

Seals

IT'S been such a long time since we told you about anybody who collects things that you might bear with us now, like good fellows, while we tell you about William Kinkead, of Glen Rock, New Jersey, who collects Christmas seals—tuberculosis-fund seals, of course, not Dennison's. Seems like a pretty specialized hobby, but it turns out that there's an international organization of Christmas-seal collectors, the Christmas Seals and Charity Stamps Society. It has about three hundred members, here and there, and Mr. Kinkead is president. He's a stout, ruddy, breathless gentleman; sales representative of a textile-machinery firm in his nonphilatelic moments. He has long been a member of the New Jersey Tuberculosis League; got interested in seal-collecting back in 1924, when he got up an exhibition of seals as part of the state sales drive. Now he has more seals than you'd imagine possible, including an awe-



"I popped into St. Luke's today for an appendectomy, but they were all tied up."

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some assortment of off-sets, imperfs (no little holes between them for tearing them off), essays, proofs, freaks, and design sketches. He'd be happy if he had the national Red Cross seal for 1912, perf 12 (12 little holes to an inch), but the only known copy reposes snugly in the collection of his closest rival, an employee of the Scott Stamp & Coin Company named Dorsey F. Wheless. Heigh-ho!

Looking over Mr. Kinkead's collection, we were interested to learn that lots of sanatoria and communities issue their own seals. We saw some from a few of them: the late Mr. Long's empire (it had a pelican on it); the county of Blue Earth, Minnesota; the cities of Norfolk, Virginia, and Superior, Wisconsin; the Grace Lutheran Sanatorium of San Antonio; the Lutheran Sanatorium of Wheat Ridge, Colorado; and the towns of Aalborg and Odder, in Denmark. We saw copies of the first seals ever issued—postage stamps of New South Wales which sold for double their face value, the premium going to a home for consumptives. That was in 1897, Victoria's Diamond Jubilee year. The idea was dropped after that until 1904, when it bobbed up in Denmark, the independent inspiration of a postal clerk. The movement came to this country in 1907, as the result of agitation started by Jacob Riis, the philanthropist. The seals were sold by the Red Cross until 1919, the money being turned over to the National Tuberculosis Association; since then the selling has been conducted by the Association itself. The double-barred cross which appears on the seals is from the crest of Godfrey of Bouillon, Crusader and first Christian king of Jerusalem; carries out the idea of a crusade against disease.

Values of old Christmas seals run pretty high, everything considered. Mr. Kinkead once had complete sheets, com-



"The important thing to remember is that the numbers on that side are odd, while the numbers on this side are even."

posed of two hundred and twenty-eight stamps, of both types of the 1907 seal (with and without "Happy New Year"). These were listed as being worth five and seven dollars apiece, respectively, until somebody strayed into a safe-deposit vault in Wilmington and found two hundred thousand of them. It shot the market all to hell, but that's philately. This year, as usual, Mr. Kinkead bought complete sheets of a hundred seals from each of the four printers who produce the seals—the Columbian Bank Note Company, the Eureka Specialty Printing Company, the United States Printing & Lithographing Company, and the Strobridge Printing Company. Each printer has a different little watermark on his block

of seals, so collectors have to buy from all four printers. It's for a good cause, though.

Dead End

MR. KOENIG, so tired he could hardly hold his head up, trudged into the lobby of his Tudor City apartment house one night last week, and found in his mailbox a memorandum from the apartment's switchboard, saying to call such-and-such a number. Mr. Koenig called the number and said to the woman who answered, "I'm Mr. Koenig. Does anybody there want to speak to me?" "What about?" said the woman, tartly. Mr. Koenig didn't know; he hung up.