

dark. Come along, Budge. Good-bye. I believe I could swim farther than that to save my life. I'll shout out when I'm over the other side."

Taking off everything but knickerbockers and shirt, the noble boy went into the water. He struck out slowly and steadily, bearing well to the left for fear of the current taking him to the weir.

How those two on the island watched his little head bobbing up and down!

"He's getting tired," cried Norah presently, in an agonised tone. "What is he doing? I can't see him at all."

At first they thought he had sunk; but Bertie scrambled half-way up a tree, and seeing the white face turned upwards, knew that Jack was floating to rest himself.

I don't think Bertie will ever forget his feelings in those few minutes when he thought his brave little brother had lost his life. Fear, sorrow, and self-reproach taught him a lesson which he never forgot. The last rays of the setting sun had just disappeared, when Budge gave a joyous bark, and Jack's voice sounded across the river, "All right!"

It was too dark to see him amongst the trees, but those two words filled the watchers' hearts with joy, and they answered with a cheer.

"He's a noble fellow," said Bertie; "and I just told him he ought to have been a girl."

Norah squeezed his hand and said nothing.

Darkness came over the two weary children as

they listened for the sound of oars. At last, worn out, they lay on the grass and fell asleep.

They were awakened by a lantern flashing in their faces, and their father's cheery voice, asking how they liked their night's lodging.

"Where's Jack?" asked Bertie.

"Being toasted by the fire, and made much of by every one, as such a hero deserves to be. Now get into the boat, and James will soon pull us home. Where is the *Victoria*?"

"Oh, I quite forgot her," said Bertie; "she must have been wrecked with the punt."

"Bertie, my boy, when will you be different? 'Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel.' So eager about the *Victoria* at one minute, that you fall into disobedience and danger for the pleasure of sailing her, and then when a new attraction comes, you leave her in the boat and never think of her again."

That was all Mr. Briggs said, but Jack's white and weary face taught Bertie a deeper lesson, and he is trying hard to conquer his natural weakness of character.

But what about Budge, the other hero of that memorable day? for Jack declares he could never have swam so far without him.

He is fast growing into a sober, full-sized dog, still objecting to the water, but justly proud of his new brass collar, which bears the date of his master's heroic deed, with the words "strong in purpose" inscribed below. E. M. W.

HINTS ON COLLECTING STAMPS.



THERE are about three thousand different sorts of stamps, English and foreign, and every year the number is increasing, or new kinds are being issued instead of the old ones; so there is scarcely a chance of collecting specimens of all the stamps that exist. But if you have five hundred, you will have done well; if you have a thousand, the book will be worth treasuring. Still, it is better to have even one hundred stamps, and to know all about them, than to have a couple of thousand boastfully counted in an album, and not to know what they mean. In stamp-collecting, as in everything else, there is wisdom in doing "a little and well."

As to the actual collecting, it is easy enough. They can be bought in packets or singly; they can be gathered among friends, sent by friends living abroad, or exchanged among schoolfellows, to

supply the stamps wanted by giving away those of which the collector has more than one. They can be gently taken off the adhering paper by dipping in water; but with rare stamps, or those which have a raised pattern, like the Portuguese, the best way of removing them from letters is to lay them on very wet flannel, with the stamp upwards kept dry; when the paper at the back is soaked, a few touches will bring it off. In a good stamp album there will be a list of the stamps belonging to the various countries, and ruled spaces for pasting the specimens in. But we maintain that an expensive album and a pocketful of money are not needed for foreign stamp collecting, and that the album might be filled and the pocket emptied, and the collection, being badly done, might be worth little or nothing to the girl or boy who made it.

The great thing is intelligence: to know all about the stamps as they are gathered one by one. Begin your collection, then, with all the different

sorts of English stamps, since England was the country that made kindly greetings cheap and easy for poor and rich. How many kinds of English stamps are there? "Penny, and half-penny," you will say, "twopenny, sixpenny, shilling." Yes, and a great many more. There are some you will be unable to get at. There are five-pound stamps, pound and ten shilling stamps: these are used in Civil Service examinations, and are a sort of receipt for the fee, the student affixing the stamp to his examination-paper. Then there are five-shilling, and three, and two-shilling stamps for postage; but you had better begin by trying to get off parcels and letters the shilling buff stamp, the grey sixpenny, blue-black fourpenny, the pink threepenny, the pretty blue twopenny-halfpenny, bricky twopenny, lavender penny, and pale green halfpenny stamps, with the halfpenny wrapper and envelope embossed stamp. Then get the various patterns now out of date. No stamps have changed so often as those of England. The very first were black and red-brown, and there was an old twopenny blue stamp. After these followed the penny red, then the penny pink, and among the others there were changes through all the colours of the rainbow.

About foreign stamps there is far more to be known. If you have a stamp of Mauritius, and do not know what head is on it, and have a vague sort of idea that Mauritius is a French possession in the north of South America, what good will there be in your stamp album, though you may pop in the Mauritius stamp at the right page, and have the most wonderful ones to glory in as well, even the very rarest of Nicaragua, the Philippines, the Sandwich Islands? But if you hunt out Mauritius in the atlas, and find it to be an island to the east of that immense island of Madagascar which lies eastward, where Southern Africa cleaves the ocean like a great wedge of a continent, and if you know that the head is to represent our own queen's dominion—that Mauritius, after belonging to the Dutch, and then to the French as "the Isle of France," took it into its head to belong to itself, and became a nest of pirates, whose ships attacked and robbed our ships going to India, and that after all this it came to the English Crown by treaty—then you have a right to paste in your stamp, and you know why there are English words on it.

You should know, too, what great man is represented on each of your United States' stamps, and why, for there the ruling President's portrait is not on the stamps, but instead, the portraits of former Presidents or of other great Americans. Do not, then, be content with noticing that the faces are different. Try to recognise them, and ask why they are called great, from Washington and Franklin

to Garfield. You will be fortunate if you get some of the Californian pony-express stamps, with the picture of the letter-carrier on a pony, with neck, legs, and tail all stretched in full gallop. Fortunate, too, will you be if you get hold of local stamps: that is, those only used for the letters circulating in one country or one district. A few local New York stamps are printed in gold. This is not the only example of metallic colour; you may find gilt stamps of Western Australia, and some of the old Sardinian stamps were printed in bronze. Other local New York stamps are marked with two upright bears—representative of an animal belonging to the country. The head of the sphynx and the pyramid on Egyptian stamps, the head of Mercury (the messenger of the gods in ancient Greek mythology), now on the Greek stamps and on some of the Austrian, the anchor and figure of Hope on the three-cornered stamps from the Cape of Good Hope, or the orange-tree and post-horns on the stamp of the Orange Free State in Africa, ought all to set the stamp-collector thinking until their various meaning are found out. The arms of the various nations, the eagles of France, Russia, Prussia, and Austria, will remind you of the old Roman eagles, the symbol of strength and dominion.

We have said there is no necessity for an album, though of course it is better to have one when you have a collection ready. The best way to collect at first is to get several pieces of white paper of the same size, and write at the top of each the name of the country which you are already able to represent. Then cut four little slits, for the four corners of each stamp to slip into, leaving each at first with the original paper sticking to the back. In this way the stamps can be kept, exchanged, or removed to give space for new ones, while if they be placed at once in an album you will hardly be able to take out a blackened specimen to put in a cleaner one, much less to remove a whole row when a new stamp is found that, being of the least value, should have gone in first. It ought to be a pleasant and tasteful task to make a neat and pretty album of loose sheets. When your collection is numbered by hundreds, it will be time enough to paste them with care into a printed album. But by that time be sure that you know what king is here and what queen is there; what worth a German thaler is, and an Indian anna; be ready to recognise the great dragon of China always wriggling over the Shanghai stamps, and understand why the crescent and star were chosen long ago by Mahomet, and still appear on the stamps of Turkey. This is collecting foreign stamps in the right way. Though you get but a dozen together, the old saying is always true—whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well.