

Approval Sheets.

Their Use and Abuse.

BY EVERY PAGET.

Approval sheets, as we are all aware, are sheets of paper made out of onion skin, or good linen. They are ruled off to hold generally twenty-five, fifty, or one hundred stamps. Enough room is left in each space so ruled off for the stamp and a place below to mark the price thereof. At the top of the sheet we find the number of the sheet, the owner's name, the total value of the stamps thereon, the commission allowed, and generally a statement that all stamps are guaranteed genuine, also they must be returned within a certain number of days.

All dealers have approval sheets. Any collector, upon furnishing good references, or a cash deposit, or a stamp society number, is entitled to receive stamps on approval. He is generally allowed a commission or discount on all he sells or buys himself. The collector deducts the commission and sends remittance for the net amount to the dealer.

This method has its good points as well as its bad ones. It often happens, more frequently amongst youths, who are buying stamps. They may act honestly for some time, and then get a batch or several batches from as many different dealers, of valuable stamps, and being uninformed of the consequences, never return them. This causes the dealer a vast amount of trouble and expense, but quite often lands the offender in the reform school.

Again there is encountered the substitution fiend. He removes one stamp and places another in its stead. He takes off a

perfect specimen and replaces it with a fair or poor specimen of the denomination. Dealers keep a diagram showing just what stamp was placed in each position, and often a description of it, and if there has been any substitution it is easily discernible. Where a dealer has a large and increasing approval sheet trade, it is hard to detect some substitutions, but the detection most always follows sooner or later, so complete is the system, and the guilty party is punished. Not, however, until the dealer has lost some money.

Again, the boy dealer does much to belittle the approval sheet business. He advertises and sends out approval sheets filled with stamps marked one, two, and three cents each, which stamps would be dear at 50 cents per thousand. It costs money for postage, though, to return those stamps.

Not so much as formerly, various dealers took to sending out stamps unsolicited. Thus when a party joined a society, or a dealer became possessed of an address from a reliable source, the addressee was flooded with approval sheets from various dealers. This would not have been so bad had they all enclosed a self addressed stamped envelope. But few, aye, a very few, indeed, did this. And yet these dealers wrote threatening letters to the parties who did not return the said stamps promptly. Why it would make a party bankrupt buying envelopes and stamps to return these various approval sheets with.

However, this approval sheet method is an excellent one for filling up collections if conducted in the proper manner. Stamps are arranged and classified by the various responsible dealers now, and a postal card and names of reliable references will bring