

Timmins Stamp Club Column

Italy Honours Her Great Men

A glance through the stamp catalog will reveal that no country in the world has been so lavish with postal tribute to her great men as Italy. This is not surprising, for few countries can boast of such a long and eventful history as Italy's, crowded as it is with brilliant, colorful figures who have distinguished themselves in every possible field—soldiers, statesmen, religious leaders, artists, poets, musicians and scientists. This latest series of Italian commemorative stamps adds five more subjects to the philatelic hall of fame—two musical composers, a poet, an artist and a craftsman.

Spontini—a Forgotten Composer
Gasparo Luigi Pacifico Spontini, whose portrait appears on the 10c dark brown and 1.75L red-orange stamps of this attractive set, was born in 1774 and died in 1851. It is not quite clear why his centenary should be honoured this year, unless it is intended to be the centenary of his best-known opera "Agnes von Hohenstaufen," which was first performed in 1837.



Like many other famous Italians, Spontini was the son of simple peasants. His parents intended him for the priesthood, but somehow the boy managed to obtain music lessons and his brilliant talent caused him to be appointed court composer to the King of Naples. An intrigue with a royal princess forced Spontini to leave the court hurriedly in 1800 and he fled to Paris, where his opera "La Vestale" won a prize offered by the Emperor Napoleon.

Spontini's character has been described as "grasping and treacherous, indolent and spiteful," but throughout his life he succeeded in winning wealth and honours from princes. In 1810 his quarrelsome disposition led to his dismissal from the post of Italian opera director at Paris, but he was promptly invited to Berlin by the King of Prussia. Here he soon embroiled himself again, but through the favor of the King he retained his position until 1841. In that year he left Germany and spent the rest of his life in obscurity.

Like so many composers of the Italian school, Spontini loved the grandiose and awe-inspiring. "His forte," said one critic, "is a hurricane, his piano a breath, his crescendo made everyone open their eyes, his diminuendo induced a feeling of delicious languor, and his sforzando was enough to wake the dead!" With the triumph of the great German composer Von Weber, however, Spontini's showy but superficial music suffered a total eclipse, and to-day his operas are almost entirely forgotten.

FIGURES IN A BOOK? What gives rise to a loan?

"Credit can only be issued against real assets... The amount of credit must always be limited to the amount of free money..."

That was written by one of the greatest of Socialists—by the late Viscount Snowden of Icknowshaw, Philip Snowden, in 1935—little more than two years ago.

Few stood so long or so resolutely in the forefront of public controversy, or aroused such fierce opposition by vigour of opinion or severity of tongue—and none passed to his rest having earned greater public respect than Viscount Snowden.

His career was a triumph of sturdy British character. He took an unpopular course during the Great War, but later became one of his country's great figures, standing firmly for his convictions and for soundness in the financial structure of Great Britain.

His words quoted above apply to Canadian banking today with all the force with which he applied them that day to banking in England. The Canadian banking system is a British system, adjusted from time to time to fit the needs of a developing nation in the changing scene of this new world.

Credit can only be issued against actual assets. That is as true today as ever. You cannot create credit by writing figures in a book. You cannot make loans regardless of deposits, collateral or repayment, then write the loans up with a fountain pen as figures in a book labelled "Deposits" and lend them over and over.

If you could, then bankers in any country would need no more than a fountain pen to prevent bank failures.

During the last ten fiscal years Canada's chartered banks have paid more than \$397,000,000 in interest on deposits. If they could create deposits by the magic process of writing figures in a book, they could have saved that \$397,000,000!

And if banks could lend ten times the amount of their deposits, collecting interest each time, bank profits would become a national scandal, dividends would be paid in astronomical figures, people would be selling all they had to buy bank shares, and there would be a land office rush on at Ottawa for bank charters.

But what are the facts?

Bank profits last year averaged less than half of one per cent. on total assets—a lower margin than that on which any other class of business, corporate or individual, can succeed.

Dividends are less than 4½ per cent. on shareholders' investment; nobody is scrambling to sell all he owns to invest in bank shares, and there is no land office rush at Ottawa for bank charters—though no application has been refused in the last fifteen years.

Banks perform no miracles.

THE CHARTERED BANKS OF CANADA

Your local branch bank manager will be glad to talk banking with you. He will be glad to answer your questions from the standpoint of his own experience. The next article in this series will appear in this newspaper. Watch for it.

Stradivari—Master Craftsman

On the 29c carmine-rose and the 2.56L 2L gray-green is pictured the great violin-maker Antonio Stradivari, whose matchless instruments, made over two hundred years ago, have never been equalled by later workmen. The design shows the old craftsman working on one of his violins, but the scene is entirely imaginary, as no authentic portrait of Stradivari is known to exist.

Stradivari was born in 1644 at Cremona, where the art of violin-making had already reached a high degree of perfection under the celebrated Niccolò Amati. After serving as apprentice to Amati, Stradivari opened a workshop of his own and gradually developed the violin into the form in which we have it to-day. Little is known of his personal life and the only description of him that has come down to us is that "he was tall and thin in appearance and invariably to be seen in his working costume, which changed rarely as he was always at work." We also learn that he "wore a white woolen cap in winter and a white cotton cap in summer!" Beyond these meager details his personality is entirely merged in the beautiful violins that he turned out year after year, bearing the Latin label "Antonius Stradivarius."

In the light of present-day opinion that a workman has outlived his usefulness at the age of forty-five, it is interesting to note that some of Stradivari's masterpieces were produced when he was well over eighty! During his long and busy life he made a total of 1116 instruments, of which 540 violins, 12 violas, and 50 violoncellos still survive. Over \$10,000 has been paid for some of these in the past, and to-day many of them are well-nigh priceless. No two Stradivari violins are exactly alike in tone or appearance, but all possess an unmistakable quality that defies imitation. Strangely enough, experts say that the secret of their marvelous tone lies not so much in the workmanship or the material as in the varnish and the loving care with which the old craftsman laid it on.

Leopardi—Poet of Pessimism

The 25c dark green and the 50c purple stamps honour one of the greatest lyric poets of the 19th century—Count Giacomo Leopardi, who was born of an aristocratic family in 1798. Leopardi's strange genius was developed only at the expense of his physical and mental health. He grew up nervous, sickly and deformed; his parents showed him no affection, and life in his native town was dull and uninteresting. Friendless and alone, he passed the early days shut up in his father's vast library, which happened to be one of the finest in that part of the country.



Solely by his own efforts, the precocious boy mastered Latin, Greek, Hebrew and several modern languages so well that at sixteen he was one of the best classical scholars in Italy! At that age he wrote a Latin essay on the Roman rhetoricians, at seventeen he composed a treatise on the popular errors of the ancients, citing more than 400 authors, and at eighteen he wrote imitations of the Greek poet Anacreon that deceived even experienced scholars!

Excessive study and an unhappy love affair permanently shattered Leopardi's fragile health, however, and he passed the rest of his life half-blind, deaf, and tortured by incessant pain. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that he soon adopted a philosophy of despair. This philosophy he expressed in a series of poems whose antique style and austere beauty rank with the great masterpieces of all time. Worn out by suffering, he died at Naples in 1837.

Pergolesi—a Genius Who Died Young

Giovanni Battista Pergolesi, who is shown on the 30c brown and 75c deep carmine values, was born in 1710 and died of consumption at the early age of 26. Yet during his brief life this gifted composer wrote no less than 12 operas (of which "La Serva Padrona" is the best known), 3 oratorios, 30 trios, a number of masses, cantatas, etc., and the celebrated "Stabat Mater."

Pergolesi played a brilliant, dissipated part in the court life of the period, and the tragedy of his early death has made him a romantic figure to his impressionable countrymen. It is said that his last opera was greeted with catcalls and rotten oranges, and while the composer sat alone and dejected among the audience, a titled lady named Maria Spinelli came up to him and whispered words of encouragement. An ardent love affair soon sprang up between the two but one day they were suddenly surprised by the lady's three brothers, who offered her the choice of marrying a man of her own rank or seeing her lover slain on the spot. Proudly refusing to marry anyone but Pergolesi, the beautiful Maria entered a convent and died of a broken heart within the year. The youthful composer, already stricken by consumption, retired to a lonely monastery where he wrote his great "Stabat Mater" as a tribute to his lost love and then expired. This work has been called "a divine poem of grief" and Pergolesi is still venerated in Italy as a composer who would have ranked with the greatest masters of the century if only he had lived.

Giotto—the First Modern Painter

The robed and hooded figure on the 1.25L deep blue and the 2.75L plus 2L dark brown is Giotto di Bondone (1266-1337), whose sixth centenary has been widely celebrated throughout Italy this year. Giotto is famous as the first great modern painter, the precursor of that long line of illustrious Italian artists that culminated 300 years later in Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci and Raphael.

Attend Conference



Abe Maurice Roy, RIGHT, of Quebec, is shown with Father H. J. Markey, of Detroit, as they attended the first annual conference of the Catholic Youth Organization in Chicago.

great modern painter, the precursor of that long line of illustrious Italian artists that culminated 300 years later in Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci and Raphael.



Little is known of Giotto's life, but tradition says that he was discovered as a shepherd boy drawing pictures of his sheep on a piece of slate. For centuries before his time painters had slavishly copied Byzantine models that showed the Virgin Mary and the early Christian saints arranged in stiff, unnatural poses; Giotto had the courage to break with these paralyzing conventions and make his subjects look like living, breathing human beings. His greatest frescos are at Assisi and Padua, and he also designed the famous campanile at Florence which is still known as "Giotto's Tower."

Giotto was a friend of the poet Dante and the storyteller Boccaccio, and many anecdotes are told about his shrewd humour. In a playful mood the King of Naples once asked him to draw a picture of his kingdom. Giotto immediately sketched the figure of an ass bearing a heavy pack saddle on which lay a crown and scepter! More familiar is the story of how the Pope sent a messenger to the great artist asking for a sample of his skill. With one sweep of his brush, Giotto merely drew a circle on a piece of paper, and this circle was so perfect that the Pope offered to take him into his service. Even to-day the Italians still use the expression "As round as Giotto's O!"

How Hay Fever May Be Made Less Serious

Causes of the Disease and Suggestions for Some Relief.

(By J. W. S. McCullough, M.D., D.P.H.)
There are two types of hay fever. The one seasonal and the more common, begins every year when the particular pollen by which it is caused begins to be carried by the wind; it persists until pollenation ceases. The offending pollens are those of trees, grasses and ragweeds and these give the titles respectively "spring," "summer" and "fall" hay fever.

The symptoms are itching and congestion of the eyes, violent paroxysms of sneezing, and a thin irritating discharge from the nose, often very profuse; sometimes there is itching inside the mouth and as the patient says, "behind the eyes." These signs are usually worse or less all day. More than one-third of the fall or ragweed cases have asthmatic attacks as well.

Those who are affected by ragweed pollens can escape by an annual migration to regions (now rare) where the ragweed is not found. Spring and summer sufferers escape only at sea since the offending trees and grasses are to be found almost anywhere.

The other type of hay fever is perennial; it lasts throughout the year with symptoms such as those already described for the seasonal type. It is caused by house dust, animal danders, powders, food and drugs. John Bostock of London, has the credit of first bringing to the attention of the world in 1819, the earliest clear account of hay fever.

It is possible by means of certain tests to discover the pollen or other causative agent of hay fever in the individual. This being accomplished, the person may be "desensitized" for the particular agent. The usual practice is, before the pollen season com-

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mences, to give the person about 16 injections of the "desensitizer" at intervals of five to seven days, the time of the last injection coinciding with the beginning of the patient's "season." If successful, this treatment lasts for the season only; it must be renewed the following year. About two-thirds of those treated will obtain considerable relief from the treatment; one-third will have slight or no relief, while a small proportion will be made worse. Certain drugs are more or less successfully used in the treatment of this disagreeable complaint. None should be used by the patient without the direction of a doctor.

Sentence Timmins Man for Drunken Driving

Anthony Campbell, 155 Pine street south, Timmins, was sentenced to fifteen days in jail when he was convicted of drunk driving in South Porcupine police court before Magistrate Atkinson on Tuesday morning. He was defended by Dean Kester, K.C.

St. John Telegraph:—The most casual observation will prove that nearly every instance of so-called bad driving is really an exhibition of intolerable bad manners.

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