

ODDITIES AND CURIOSITIES.

PERHAPS many collectors have what appear to be errors in the shade of a stamp in their collection, and thinks that his collection is very valuable on this account. He does not take into consideration that a stamp may be changed in color by means of acids, etc., and does not discover his mistake until he wishes to dispose of his collection, or until it is examined by an advanced philatelist.

Even if he suspects that a stamp is changed in color, he has no means of proof unless he submits the "suspect" to an expert. I give the following table taken from "Der Philatelist", showing what may be accomplished by a skilful manipulator in the way of making color varieties.

One can change—

Carmine and rose	} Brown, orange, yellow, grey.
into	
Erick-red, orange	} Brown (rose), yellow, green,
and yellow into	
Green into	} Brown, yellow, blue, violet, grey.
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Blue into	} Brown, orange, yellow, green,
.....	
Ultramarine into	} violet, black.
.....	
Violet into	} Yellow, brown, grey.
.....	
.....	} Rose, yellow, blue, green, grey.
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I recently had sent me for inspection a U. S. 5c brown, 1890, which had been changed by acids to a silver grey. I have in my possession an U. S. 1868 5c, which has been changed from brown to a deep black.

What is believed to be a U. S. 30c of 1868 with a 13x16 mm. grille was at the 9th sale of R. F. Albrecht & Co. on Dec. 8th. Unfortunately the size of the grille is not exactly measurable, as it commences from the right side margin and extends into the stamp, covering a space 11x16 mm. Until this the 3c was the only known stamp having a 13x16 grille.

Another rarity seldom met with is the U. S. 1888 officially sealed *unperforated*. These are valued at \$10 each. Mr. Wilfred N. Mathews, of London, England, possessed an unsevered pair of these stamps, which were disposed of with the remainder of his collection at auction last March.

I noticed in an amateur magazine recently, an article, the writer of which claimed to have discovered a new variety of the U. S. 3c, 1851. It was described as having two fine lines running along one side and on the top of the stamp. It was simply caused by a border being engraved around the entire plate, and as this stamp was probably from one corner I fail to see its exceeding rarity.

A prominent philatelist, Mr. Alvah Davison, in an article notes: "In looking over a few hundred 3c 1857 the other evening, I came across one which is a curiosity, or really a die variety, the difference being readily seen when pointed to, but would easily be passed by one unaccustomed to a close examination. The stamp in question has the five lines on the sides which are found on nearly all specimens of the 3c 1857, but the line on the left side, after going down 8 min. is split, and while one part goes straight to the bottom, the other part diverges 1 min. and then continues to the bottom. It is a fine specimen, being cancelled with two penmarks, and I prize it as a rarity, as I believe it is". Now although it is desirable to catalogue every variety of a stamp, is this not getting it down to a pretty fine point? If such errors(?) are catalogued we would soon have a catalogue of 1000 pages, and without any further Seebeckism either.

Written for THE CANADIAN PHILATELIST.

NOTES ON UNITED STATES STAMPS.

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EARLY every collector of U. S. stamps I meet is continually bewailing the fact that there is little chance to buy a good rare stamp at a reasonable price. Now if these grumblers would, instead of spending their time in wishing they had lived thirty years ago, get up a little energy, buy themselves a good microscope and examine their stamps, comparing all of same values and noting every point of difference, they would be quite likely to find something out of the usual line.

Some will say "That's all true enough, but I haven't any *luck*". Now put a "p" before the last word and it would come very near the true state of affairs. Perhaps a little assistance would prove of value. Buy a good microscope (tripod) with two or three lenses. One of these can be purchased for about seventy-five cents. Then get a color chart (fifty cents), and millimetre scale and perforation gauge. These two combined cost thirty-five cents, and you have a good outfit for only one dollar and sixty cents.

Now let us take a few common stamps, say the 1c 1870 issue. Compare each stamp with your color chart and you will find many distinct shades—imperial ultramarine, indigo, dull indigo, ashy blue, ultramarine and perhaps one or two more, but these are the main varieties in shade. Look at the frame surrounding the stamp. There you will note the plain and fancy frame. Some of them may be embossed. Measure with your millimetre scale and the following sizes may be noted:— $10\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{2}$ mm., $8\frac{1}{2} \times 10\frac{1}{2}$ mm.

We have now 11 varieties of this one stamp sufficiently distinct to catalogue as follows:—

- 1870, 1c imperial ultramarine, grided, $10\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{2}$ mm.
- 1870, 1c imperial ultramarine, grided, $8\frac{1}{2} \times 10\frac{1}{2}$ mm.
- 1872, 1c imperial ultramarine, not grided.
- 1873, 1c imperial ultramarine, plain frame, not grided.
- 1873, 1c indigo.
- 1875, 1c dull indigo.
- 1882, 1c ashy blue, re-engraved.
- 1886, 1c ultramarine, re-engraved, (3 var).

There are 6 varieties of 1870 2c, 7 varieties of 1870 3c, 5 varieties of 1870 6c, and 9 varieties of 1870 10c. There are shades of the 1890 issue, particularly in the 2c. You can get 5 shades each of 1851 and 1861 3c for only 20c. Could a philatelist wish for "more fields to conquer."

I learn that the following values have been decided upon for the "Columbian" stamps: 1c, 2c, 3c, 4c, 5c, 6c, 10c, 15c, 50c, \$1, \$2, \$4, \$5. Wonder if Seebeck has any influence with Wannamaker and Hazen. (This does not apply to editor Florida Philatelist, but to Third Assistant Postmaster General.)

Many collectors seem to have just discovered that the 1861 3c pink is very rare since Scott catalogues it at \$2 in his 53rd catalogue. This is for a used specimen, but I wonder if they have any? I have been fortunate in securing an extra fine used specimen, very lightly cancelled, and I would not care to sell it for \$5. John N. Luff, of San Francisco, has a beautiful block of 12 unused, and about 20 or 30 more are known. I think they are not as rare unused as used.