

only French. Collectors in Russia, Sweden, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, Greece, Egypt and many other countries, have answered by letters, written for the most part in English and French. This speaks well for the average intelligence of collectors the world over. I received one or two letters in Spanish, Italian and German, but have always been able to make out the sense of them, although I probably did not take a very literal translation. But the majority of letters I have received from Europe have been written in French. It is the language used more than any other in Europe. It is used altogether in France, Belgium and Switzerland.

Another thing I must mention, and that is the good penmanship displayed by the majority of my foreign correspondents, although, perhaps, not so remarkable as that noticed in my United States correspondents, whom I have found almost invariably to write a smooth, legible business hand. I have found several of my foreign friends very fond of seeing all their titles used when addressed, such as president of such and such a society, or major so and so, and they have seemed to feel that I lacked respect for them when I address them simply by their name without putting on their full titles, and in fact I seldom even take the trouble to prefix Mr. or M. In my next letter I would be requested to address Sir William Blank, Lieutenant colonel of Her Majesty's Dragoons, Strawberry Villa, Pountah Road, English Quarter, Bombay, India, etc., etc. This is a sample and is a whole letter in itself. Life is too short to follow this practice, although I do it when requested. Just enough address to enable the letter to reach its correct destination is all that should be required. I have found this relish for titles more noticeable in the English colonies than elsewhere, but, in fact, it is rather an exception than the rule. I exchanged for a long time with a certain baron in Belgium, who never wrote his title at all, and I should never have known it had I not learned it through other sources. It is hard work to get the names of collectors in South American countries even if you subscribe to philatelic papers published in those countries, as most of the advertisers are dealers. I have more than once sent letters to countries in the postal union prepaying all the postage asked at this office, and afterwards received word from the addressee that he had to pay postage due on it. This has happened several times and I have had my letter returned with the postage due stamps on them by the collectors, thus proving their words. Can it be that the letters absorb moisture or dirt in being handled and re-handled and so become heavier. I can explain it in no other way. In some countries a letter from the United States with postage due on it, if not delivered, will be returned to the writer, and he does not have to pay anything to get it back again, even though the foreign due stamps be on it. In other countries the letter is returned to the United States dead letter office and you have to forward the postage due on it before you can get it. I usually send my stamps first when exchanging with foreign collectors, as it saves both time and postage, and have rarely lost a lot, which speaks well for the honesty of philatelists, for there is no international law that could touch them, and even a broad advertisement in the philatelic press would not be of very great harm to an obscure foreign collector.

Written for THE CANADIAN PHILATELIST.

THE TREATMENT OF STAMPS.

By WALTER A. WITHROW.

TRANSLATED from an ancient manuscript recently found in the possession of an Egyptian mummy, supposed to be about two thousand years of age, and modeled especially for *The Canadian Philatelist* by

Walter A. Withrow.

For a proper understanding of the article, for scientific articles are proverbially scientific, a series of annotations are added in italics, by the translator, with the hope that they may prove of value, especially to the young collector.

Too often the collector forgets that stamps are possessed of a sensitive nature and in consequence does not treat them as is their due. In this article I cannot particularize the many indignities heaped upon the innocent, defenseless stamp, and warn you as to the same, but my general advice is, "Put yourself in their, or its, place," etc.

In the treatment of postage stamps, too much care cannot be taken, and having had an experience of two hundred years—*It is well to keep in mind that in those days people lived to a very ripe, almost rotten, old age—with these interesting bits of paper, I propose to give my fellow-beings the benefit of my experience.*

One of the greatest crimes of which a collector can be guilty is to break in upon a happy married couple and separate them, tearing away their dwelling, and destroying their dream of domestic bliss. *Although I am not positive, I think that this refers to removing from the original envelope, and separation of an unsevered pair.*

Another heinous offense, which should be punished by imprisonment for life, is the practice of removing from the back of the stamp, the adhesive layer, known as the gum, depriving as it does the specimen of sustenance; for having made an exhaustive study of this matter, I am of the opinion that the stamp draws from the aforesaid gum much nutriment, and to do thus is to deprive said stamp of life. *The gentleman probably makes this fling at Alvah Davidson, who advises collectors to remove the gum from their three-cent pinks, providing, however, that they have any.*

Another point about which collectors are rather careless is the practice of washing or cleansing the face of the stamp with soap-suds. *You who have endured the agony of having been washed in this substance can have some idea of the sufferings of the more beautiful and delicate little stamp. From these two very important facts may be deduced. The Egyptian boy held in mortal horror that alkaline composition known as soap, even to the extent of the American small boy, and that the human has outstripped the stamp in point of beauty within the past two thousand years.*

There is another point which I wish to impress upon your minds and that is to use your best efforts toward the prevention of the practice of perforating stamps. Did it ever occur to you that this operation hurt them? As I understand it, they are irreparably injured. Putting yourself in their places, how would you like to be punctured all around your sides or, if as it often happens, you were not placed under the perforating machine correctly, to be punched full of holes?

From these remarks it may be concluded that the