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WORLD OF STAMPS

Men of music for your album

HUNGARY is issuing an attractive series of stamps showing the portraits of famous men and women. Some of them are Hungarians, but two recent additions to the series show men known the world over.

One honours Garibaldi, the Italian hero who, a century ago, helped to weld the different Italian States into a united kingdom. The other, pictured here, portrays Beethoven, the great composer.



The issue marks the opening of a season of concerts of Beethoven's music at the Hungarian town of Martonvasar.

From the United States comes news that two stamps are to be issued in October in honour of another famous musician, the Polish pianist Jan Paderewski.

After the First World War, Poland became an independent republic and Paderewski became the first President. His portrait

has already appeared on a Polish stamp, but the American stamps will be the first foreign issues to honour his memory.

MEANWHILE, a steady flow of stamps comes from the newly independent countries of Africa. Madagascar, the former French colony which became the Malagasy Republic on 26th June, has produced a long series featuring the island's industries.

Among them are the cultivation of cotton, pepper, and sisal, for rope-making. Four of the new stamps depict some of the beautiful butterflies to be found in the country.

Ghana, which became a Republic within the British Commonwealth on 1st July, issued four special stamps in celebration. One of them (pictured on the right) shows Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, who is Ghana's Prime Minister and also the country's first President.



FINALLY, from Czechoslovakia comes a stamp in honour of the International Red Cross. It shows a girl member of the Czechoslovak Red Cross move-

ment, holding in her hands a dove, the universal symbol of peace.



A READER who has just begun to collect stamps asked me recently what is meant by the "approvals" mentioned in many stamp dealers' advertisements. Perhaps other readers are puzzled by this, so let me explain what they are.

When you write to a dealer to ask for approvals, he will send you a booklet containing stamps, each marked with its price. You may keep the booklet for ten or fourteen days and during that time you can decide which stamps you would like to buy for your own collection.

Having taken out the stamps you have chosen, you then return the booklet containing the rest of the stamps, enclosing a postal order to pay for those you have kept.

Of course, you should tell your parents when you wish to write for approvals, and always mention in your letter the kind of stamps you prefer, or the countries in which you are most interested, so that the dealer knows what to send on approval.

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THE HOUSE OF BLUE DRAGONS

Continued from page 9

"That's what father would say. A perfectly natural explanation," Andrew mimicked their father. Sarah stifled a giggle. She was relieved to see that her brother was more his old self again. He had seemed so badly shaken when she had first joined him in the churchyard. It had been quite frightening.

"Are you going to tell father?" she asked.

"Do you think we should?"

She nodded. "Yes."
"Let's see what sort of a mood he's in. We'll have to choose our moment a bit carefully. Poor father's got a lot on his mind just now."

Worried about father

The faint shadow overhanging the vicarage, which they had both noticed on the evening of their arrival, had not grown any lighter in the past week. Both children knew enough of a clergyman's work to understand that taking over a new parish must involve a lot of extra business, and of course there was the school as well. But the school was closed now for the Summer holidays, so surely that did not count? And Mr. Hunt was not afraid of hard work. He had been looking forward to his duties at Midport.

Why, then, did he so often look worried and angry?

When they saw him before breakfast, at family prayers, the children exchanged warning glances. His face looked tired and drawn, as though he had not slept well. Later, at table, they noticed that their mother was watching him anxiously.

Andrew wondered if his father had been disturbed by the mysterious happenings during the night. He decided it was most unlikely. Only the children's bedrooms looked down on the churchyard. And if his father had heard noises or seen ghostly lights, he would have rushed out with a lantern in one hand and a stick in the other. Andrew had a great respect for his father's courage.

It would be better for the present, he decided, to let sleeping dogs lie. If he started worrying his father with tales of headless figures haunting the graveyard, it would only add to the general atmosphere of uneasiness.

They had just pushed back their chairs and said grace when Dora came in.

"Yes, Dora, you can clear now," said Mrs. Hunt.

"Yes'm. Please, though, there's old Bannister waiting at the door. Wants to see Parson."

"Has he found that key?" asked Mr. Hunt sharply.

"He's holding a key in his hand, sir," Dora agreed, piling her tray with crockery. "Something about the crypt, he said."

"Thank goodness. About time, too! Do you know, my dear," said Mr. Hunt, turning to his wife, "I haven't yet been able to get into the crypt of my own church? They say it hasn't been used for years. All the same, it's part of the church and it's part of my responsibility. The sexton, if you please, couldn't find the key! Really, these Midport people—"

Into the crypt

"Sh, dear!" said Mrs. Hunt, with a warning glance in Dora's direction. The children knew just what the glance meant. Their mother had impressed it upon them that a new parson and his family must not make enemies in the parish.

"Oh, well, he's found it now. Which is lucky! I warned him that if he didn't produce a key by this morning, I'd break the door down myself!"

"Well, don't keep him waiting, my dear."

"May we come and see the crypt, father?"

"Of course, Andy. You, too, if you like, Sarah. It may be very

musty and dusty after being shut up all these years."

They went out and greeted the sexton, a jolly-looking, red-faced old man, with two tufts of woolly white hair flanking a shiny bald head.

"Here you are, Parson! Told you I'd find it. All in good time. All in good time."

He led the way across the churchyard. How different it all looked, thought Andrew, in the golden sunshine of an August morning, with the blue Channel hung like a curtain in the background!

The crypt was entered through a little outside door, sunk below the general level and reached by a few steps down. They filed in, even the children feeling an instinct to duck their heads.

"H'm, some fine Gothic arches," said their father, peering round in the dim light. "Not as musty as I expected—or as dusty. Considering how long it is since it was used."

"Oh," said old Bannister hurriedly, looking virtuous. "I swept round a bit, first thing, afore I stepped over to the Parsonage. Nothing much to see, though. Same as I told you. Naught of interest."

Andrew would not have agreed with him. He lingered in the crypt, sniffing thoughtfully like a bloodhound. When he followed the others into the sunshine outside, his expression told Sarah that he had noticed something very interesting indeed.

To be continued

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