

A DETECTIVE CARD.

(BY HENRY HECHLER.)

An improvement on the present registration system would be the issuance of a card bearing the same register number as the letter to be addressed and mailed to the party to whom the latter is sent, thus notifying him that a registered letter is on its way. The letter would, of course, go in the bag for registered matter and the card in the ordinary mail bag. This would give additional security, and in the event of a registered letter going astray, the fact would be known at once, and enquiries could immediately be set on foot, thus saving valuable time and increasing the probabilities of its recovery. A charge should be made for such an advice card equal to that of an ordinary postal card, and it doubtless would be cheerfully paid by all sending valuable letters.

This advice card, being of the size of any ordinary postal card, would allow room for the sender to write any information or instructions that he chose to his correspondent.

As it would go direct, while the registered matter to which it related would be delayed for booking at the different offices through which it passed, the card should generally reach its destination at least a day sooner than the letter.

We think also that it would be as well to have register stamps in Canada issued in series, as are bank notes, or as the same kind of stamps are in every other country, so far as we have observed. If this was done, each number would represent a certain letter and no other. Register stamps also should be sold only at the registration office and as wanted, and not as are ordinary stamps. By this method the books of each office would necessarily tally with the stamps issued.

POSTAL FACILITIES IN GERMANY AND FRANCE.

Postal orders, which cost in France twenty-five cents for the smallest sum, are in Germany only one-fifth as much, and in the latter country an extra payment of one cent entitles the sender to have the money carried by the postman to the house of the person addressed, and there paid to him. In the same way the postmen are obliged to receive money from any one who wishes to send a postal order, and give a receipt for it, entering at the same time in a book the name of the person to whom the order is to be sent; and the postmaster then makes out and forwards the order required. A species of missive used in Germany, but nowhere else, so far as we know, is the express letter, which, for an extra postage of six cents, is forwarded to the person addressed without passing through the post office of the town in which he lives; a messenger, who travels on every mail train, taking the letter immediately on the arrival of the train, either by day or night, to the one it is intrusted to reach. As the boxes in the stations are open to receive letters until one minute before the departure of the train, an express letter of this kind can be transmitted very quickly.

ODDITIES IN PERUVIAN STAMPS.

(BY THE EDITOR.)

To illustrate the vast field for varieties opened by the Chilean occupation of Peru, we note that in one denomination alone—the 10 centavos green, surcharged with the arms of Chili—no less than 18 variations occur. These surcharges are in five colors—black, blue, vermilion, yellow and magenta. Besides, many of the surcharges are in reverse and here and there in a sheet is found a stamp unsurcharged. It behoves collectors to give attention to all these differences, and also to remember that those mentioned above as having no surcharges should not be detached from those next to them that bear it, as, if they are separated, the proof of their character as provisionals is destroyed.

The variations noted above, are as follows:—

1st.—The surcharge placed plain and upright.

2nd.—The same in reverse.

3rd.—The upright and reverse combined.

As there are five different colors, and the above variations appear in each, this gives a total of 15.

In addition the sheets surcharged in blue show instances of unsurcharged next to each of the above, thus adding three to the list, and making the total as stated (18.)

Though some "plodders" in the fields of philately may be so little imbued with the spirit of the science as not to appreciate these technical points, we are sure that all who take a real interest in observing these variations, on which depends a proper knowledge of the art, will thank us for pointing out the facts in this matter.

DISHONEST POSTAL CLERKS.

Every few months some clerk in the Post offices in this country is detected in purloining and appropriating valuable letters passing through his hands, but usually the family or political influence of the offender, through which his appointment was gained, avails to secure him from any punishment other than dismissal. This is not as it should be, for all over the world the fear of punishment is a more powerful deterrent to wrong-doing than is principle, and the more certain and severe the punishment the greater is its force. Of course the large majority of postal clerks are strictly honest and reliable men, but in every flock there will be some black sheep, and these when discovered should be treated as the law prescribes.

This is a matter the importance of which cannot be over-rated. The position of a postal clerk is probably the most responsible as regards his relations to the public that exists in the whole range of governmental offices. Even if a dishonest clerk is detected, and if he or his bondsmen are forced to make restitution, the delay and interruption of business and the injury, and sometimes ruin, inflicted on innocent persons cannot be measured by money alone, to say nothing of shaking public confidence in the post office as a safe medium of communication and transmission.

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