

Monsieur cannot obtain all these surcharge varieties, he will not hesitate to make them. Can he not easily obtain type and ink at the nearest printer's? and is it not with him an easy matter for he himself to surcharge the coveted varieties? If you are disposed to hand our friend a few francs, he will gladly and cheerfully show you his outfit, and show you how to obtain unobtainable varieties without money and without price. So interested is he in his specialty, that he will show you how to prove a forgery unquestionably genuine, or, on the other hand, how to convert new-forged issues at a moment's notice, and show beyond question that they were issued by government authority. Such is the French specialist.—Taking the train at Paris, it is but a short journey to the German capital, Berlin: here we find the most enthusiastic specialists without number, *all* (?) of whom have the finest and most complete collection of German stamps in the world. All their collections are composed purely of Germany and the German States. What is there in the outside world worthy of notice? Nothing at all! All outside is blank to our German friends. So enraptured are they with their "Faderland" that nothing outside has any attraction for the German specialist, unless it be some rare German State in the collection of some wealthy general collector, and to obtain this he is willing to devote his valuable time in order to procure it lest it be polluted by the touch of some foreign collection. Every collector in Berlin, it is strange to say, has a better collection than any other specialist in the city. The *great* (?) German dealers have also gone solely into German stamps, which they *all* can sell cheaper than the cheapest rival dealer in Berlin. German collectors are very honest. They would not think of forging a surcharge on a German stamp as their French brother does. If they lack certain varieties, they are capital engravers, excellent printers, for they can mix ink to perfection, and they are excellent judges of paper. With the above hereditary qualities, the German can manufacture, wholesale or retail, the rarest of German stamps, used or unused, as his fancy may desire. *The world over* there are specialists, and in nearly every case we find them taking their national country as their specialty. Specialism causes advances in the prices of the older issues of every country. Specialism is the growing custom of to-day among collectors.

Before closing, I must beg my French and German friends to take no offence at the above references, for, candidly, some of the most honest, painstaking and ardent specialists I have ever met are the German and French collectors. I only make the above reference to show how enthusiastic they are.

Thanking the editor for having allowed me to encroach on his valuable space, I will close, trusting at some future time to again have the honor of addressing you.

PHILATELIA.

(*A Parody Adapted to Ware's "Zenobia"*)

BY L. H. BENTON.

I am charged with being a stamp collector. The charge is true, and I glory in its truth. Who ever acquired a magnificent collection of stamps, proofs, or essays, who was not a stamp-collector? The rich collector is not more ambitious than the poor collector. It is but in another way. All magnificence is born of the pocket book. Let the pocket book be a large one and who shall blame it? I confess, I did once aspire to be the owner of not only a large collection but a fine one. That I am. I now aspire to remain so. Is it not a worthy ambition? Does it not become a follower of Philatelia of Philatelicus? My collection is admired by you all for what it now is. You would not it should have been less. But why pause here? Is so much ambition praise worthy, and more, criminal? Is it fixed by finance that the limits of this collection should be ten thousand stamps on the one hand, and twenty thousand dollars and no more on the other? Are not unlimited numbers and unrestricted finances more appropriate ends? Or hath the extent of the collection no fixed limit, but is in proportion to the avoirdupois and dimensions of the owner's pocket book? Mr. Richman has a magnificent collection. Let Mr. Poorman possess one also. Not that the catalogue price guides this and no more. My finances prospering, and I swear not that Mr. Richman shall surpass me in magnificence, or Mr. Moneybags in number. Philatelicus was right—I would that all the stamps were mine. I feel within the will and the power to take care of them, were it so.

Are not stamp collectors happy? I look upon the past and the present, upon the greater and lesser collectors, and ask nor fear the