

Written for THE CANADIAN PHILATELIST.

MY FIRST STAMP SOCIETY.

BY GUY W. GREEN.

One winter, when the evenings passed
 With dreary, dragging length,
 And when the hoary ice king came
 Among us in his strength;
 We youngsters gathered, one and all,
 In Andy Nuquist's store;
 And there we formed the "Stamp Combine,"
 Behind the close barred door.

Each member then, with due regard,
 Signed carefully and plain,
 A set of by-laws just produced
 From Andy's fertile brain;
 'Twas then we met and organized,
 'Twas thus we gained and grew,
 'Twas thus we added strength to strength
 The frigid winter through.

We came together ev'ry week,
 In conclave most profound;
 The old walls echoed gladly back
 Our boyish laughter's sound;
 And hand to hand, and heart to heart
 We passed each joyous hour;
 For each had felt the magic of
 A common friendship's pow'r.

Of mighty undertakings there,
 We fearlessly took hold,
 And many were the auction sales
 At which we bought and sold;
 And sometimes, just to be in style,
 With albums on our knees,
 We held a good, old-fashioned "feed"
 Of ginger snaps and cheese.

There we exchanged our surplus stamps,
 With rare and ready tact;
 And lied sometimes, I greatly fear,
 In word, or deed, or act.
 I recollect that Freddie Smith,
 One evening somehow made
 Himself a gainer off of me,
 Through some unusual trade.

But next day things were evened up,
 Because I found a tag,
 Upon some ancient vermifuge
 Put up by Bark and Wag;
 And Freddie bought it, thinking that
 The words I said were true,
 When I affirmed it found its way
 Clear up from Timbuctoo.

The boys are parted long ago,
 And wander far and wide,
 Throughout the broad earth's vast expanse,
 Wherever men abide.
 I wonder if they ever turn
 Life's many pages back;
 To all the joys they once possessed,
 The joys which now they lack.

I sometimes think that could I live
 The old, free life again;
 With all its careless boyish sport,
 So free from care and pain;
 I'd just give up my chance of Heaven,
 And revel for a while,
 In that enchanted land of youth,
 Where endless pleasures smile.

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CURIOUS FACTS: SOME OLD,
SOME NEW.

It was not required by the postal rules of the United States and Canada, which were in existence at the time of the first issues, from both countries that postage should be post-paid by stamps. The U. S. 1847 issue only came into use in a few cities, and, indeed, all letters taken to the post office and there prepaid, as was almost universally the custom, were not stamped.

While the distribution of the pence issues of Canada was more complete, their use was exceedingly limited. It has been estimated that on only one letter in fifty was there used a stamp.

Many of the U. S. stamps, of 1847, are found accompanied by local stamps. The local posts placed boxes or stations in various portions of large cities, and letters collected from these were carried to the post office and mailed if they bore one of the company's stamps. Naturally, they either were prepaid by U. S. stamps also, or were sent unpaid, a less common procedure.

Postage stamps often bear secret marks which tend to render counterfeiting more difficult. Everyone knows of the letters in the corners of some British stamps, but few ever have been found without these having been pointed out the plate numbers which are placed literally with the lathe work in the one and two penny stamps which were used so many years and are so common. These figures are hidden so cunningly that one will look at thousands of these stamps without noticing them, though they are visible to the naked eye.

If you possess any reprints of U. S. locals or Hamburgs, taste the gum and you will never mistake it. Should you ever have trouble to decide whether an unused local is a reprint or not this knowledge will be useful. It is a mucilage, the like of which one's tongue will never taste elsewhere, and is used exclusively by the manufacturer of these things.

In the good old days, when few could tell counterfeits, such scamps as S. Allan Taylor certainly had a feast. He issued a local of his own, bearing his name, address, and the value of five cents. The writer recently saw an old album in which was a whole page of "rare" locals, all of which were either rank counterfeits or bogus stamps. In one of the lower corners was this "Taylor's Local," and well might the word "fecit" have been added, as the artist signs his name to his painting.

The Canadian stamp of the denomination of 12 pence bears that value instead of one shilling because 12d. was not 1 shilling at that time. The 6d. stamp bears the words "7½d. currency" also; therefore 12d. sterling was 15d. currency, and 12d. currency or a shilling was but 9 3/5d. sterling.

It is not a haphazard assertion to say that ninety-nine out of one hundred of the U. S. stamps sold as unperforated of issues after 1861 are perforated specimens which have been unperforated, i. e., the perforation cut off. Perforated stamps are frequently met with the margins of which are as wide as of imperforate specimens listed in auction catalogues as having fine margins.

—TIMBRE.