

Written for THE CANADIAN PHILATELIST.

GENERAL COLLECTING vs. SPECIALISM.

PART II.

BY J. BERNSTEIN, JR.

Good morning, friend subscriber; we meet again. Your most welcomed (by yourself) second paper of your explication of Specialism to hand, and perused with pleasure, not on account of its efficacy and its good reasoning, but, on the contrary, more owing to its erroneousness and tendency to insolence, which, accordingly, exposes the true character of its author. In my first part, I had only one point to contend with, *i.e.*, to prevent the multitude of the readers of this worthy journal from being led away by the idea of Mr. Subscriber's doctrine. Now, I have, in addition to the aforesaid, something else to say, which is nothing but a little healthy advice to Mr. S. In the first place, when you attempt a criticism upon a gentlemanly expressed argument, do, by all means, keep calm, for as soon as you do not you will make it an utter failure, as you have done your last. But, to return to my original point. I must confess that Mr. S. is far more long-sighted than I am, for I am unable, up to the present, to see the points that I have represented untruthfully in order to carry a point, although I think there are sufficient points in favor of my theory without resorting to the dishonorable means that Mr. S. accuses me of. But perhaps, as he is such a wonderful advocate of reform, he reads it between the lines, or that which is more probable, *does not read it anywhere in my criticism*. As to his putting me to task, as regards my statement that old issues generally rise, and not those of the present issues, I may say that I placed the *rule* before him, and not the exception. If he does not know, I must say that there are few rules that have no exceptions, and especially in this case, where the exceptions are so few and inconsistent. Then, again, I said that the rise in the older issues was not the cause of the progress of Specialism. Mr. S. finds fault because I do not class some new issues as also rising. Why, I only repeated his statement in his first part, with a little change, which reads: "*The increase of the former (specialism) is rapidly causing a steady advance of price in the older issues,*" etc. Now, pray, why does he not mention

the new issues? For a good reason, and he knows it, too. By the way, why does he always leave out the interesting matters? He says that it is on account of space. I am sure that the worthy editor of this journal would tender him all the space he requires for the good and welfare of Philately. But is it such? I do not think so. One reason is, that the expounding of Specialism leads the collector to turn to it, and in so doing, also unconsciously turns the science Philately into the hobby stamp-collecting—a fad which would not only tend to change the opinion that it now enjoys in the eyes of the world, but would also after a while come to nothing, as every toy is when its owner gets wearied with it. Do you think, then, that this is any welfare to Philately, Mr. S. and adherents of Specialism? Yes, I have said, and I say the same thing again, that Specialism is not a promoter of the principles of Philately, but is rather to its detriment. By the way, looking over some old philatelic literature, I noticed in one of our American magazines a leading contribution by one of America's greatest philatelic writers, Mr. E. P. Newcomer, who, like myself, does his noblest in keeping up Philately and general collecting. In the course of his article, he narrates an opinion on this subject from Lieut. P. J. Thorpe, of England, a good authority, who says in a leading Philatelic magazine:

"But for the very same reason that it is considered judicious to throw a wet blanket over the practice of general collecting, on the score that a complete collection is *unattainable*, so also do I consider limited collecting *unadvisable*, on the ground that after a time such a collection becomes possessed of almost every specimen procurable—eccentricities excepted—and then his collecting practically ceases, his enthusiasm wanes, and, in the majority of cases, he ends by selling his treasures. Not only this, but moving in a narrow groove, he loses touch with all other branches of Philately, *gathers no knowledge of the issues of other countries*, and, except so far as it relates to his own 'Tom Tiddler's ground,' philatelic literature has but a passing interest for him."

There are scores of the same views coming from our neighbors across the border, and in our midst, in Canada, are voices to the same effect. Shall their opinions be neglected, for the sake of radicalism? And if Mr. S.'s theory, that I must have been like the hero in Bellamy's "Looking Backward" be cor-