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NEW YORK NOTES.

Cuba is the talk of the Universe at present, but it has not materially advanced the price of this Island's stamps, and reports that current issues will become scarce are untrue. We might however look for a provincial government issue in the near future, that is to say if the insurgents are victorious. But don't hold your Cuban stamps for higher prices. One dealer here claims to have a barrel of the latest issue. We haven't seen them.

The Collectors' Club is an assured success, and quite a few persons have joined in the last two weeks. The Club house is situated on Fourth Ave. opposite Madison Square Garden and is, therefore, very centrally located. Dues are nominal and it is worth while for an enthusiastic philatelist to become a member.

Although various persons have tried to form a New York and Brooklyn branch of the P. S. of A. their efforts have been in vain, and neither that society nor the S. of P. can boast of a branch here. It seems that some people are very much prejudiced against these societies, and although willing to join them do not care to become members of a branch.

The publishers of the International Album expect to have a large sale among younger collectors, but my opinion is that a beginner should know something about watermarks, etc., and if he is at all ambitious he will find out and will then have to purchase an old album, or a blank one. If the beginner is not taught, philately will take a backward step or two.

Madrid, Spain, is the latest city to use the bicycle for postal facilities, an American firm having just sent over a trial shipment. The English Government is open to bids for 2,000 wheels to be used in the P. O. department.

Dealers are trying to unload their stock of Columbian stamps, notably the 3¢ which can be purchased unused most anywhere at considerable off face value.

The latest is that Scott's Catalogue will on Jan. 1st. But we have heard this statement before. Be patient.

SWERN.

SOME IDEAS ABOUT STAMP COLLECTING.

My dear reader, I am not going to sketch before your eye the old lady that gathered stamps with a view of securing a place in some old people's home, or the English collector who wanted only cancelled stamps in his collection, even when he knew that the Abyssinian stamps in his collection were obliterated through the kindly accommodation of his rural postmaster, not two miles from his home. On the contrary I shall endeavor to give you some of my own thoughts on this delightful pastime, and if you are an advanced collector, or even a specialist, I am sure that some of my ideas will appear quite funny, perhaps even silly, to you.

Is philately a science? That question, brought before us some years ago hundreds of times, has been answered by very good people, both in the affirmative and in the negative, and with the best of reasons.

Philately undoubtedly is a science with some people who take delight in searching for the minutest details, for everything connected with stamps, however remotely, their use and their manufacture. But for pity's sake do not demand from every stamp collector that he shall treat his hobby scientifically. Some people have no use for any science whatever, and there are few people who really want science mixed with their pleasures. A long time before philately was treated as a science, it was a pleasure for many. Botany is a science without doubt; but who will deny that a greater amount of keen delight and healthful pleasure is derived from the millions of large and small flower gardens by their unscientific owners than from the far-reaching discoveries in plant life by learned professors?

Let us, my friends, not spoil the real fun that is in stamp collecting generally, by the introduction of too much scientific principles into our collections. If you tell a boy that a collection, without regard to watermarks, perforations, soft porous and hard brittle paper, is not worth having, and if that boy then believes you,

what will be the consequence? In ninety nine cases out of a hundred, that boy will throw up collecting entirely, because it is too much like hard work. And he is right! He wants no hard work — he wants pleasure and amusement out of his collection. I hope that boy will not believe you, for after all you are wrong yourself! Did not you tell me that it is altogether impossible for you to treat more than a very small group of countries in the highly scientific way that you have chosen? What a poor, insignificant picture does your special collection, with its endless varieties and sub-varieties, of this little group of countries, present, compared with a fairly representative collection of the whole world.

A very rich man built himself a magnificent home, grand in every respect. The same man was also an enthusiastic stamp collector, and gathered together a marvelous collection, you might say, a specialist's collection, in every single country. He then invited three friends that were also stamp collectors, but not rich, to look at his house and at his collection, and they admired both very much. One year afterwards the three friends met again and began talking. Said the first: "After I had seen our friend's house, I did not like mine any more, and I sold it and began building a new one, just as fine as his. I have finished the hall, mosaic floor covered with costly rugs, walls of onyx, and the finest brass work; but now I find my funds are entirely exhausted, and I really do not know what to do, because I cannot sleep, and cook, and live in that magnificent hall. I think I shall have to sell my stamp collection to build a little shanty near that hall where I can live."

"O, you are a fool," said the second. "I have not done anything of the kind, only I did not like my stamp collection after I saw his, and I sold it and collected only United States, and made a fine show in that country; but now that the new advance sheets are out, I hardly think I can follow with half of the Newspaper and Department stamps on two or three different papers. I think I will sell my house in order to get these high-priced gems and make my collection complete."