

BUILD UP YOUR LIBRARY.

BY ROY F. GREENE.

SITTING *tete-a-tete* with a philatelic friend last evening, I was brought to think forcibly of the benefits of a library, in our profession (or pastime as you prefer) as in any other.

My friend had called at my home with a view of talking over late happenings in philately's ranks, and speculating as to what the future had in store for us as collectors. After drawing ourselves nearer the welcome grate in my cosy little library, my friend glanced at a small volume placed conspicuously on my study table. "What's this old fellow? Ella Wheeler's 'Poems of Passion' likely, or Carleton's 'Farm Ballads,' eh?" By this time he had seized it and read *The Stamp*, (Denver), Vol. 1 & 2, (1886-87). It was a volume which I had just received from the book-binder's, and was the first two volumes of that excellent little Journal which ran its life of thirty-eight months and sank into oblivion. I had completed my volumes of it and sent them to the bindery, and as a result it had come forth a pretty ornament and a pleasant companion at one and the same time.

Of course my friend had to look through the volume, and had I been less enthusiastic on the necessity of every philatelist having a philatelic library of his own and keeping it for reference and study, I might have taken offense at my friend's conduct, for he scarcely glanced up from the volume all evening. After apparently reaching a sleepy stage in the proceedings, he leaned back in the chair, yawned and said: "Why old fellow, this is deucedly interesting." I made no response, but could you have seen the blush of pride suffuse my modest countenance you would all straightway set about getting you a start for a library.

Resuming the perusal of his volume, and I, reading a current issue of a leading magazine, utter silence was the result of our evening's sociability for an hour longer. At last, laying the volume aside, he began to question me as to how I obtained the numbers which when completed made such interesting reading. I told him how I had been for a year or more accumulating papers and magazines, retaining one copy of each and trading my duplicates with other collectors, securing something I needed and supplying them in return with a missing number in their files, and so on *ad infinitum*.

"The result is I have completed many files and have sent them to the binders as soon as completed, and now have a number of these volumes, one of which you seemed to find so interesting. Besides, I have several hundred volumes in process of completion, some of them lacking but one number, but it is more difficult to obtain that one number than the other eleven which goes towards completing the volume."

"And why this scarcity of certain numbers?" queried my patient listener. "I have often wondered that myself," I answered. "I have in many cases attributed it to a large share of a certain issue being mailed to foreign addresses, and oftentimes I surmise the publisher has mailed to lists furnished to him, of persons who were not interested in the pursuit and would burn or otherwise destroy the papers. In this way whole editions would be destroyed. Then again perchance a small edition would be issued for one month or more and the supply would not meet the demand. Very few philatelic journals issue over one thousand to fifteen hundred copies, and as there are from five to eight hundred promising young libraries in the United States and Canada to-day, all of which are

nearing completion, it is easy for to see where a good portion of each edition has gone to."

Having become breathless, I stopped, and gave my friend another chance.

"And is it very expensive, the accumulation of the various numbers?"

"No, it has not been in my case. I have made slight inroads on my pocket-book, having secured most of them by exchanging. The binding costs a neat little sum, but when one considers the happy hours to be spent in studying it, the valuable references there to be found, and then it will be a source of joy and comfort for years to come, even that cost seems slight."

In the case of many of my volumes which consisted of but three or four numbers each, all that had ever been issued, which though valuable in themselves, their small size, or rather thickness, would make them rather awkward in binding, and in fact hardly paid, so I have bound these in a homemade way between pasteboards which I have lettered nicely by hand and pasted a few brightly colored stamps in corners or in the centre or arranged in diamonds or squares to produce artistic effect and serve to please the eye. So much for my library."

"Well, I'll admit it is quite an undertaking," said my friend, "and though I love to read philatelic literature I fear it would exhaust my patience to commence the building up of a library which might require years to complete. But I must bid you good night. But by the way, old fellow, can I borrow that volume of the *Stamp*? I became interested in Philo's 'Bluffton Stamp Society', and would like to finish it. I assure you I will take the best care of it."

"Certainly, you are welcome to enjoy the contents of that volume as I have enjoyed, and when you have finished it I trust that Vol. 3 & 4, which I have sent to the binders, may be ready for your perusal, also think over this library business and decide whether you want to try the undertaking or not. I assure you it is not arduous or even tedious. There's a fascination as there is about everything connected with philately, and that leads you on. Your greatest objection, I believe, was that you doubted whether your patience would hold out till you had completed your library. Don't flatter yourself that you can ever complete your library, for although our hobby is young, it would be impossible to collect together everything that has been printed pertaining to it."

Content yourself with what you can secure and "don't complain because it's little," and above all don't let your library interfere with your album."

Never let the thought wedge itself into your head, drop your album for the time being until you complete your library. I am as devoted to philatelic literature as anyone in this broad land, but I've never given it the attention I have my album and contents, for it does not deserve it. They go hand-in-hand and should not be separated, but of the two—we'll you know a "double eagle" of American coinage is worth more than any treatise on Numismatics."

By this time my friend had risen to go, and as he left me at the door he promised to call in one week.

He did so. Returned Vol. 1 & 2 of *The Stamp*, and took home with him Vol. 3 & 4, and before he left me he told me that he had hunted up over a hundred old papers devoted to philately, and had laid the foundation to his library.

I congratulated him and donated a few of my duplicates towards the good cause.

There's a meaning to this story which is by no means concealed, but for fear you'll not grasp it I'll express it more explicitly: *Build up your library.*