

## Philatelic Societies and their Use.

BY THEODORE SIDDALL.

There have been a number of articles written, lately, giving advice as to the formation of philatelic societies. These societies, for the first few months while the novelty lasts, are of some benefit to their members; but after that time interest in them is loosened and their meetings drag along like a horse-car going up hill; and the members, finding nothing to interest them there, stay away, and then the society goes to the bow-wows.

There is not so very much to say about philately after all. There is a great deal of "blowing" done, arguing for and against, but very little new matter is brought up, and what is old is talked dry. Those who argue that philately is a science ought to bring out a fact or so occasionally. In the older sciences there is always something new going on, or news to talk about. Again, they argue that philately teaches history, geography, languages, etc., etc., but in papers edited by the upholders of the "science" howl, we do not find that they put into practice their pet doctrines—no historical items, except perhaps that perennial chesnut about the inventor of postage stamps, or the first postal service.

I think the aim of philatelic societies and philatelic papers ought to be to instruct and interest those who now collect stamps, as well as to induce outsiders to take up the hobby. The meetings of societies could be made very interesting by discussions upon living topics, or contemporary history, without having too much "stamp" in it—for all who ever tried will agree with me when I say it is decidedly a dry job to be forever licking stamps. Societies could in many ways be more attractive to outsiders, who, when they see the charm of collecting stamps, would take it up and make good and useful members of the society, and at the same time still further spread stamp collecting—which last is, or should be, the object of all right minded philatelists.

This is not a merely theoretical article but is written by one who knows something about the needs of philatelic societies. Some may object to this introduction of outside subjects as tending to draw off interest from stamp collecting, and also as being out of place in a stamp society—in answer to which I would say, that if they cannot make their meetings interesting with stamps alone, and want to keep their society alive, they will suffer a disappointment. As I said above, there is little to be said about stamps, and it has been nearly all said, and about the best way to do it is for a number of collectors to get up a society having an aim, or joint object, of promoting stamp collecting, then make meetings interesting to outsiders, and they will most likely follow the example of the collectors who should be in the majority, and take up the collection of stamps.—*Canadian Philatelist.*

### Current Opinion.

*From Stamp Collector's Journal.*

About ten years ago, the stamp mania proper showed signs of waning. Since then stamp collecting has been somewhat dormant; enthusiasts and numerous Philatelic Societies have gone on steadily, but the gigantic craze, which seized hold of boys in every part of the world, which gave rise to Stamp Collecting Journals without number, and sent the prices of very ordinary specimens to a premium, has vanished. Of the merits of stamp collecting as a pursuit, it would be somewhat difficult to speak. Yet, when we consider that men learned in law, Members of Parliament, financiers, diplomatists, and eminent literary men have adopted the pastime, it must be confessed that there is more in it than seen by the unphilatelic eye. The extent of the stamp collecting world is not generally known. There is a Society, meeting at certain intervals in the rooms of one of the best known of Her Majesty's Q C's, which has its correspondents in every civilised land.