

The Canadian Philatelist.

PUBLISHED MONTHLY

IN THE INTEREST OF STAMP COLLECTING.

VOL. II. No. 9.

LONDON, MAY 25, 1893.

WHOLE NO. 21

Written for THE CANADIAN PHILATELIST.

PROCRASTINATION IS THE THIEF OF TIME.

BY LEWIS G. QUACKENBUSH.

ERHAPS I owe an apology to the readers of this magazine for penning a supposedly philatelic article whose subject and treatment smack more of a moral treatise or a sermon than of a strictly philatelic essay. But in these days of stamp journals in which postage stamps are seldom or never the subject on which the space writer employs his brilliant pen, I may perhaps be excused by the lenient public, who ought by this time to know that the wretched journalist called upon to compose a new and original article on some phase of Philately every week, a new subject for thought is as difficult to find as the proverbial needle in the haystack.

Procrastination, an unwieldy word and a jawbreaker, which nevertheless describes tedious and unnecessary delay better than any word in the English language, is common enough among all classes and ranks of men, but it has reached its highest development in the hands of certain American philatelists, including the three great classes: collectors, dealers and publishers. Speaking from personal experience, I have learned my greatest lessons in procrastination from the philatelic publishers; but the publishers inform me that most of the dealers, from whom they derive the largest share of their receipts, seem to require anywhere from 30 to 365 "days of grace" before remitting payment for a 5c. ad., and the dealers, in their turn, wail in accents loud and mournful that they do not expect the returns from the last lot of approval sheets sent out to begin to come in much before the beginning of the next century, if at all.

Promptness is a word whose value has yet to be appreciated by many business houses in larger spheres than that of philately, but it seems to me that in sales involving so comparatively small amounts of money as most philatelic transactions, there is no reason why prompt payment of all debts should be not only expected but exacted. Hardly a month passes that we do not notice some stamp paper jogging up its recent advertisers. One editor of national reputation, whose word can be relied upon, recently stated in his journal that out of \$100 worth of advertising bills sent out a month before to supposedly reliable dealers, only about \$5 worth had been paid up to date. Such slack business methods are a disgrace to the stamp dealers of America. We do not hear so much as to the trouble dealers have in securing payment for stamps sent out on approval, but doubtless collectors are not as prompt as they should be in making returns on approval selections.

Those of us who contribute to the philatelic press attestify to the ease with which the overburdened

editorial mind forgets all about the promise to "remit immediately upon publication," and only sends the much needed cash after a half dozen mild reminders from the author. All writers, also, are familiar with that aged chestnut much used by editors ever since Noah's time:—"Please pardon delay, as I have been very busy." In justice to our philatelic editors, toward whom my feelings are friendly, (for have I not still many bales of MS. which must be sold) it is as well to state that the disease of procrastination attacks almost all editors, both great and small, whether they are presiding over the destinies of a great daily, or losing ten dollars per month by the publication of a mediocre stamp journal. It is, in fact, an editorial prerogative, and I congratulate myself that the editors with whom my lot is cast are not so experienced and cold-blooded "procrastinators" as their brethren of the newspaper and periodical press.

At one time in my career I held a position as collector for a gas company, and at that time I would have sworn that several gentlemen who had shown great talent and ingenuity in evading the payment of their gas bills, could not be excelled as successful "procrastinators" by any two-legged thing on the face of the earth. But since I have forsaken gas-bill collecting and taken up stamp collecting, I find that these versatile dead beats cannot hold a candle to some of my correspondents. The business world does not tolerate delay in answering letters, and it seems to me that philatelists ought to appreciate what an annoyance a delay often causes to a correspondent.

There are few better advertisements for the stamp dealer than a reputation for promptness—promptness not only in filling orders, but also in paying bills. It is not always the small dealers, either, who are slow in paying up. Large firms, who it would be supposed might gladden the heart of the editor by paying in advance or at least by remitting promptly on receiving an advertising bill, are about as slow pay as the \$25 school boy dealer. It seems to be one of the gravest weaknesses of human nature to put off till tomorrow what should be done to-day. It is, of course, natural that philatelists should share this failing in common with all mankind, but it does seem as though some of our brethren are doing rather more than their share of the general procrastination.

I can hardly hope that this brief sketch will move every reader who is in arrears with his milkman, his grocer, his stamp dealer, or his philatelic society, to pay up without further delay, but I do hope that it will cause some delinquents to realize the injustice of their conduct, since they are both unjust to their own manhood and unjust to the one who has accommodated them with credit. The golden age has not yet arrived, nor is it even on the way as far as can be ascertained, but all can do a great deal to help it along, and as it is to philatelists that I am speaking, I would exhort them to be considerate of their brother philatelists. Cypriacs may tell us that the golden rule, "To do unto others as ye would that they would do unto