopted almost directly opposite to *line engraving*. *Typography* is used in the printing of books, etc. In this method the parts intended to be left uncolored are cut away, while those intended to receive the ink and convey the impression are left in relief, or on the original surface, hence the term *surface printing*. Type and all kinds of ordinary illustrations used in printing are produced by this process. Nearly all the postage stamps of the world are produced by this process, which is by far the more simple and speedy method. In this method it is not necessary that the paper be damp as is the case with *taille douce* engraving, but notwithstanding this it is often used in that condition.

As all my readers are probably aware, *Lithography* is printing from stone. In this method the design of the stamps are drawn upon paper and transferred from the paper to the stone. When the stone is being used in printing it is washed with a mixture that makes it so that the ink will not adhere to the stone itself, but only to the design. *Lithography* is as a rule a very slow method. Two methods are known for telling a lithographed stamp, but even with these it is difficult to distinguish it from a typographed stamp. The design of a lithograph is not nearly so clearly brought out as by some of the other methods, and further, a lithographed stamp generally has a greasy feeling on the surface.

The manufacture of the plates is interesting. A single stamp is engraved on soft steel, and this *die* is then impressed into a mixture of wax, etc., which is used for the molds. The *die* is impressed in rows of impression until a sheet of the necessary size is produced. Then the plate is usually cast in one piece from this mold, made from original engraving. This process is called *Electrography*.

(To be continued.)