

SHALL WE BE COLLECTORS OR
PHILATELISTS.

It is by experiment that all knowledge is gained. Our theories are very good and often lead us to useful experiments by which we learn much; but after all, it is from the experiment, and not from the theory, that we learn. Most of us have heard of the very learned discussion which took place among some wise men of old, on the question of "Why it was that a live fish placed in a tub of water would occupy no space, while a dead fish placed in a tub would run the water over." The men grew eloquent on both sides, until finally one suggested that they experiment with a tub of water and the fish, when it was found that a fish alive or dead occupied the same amount of space. We must see in our journals as to whether philately is a science or not. Experience might lead us to better conclusion on the subject. Some contend that it is only a pleasant way to pass away spare time, but as it affords a great deal of pleasure to a great many it should be encouraged. At the other extreme are those who claim that we can learn almost anything from our stamps. Perhaps a little actual experience may help to solve the question. In one of our western cities where many of the streets are paved with asphalt, among the questions asked at the examination in the High School was, "from where does the asphaltum with which our streets are paved come?" The scholars had not studied the the sub-

ject and it was put in as a test of general information. Most of the pupils failed on it entirely, but one answered it correctly, and it was interesting, a few days later, to hear him tell of how he had gained his information on the subject. It was substance this: At a meeting of the Philatelic Society a short time before in looking over the U. S. Stamps, it was noted that only one naval officer—Perry, had ever had the honor of being placed on one of the stamps, and they studied the question of why he was there. In doing so, they learned a great deal about the battle of Lake Erie, and the famous message which Commodore Perry sent to Washington at its close. They then followed his career until they found him landing at Port Spain on the Island of Trinidad, one of the West Indies, where he was seized with the yellow fever and died. This led to the studying of the island and that wonderful lake asphaltum. So from the study of this stamp, this boy had learned much of history and geography, and had the satisfaction of using it in a practical way in improving his standing in his class. There are many other stamps of our own and other countries which would develop as interesting a line of study. We may learn not only history and geography, but much of art, printing, engraving, and the different colors directly, and there is almost no end to the auxiliary studies. Some one will suggest at this point that if we take up almost any subject and follow it in this way it will furnish much information, but it will be by study and we should use our stamps as a recreation. Just here is where the difference appears between being simply a collector or a true philatelist, and each one must decide the question: which will you be? —Era.