

Welcome to Our 125th Anniversary—and the Next 125 Years!



From the January 21, 1891 issue:



Several copies of Mekeel's Weekly Stamps News were displayed by members at the meeting the other evening, and the question was asked, "who is Kenelm, that writes up Chicago?"

Kenelm was right there among you, taking notes and smiling in his sleeve. More anon.

January 17, 1891

KENELM

From the January 21, 1891 issue:



NEW SOUTH WALES

The following newspaper clippings sent us by Mr. J. E. McLean, from Australia, describe the new 2 1/2d stamps:

THE REDUCED POSTAL RATE

On January 1 next the reduced postal rate between the colonies and Great Britain and other countries will come into force. The charge of 2 1/2d per half-ounce letter will apply universally to all parts of the world except in cases where special foreign transit has to be accounted for. The letters will after the date named no longer be sent by what is known as the all-sea route and for which 4d per half-ounce is now charged; but they will go by the fast route, the charge for which at present is 6d



NSW Sc. 89

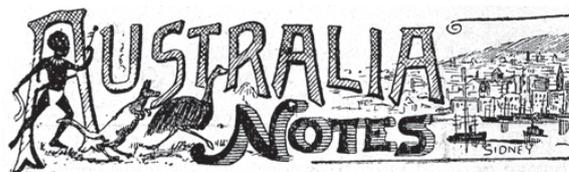
per half-ounce. It will thus be seen that there will be a considerable reduction in the amount to be paid.

The 2 1/2d stamp for New South Wales has been fixed upon and is now being printed as fast as possible. It is of a light blue color. In the center, on a globe, is the figure of a female holding in her hand a banner upon which the motto "Advance Australia" may be clearly deciphered. In the distance is the ocean and a miniature mail steamer may be recognized, the idea wished to be conveyed being that this charge of 2 1/2d is the universal postal rate between all countries. In the two upper corners wings are represented indicating speed, and on shields at the bottom corners the value of the stamp is indicated. The words "New South Wales Postage Revenue" are traced in bold letters round the border of the stamp. It may be as well to point out that on January 1 the present 3d postal card to the United Kingdom will be substituted by a 2d card.

THE OCEAN POSTAGE RATES

The Postmaster-General, Sydney [New South Wales], has decided to carry out in their entirety the terms of the resolution adopted by the Postal Convention, under which a twopence halfpenny ocean postage will come into force on the 1st January next. This reduced rate is to be applied universally, except, of course, in cases where special foreign transit may be involved... With the entrance of the new year a twopenny post-card will supersede the existing threepenny card and it may be used between New South Wales and England and the other countries in the Postal Union. ...The design for the new 2 1/2d stamp has been selected and an issue has already been printed. Its color is a light blue, and the emblem a female figure, standing on the globe, and bearing a banner with the device "Advance Australia."

From the January 28, 1891 issue:



We are indebted to Mr. Will M. Clemens, who is conducting a press clipping bureau in San Francisco, for the following from the Herald of Auckland, N. Z., December 25th, 1890:



The cut from the 1891 article

“Mr. A. E. Cousins, of Wellington, has secured the bonus offered by the Postal Department for the best design for the new ocean postage stamp of 2 1/2d and has been entrusted with the work of preparing the die. The design is the Queen's head, copied from a jubilee coin, enclosed in an oval, the words 'Postage and Revenue' being just above it. At the base are the words 'New Zealand,' while immediately below this appear the words 'Twopence halfpenny,' with the figures '2 1/2' dividing them. On each of the two upper corners of the stamp there is an excellent representation of an ocean steamer. The stamp, which is to be brought into force at the beginning of the year, will probably be printed in blue.”



New Zealand 68

Twin City Notes

Philately is ebbing low in St. Paul and Minneapolis this season. There are not over half a dozen active collectors in both cities.

Alfred Owre, of Minneapolis, has lost his interest in stamps, and is now trying to sell his collection, which is rich in U.S. Stamps. His price is beyond the means of most collectors and we fear Alfred will hold his collection for some time to come if he continues to hold to his price.



From the February 4, 1891 issue:



To those of our friends who have sent in subscriptions for three or six months and have asked to have their subscription commence with No. 1, 2, or 3, we will say that it is impossible.

We saved but a limited quantity of the first numbers and cannot furnish back numbers except to those who send one dollar for a year's subscription, and this offer expires February 11th.

Those who want to receive back numbers free must subscribe before that date.



The heading to these Chicago notes is quite appropriate, and although no comment has been made regarding it, your correspondent feels that he is in duty bound to call attention to it. It is a reminder that a World's Fair is to be held in 1893, and that it is very desirable to have philately represented as it never was before at any exposition. The time to talk it up is now, and every philatelist in the land should put on his thinking cap and make up his mind what part he will take in helping to make the philatelic exhibit a grand success.

(Here we are, 125 years later and we can adapt that same declaration: "It is a reminder that **WORLD STAMP SHOW-NY** is to be held in 2016....The time to talk it up is now, and every philatelist in the land should put on his thinking cap and make up his mind what part he will take in helping to make the philatelic exhibit a grand success." JFD.)

NEW ENGLAND NOTES

It is reported that an effort is being made to form either a philatelic society or a branch of the A.P.A. in Boston. The subject has been talked of before now, but nothing has ever come of it. It is to be hoped that this time the effort will be successful. There are collectors enough in and about the city to make the movement a grand success if they will only work together.

C. F. Strongman, of Boston, has a rarity which passed through the mails. It consists of a pair of unsevered revenues (2¢ blue, head of liberty), on the original envelope, with the Boston postmark. It is said that he recently refused an offer of \$17.50 for the same.

(Strongman may have been right in refusing



R152e

that offer. He might have been right...\$17.50 in 1891 would have been \$414.20 in 2008 U.S. Dollars. In that year, the mint pair off cover pictured in the previous column sold for \$253 including the Buyers Premium in the Spink 2008 Auction of the Cunliffe Collection of Classic American Revenue Stamps. However, we could not find any trace of a cover, so if it does still exist it would be worth many multiples of its off cover SCV.

Questions for your consideration:

- What might that cover be worth today?
- What would that pair be worth in 2141?

"DR. THEBUSSEN"



Senor Don Mariano Pardo Figueroa, though distinguished by his efforts to increase the postal facilities of his country, for which he has been rewarded, is better known to philatelists for his numerous statistical comments concerning the postal cards of Spain, which authorized in 1871 were not forthcoming until the end of 1873. Under his nom de plume he had made and used cards of his own. They were white cards of the regulation weight bordered by a black line with an ornamental cross

in the four corners, the place for a stamp duly indicated. The Inscription of the first lot of 500 is as follows:

"Postal card, issued by superior dispositions 10th May, 10th June and 7th July, 1871, and their circulation allowed in Spain according to the regulation of September 15th, 1872. As it is up-hill work for the government to issue them, Doctor Thebussem has ordered this issue May, 1873, for his use as well as that of his friends."

(If this subject is familiar, it is because you either read it as a youngster in our January 21, 1939 edition of STAMPS Magazine or, more likely in our November 28, 2014 Mekeel's & STAMPS Magazine, where we reprinted that article with new images added. Note as well that the correct spelling for Figueroa's nome de plume, which was used in the 1939 article is Dr. Thebussem. You can link to the 125th Anniversary column AND the 2014 article from the 125th Anniversary banner on the www.StampNewsNow.com home page. Shown here are images of one of the cards referenced above from the 1939 article and a stamp honoring him that was valid for one day only, as de-



scribed in the 2014 reprint on www.StampNewsNow.com. JFD.)

Yesterday in STAMPS:

The Stamps of “Dr. Thebussem”

by A. Eugene Michel (From STAMPS Magazine, January 21, 1939, with images added)

Among the most curious bonafide postage stamps of the world are the private issues of “Dr. Thebussem,” designed and issued by himself between 1870 and 1890 exclusively for his personal use, and at the time having the same franking value in Spain and all Spanish Colonies as did the regular stamps issued by the government itself. These unique private stamps were discussed some 40 years ago in the *Stamp Collectors Fortnightly* of London, but are seldom heard of today.



“Dr. Thebussem” on Spain C117, which was valid for postage on one day only, “Stamp Day” and “Day of the Race,” Oct. 12, 1944

“Dr. Thebussem” was the pseudonym of Mariano Pardo de Figueroa (1828-1918), an eminent Spanish scientist and writer who was very highly esteemed by his countrymen, and whose greatest achievements were in the development of the Spanish postal system. Although a philatelist, “Dr. Thebussem” was not a stamp collector, nor in

any way connected with the Spanish postal system at the time he first interested himself in its much needed regeneration. The government quickly recognized the value of and adopted his suggestions, all of which worked out so successfully that the doctor was offered a decoration and an important government office. These he declined saying, “The Count of Villamediano having been our first Postmaster General, I will be content to be the last postman.”

The request was so modest and original, that by Royal Decree, “Dr. Thebussem” was appointed “Chief Honorary Postman of Madrid” and was given a special uniform and freedom of the local post for his correspondence. His title was subsequently expanded to Honorary Postman of Spain and ultimately to “Honorary Postman of Spain and her Colonies.”

“Dr. Thebussem” then had entire postal freedom for both sending and receiving correspondence anywhere in Spanish territory, and in this respect ranked higher than members of the Spanish Parliament whose freedom was limited to sending only.

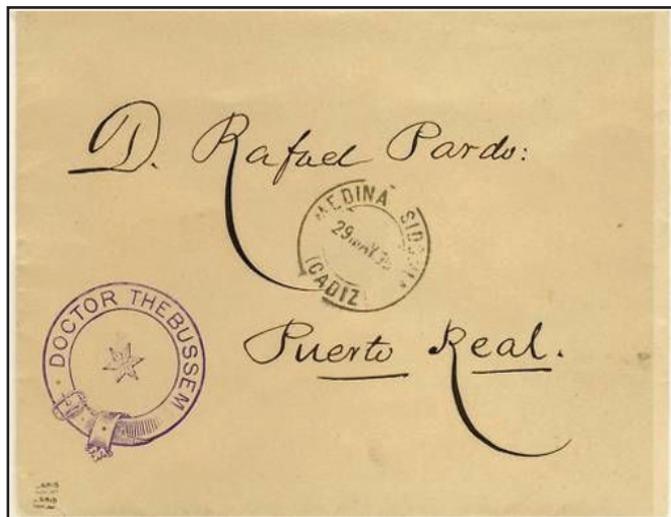
“Dr. Thebussem’s” stamps, shown below, are recognized by Moens in his excellent work, *History of the Postage Stamps of Spain* with the comment that they should be collected along with the regular issues. At first these stamps were pin-perforated adhesives usually hand stamped on brown gummed paper; later they were impressed directly upon the envelope or card.



These stamps as shown in the illustration bear the letters KTRRO, comprising a condensed form of the word *Cartero*, meaning Postman, and were intended as a satire upon the bad spelling to which the phonetic pronunciation of the Spanish language lends itself.



A cover from Medina de Sidonia to Cádiz with the frank handstamp of Dr. Thebussem, Edifil Spain specialized catalog #Fr 5.



Another cover from Medina de Sidonia, this one to Puerto Real, with the frank handstamp of Dr. Thebussem, Edifil Spain specialized catalog #Fr 6.

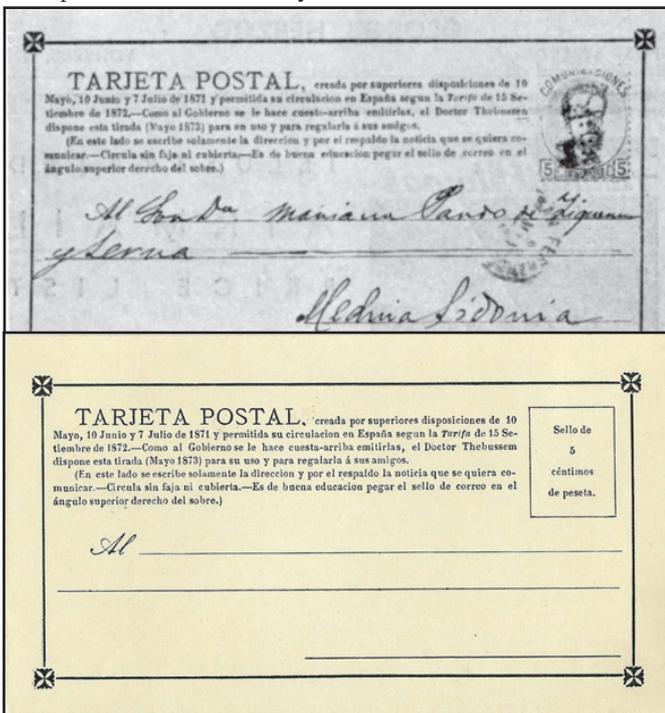
The Doctor evidenced his keen sense of humor when the Spanish government in 1871 decided to issue government stamped post cards, but was slow in actually getting the cards into circulation. After waiting over a year, Dr. Thebussem issued and sent out an immense number of post cards which were blank on the front save for the address and his own frank, and contained the following inscription: “As the Government is hesitant in is-



A cover from Medina de Sidonia to Puerto Real with the frank handstamp of Dr. Thebussem, Edifil Spain specialized catalog #Fr 5 as well as the Spain 1898 War Tax stamp, Sc. MR27.

Using its post cards, Dr. Thebussem has prepared this issue for himself and his friends. In the case of the latter, it is considered good taste to affix a stamp in the upper right corner."

The Spanish government still had not acted, so the Doctor, again at his own expense, got out a second edition of one million of these cards and distributed them widely. He even issued a third edition, but on this last he added the footnote, "New Edition, June, 1873, for use while the government is going through the labor pains of giving birth to its own issue." This last jibe proved too much, and the officially stamped government cards were put on sale before the year was over.



Top, an illustration from original article, showing one of "Dr. Thebussem's" post cards, which was mailed to him by one of his friends. The card bears his pin-perforated stamp. Bottom, an unused card.



Spain Sc. 2275, from a souvenir sheet for the Madrid Postal Museum, shows one of "Dr. Thebussem's" stamps.

Another of the Doctor's literary gems related that postage stamp collecting began at an early date, and according to the legend "was started in Spain by a number of persons who formed themselves into a society for collecting, in order to assist a young girl who had been promised marriage by a Grandee, if she could cover the walls of one of the galleries in his palace with stamps. Collecting developed to such an extent that on May 27, 1862, a decree was issued prohibiting the circulation by post of packets containing stamps."

Spain granted to another of her citizens, Diego Costell Fernandez, the right to make and use his own postage stamps (shown, Franchise stamp Sc. S2), but the privilege lasted only six months (1866) and was confined exclusively to a book which he had written on Spanish postal practice.



Mekeel's Weekly was first published on January 7, 1891.

STAMPS Magazine was first published on September 17, 1932.

We acquired Mekeel's in 1989 and STAMPS in 1995 and merged the two greatest publications of their eras as Mekeel's & STAMPS Magazine.

Each of these leading publications presented to their subscribers numerous articles by the finest philatelic writers of the 19th and 20th Centuries, as well as many other articles of lasting value.

This article and the 125th Anniversary reprints are just two examples of the great writing of the past and present that you will still find each and every week in Mekeel's & STAMPS Magazine.

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