

The First prize Article.

Stamps and Stamp Collecting.

By JOHN REGINALD HOOPER.

Continued from last month.

The whole civilized world once looked upon stamp collecting as a "crazy school-boy whim." Now it is a science participated in for pleasure and profit by some of the greatest and most enlightened people on the globe. Those who denounced it saw the day when they would have liked to crawl into a knot-hole and pull the hole in after themselves. I have seen the scoffer and derider of twenty-five years ago "come in under the roof" after years of indecision. Stamp collecting waxed strong and flourished in the land.

Then the philatelic papers and societies sprang up. I remember my astonishment, twenty odd years ago, when I was told and actually seen men-collectors. To me it had all been a "boy's dream." The name given to it "stamp craze," died out, and in its place sprang up the more euphonious title of "philately." In a paper partly devoted to stamps and partly to coins, which the writer published in 1877—20 years ago—I advised the hobby or pursuit of stamp-collecting to be named "timbroy philly," but, after a lengthy discussion both in England and America, "Philately" won the day! And I am not sorry.

Many collect for profit, they are dealers. Some collect for pleasure or amusement, they are collectors. Others collect for the valuable lessons learnt, and for the study as well as the pastime, they are philatelists. Now, when a writer says something I want to know first, his experience, on that alone depends the weight we must give his advice. I started actively in 1869 and have been interested in stamp-collecting ever since. In that time I

have published two monthly papers, in societies galore, and generally floated up and down with the tide year after year. The question ahead of me in nine cases out of ten is, "What should I collect?" A. says make a specialty of U.S. revenues; B. says take B.N.A. stamps. C. says Great Britain and her Colonies are the best, and so on. Don't listen to such rubbish. Take a veteran's advice:--start collecting in a general way and in time your own inclination will shape itself. That's the answer. Don't do anything you will regret in after years. Get an album and start a collection of any and all kinds you can get. Take an agency, if you have no means of your own. Every dollar's worth of stamps that you sell you can select another dollar's worth for your own album.

I know a young collector attending one of the colleges who receives during the school season a lot of sheets weekly. He goes over them, selects what he wants, then sells to his friends until he has enough to pay for all taken. Don't try to be a dealer with a small stock, there are enough already. And don't start a paper unless you have money to throw away. Support those already in the field.

If you get tired of stamps, don't sell them. Put them by-- because you will want them again sure. Never mind the bicycle craze or the gold boom. They all right-- but they have not crossed the Rubicon yet, whilst Philately has. You are in elysian fields, and rest assured all you invest in stamps wisely will not be lost. Where they go down in one value one peg they go up two in another.

But their is something growing upon Philately that mars the good feelings and eats like a canker-worm into the bond of mutual friendships established by the stamp associations. It is stamp politics. It is becoming common to see our philatelic press teeming with charges and abuse. Whether it is deserved or not, let every philatelist's motto be:--

..Confound their politics.
Frustrate their knavish tricks."