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The Collections of the Earl of Crawford.



Elsewhere announced, it will be seen that Lord Crawford has parted with a large proportion of his celebrated collections of stamps. This announcement will be doubtless received alike with general surprise and regret, but we believe that the latter feeling may well be restricted to the knowledge that we shall no longer have the advantages—so freely conceded by the owner—of inspection of and access to the many treasures embraced in the collections that have now been disposed of. We have full confidence that this step does not in any way weaken the Earl of Crawford's interest in Philately, to which it has been for so many years of the greatest benefit, and that the active interest in everything connected with the pursuit displayed by the President of the Royal Philatelic Society will continue entirely unabated. Lord Crawford still remains the holder of three colossal collections—Great Britain, the United States of America, and Philatelic Literature, the ownership of any one of which would render the possessor famous in the philatelic world. It may well be that Lord Crawford, whose health has unfortunately latterly left much to be desired, has felt unequal to the task of transferring and writing up (*more suo*) the vast number of stamps that he has now disposed of. It should also be remembered that Lord Crawford is a man of many attainments—*nihil tetigit quod non ornavit*—and his leisure has for a considerable period been fully occupied with a Herculean task in the world of letters. It can therefore be well imagined that the President of the Royal Philatelic Society feels, under all these circumstances, well justified in restraining his labours within the limits of the three vast collections that he still retains.

The collections now disposed of are so vast—that of Italy alone containing twenty volumes—that the total sum paid must inevitably surpass any amount ever paid for a single philatelic transaction. To Mr. W. H. Peckitt has fallen the privilege of making this record purchase—the more remarkable as we have reason to believe that the entire amount was a cash

transaction. Mr. Peckitt has already acquired a very prominent position in the stamp world as the purchaser of the Avery and other famous collections, but by this record transaction he undoubtedly stands in the very forefront of all the dealers of the two hemispheres. By the purchase of the "Crawford Collection," in addition to the holding of an extremely valuable and extensive stock, Mr. Peckitt to-day indubitably holds the most valuable stock of stamps of any dealer in the world. This high position has not been achieved without the evidence of sterling merits and desert, and Mr. Peckitt's numerous friends will assuredly join with ourselves in heartily congratulating him upon the renown that he has achieved in the purchase of the Earl of Crawford's remarkable collections.

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## Notes on the 1853 Issue of British Guiana.

A PAPER READ BEFORE THE ROYAL PHILATELIC SOCIETY, LONDON,  
ON DECEMBER 15TH, 1910.

BY M. P. CASTLE.

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THE postal issues of British Guiana occupy a place in the philatelic world far in advance of the relative position of the colony as to its status in comparison with other portions of the British Empire. This feature is attributable to the provisional locally produced issues of its early postal history, which include the rarest stamps of the colonies of Great Britain.

Beyond this fact, the situation of British Guiana renders it somewhat anomalous, as although among stamp collectors it is generally classed with the West Indian issues, it is really situate on the vast continent of South America, and is the only British possession in that huge section of the globe. A glance at the atlas will reveal what an insignificant fraction is the colony compared to this vast continent, but none the less has British Guiana a sea-board of 300 miles and a total area of over 90,000 square miles. The nearest point of contact with the West Indian islands group is Trinidad, which is about 100 to 150 miles distant.

The early issues of this colony have been the subject of numerous important articles, but owing to the absence of official information as to their origin, there is still much to be learnt with regard to these interesting stamps. Nothing much has been written of late years, but I hope owing to the enterprise of the Philatelic Society of British Guiana, that our future knowledge may be extended. The purpose of this article is the consideration only of the two stamps issued in 1853, and I propose simply to mention any other issue where the circumstances threw any light upon the stamps under immediate consideration.

The British Guiana postal authorities, in making their first issue of 1850, created four values, viz. 2, 4, 8, and 12 cents. The lowest value—of which only some seven or eight copies are known—was used for deliveries in Georgetown, and the others for defraying postage to adjacent districts.