

STRAY PENCILINGS.

WALTER A. WITHEW.

Mr. W. L. Richards, of the Standard Oil Co., New York, tells me that he has a curious oddity, the only one of which I have heard. It is the five cents, 1857, ornaments removed, imperforate, with wide margins. It is probably from a sheet that through an error escaped perforating.

The Columbian stamps are plentiful at the present time. Everyone is unloading, and as these stamps can be secured at a moderate price, the shrewd speculator is buying up all that are offered, and prices will soon advance as soon as the supply in the collectors' hands is exhausted.

There are some dealers and collectors who still cling to the perforated hinge, and the stamp clings to the hinge, or *vice versa*, in fact closer than a poor nephew to a rich uncle. Have you ever noticed a collector transferring his stamps to a new album when the perforated hinge is used?

Roy F. Greene is a busy man these days. His duty as Exchange Superintendent of the Philatelic Sons of America take up a great deal of his time, and with his approval sheet dealing he has but little time for correspondence and writing, as is evidenced by the very few articles appearing in our magazines under his familiar name.

The members of the California Philatelic Press Club are gentlemen who take philately in the right light. The articles appearing in their magazine, *The Philatelic Californian*, are almost all scientific, and always strictly original. Would that there were more collectors possessing the same enterprise.

Many collectors have written me, asking if I had an interest in *The Canadian Journal of Philately*, doubtless because of a number of my articles appearing therein. In reply I would say that my interest in this magazine was entirely as a contributor. It is a pity that a magazine of this standard could not be maintained, though the colored plates could have been omitted, reducing the cost considerably, and the plates have been printed in black, especially as there was considerable difficulty in securing the correct shades.

Written for THE CANADIAN PHILATELIST.

THE NEXT STEP.

BY ROY F. GREENE.

It cannot be doubted that the philatelic press has been, more or less, unjustly criticised by would be reformers; this omnipresent class who are always promoting plans to get their neighbors out of the mud while they remain unconsciously in the mire. And it has been with mingled feelings of pity and amusement that I have seen writers rush to the fore with suggestions on how to elevate the philatelic press, and have never put their plans into execution themselves.

For months the time-worn subject of a higher class of Philatelic literature has agitated the minds

of these chronic reformers, and possibly it may have had one desired effect, for one who keeps pace with the journalistic progress in philatelic lines cannot, even though he be a pessimist of a pronounced type, but acknowledge that the standard of philatelic literature has steadily advanced in the past year or two, and more and more we see the products of polished minds; while the puerile attempts at philatelic writing, so commonly met with a few years ago, are now, to a greater or less degree, conspicuous by their absence.

And so I have arrived at the conclusion that the literature of our hobby is, if not quite *par excellence*, at least so far advanced that we are doing a great injustice to ourselves and the army of indefatigable writers when we urge greater effort along this line.

The literature of to-day, and of course I now refer to philately, is not to be despised. I am sure that it will compare favorably with that of kindred hobbies. Several writers, who honor the philatelic press more than themselves, by their contributions are to-day winning laurels for themselves in wider fields, and we may have them with us but a short time. Of course we have every reason to believe that their successors will acquit themselves as creditably as those who are soon to deliver their valedictory to philatelic journalism and the salaries to the broader fields of fiction and poetry in the world of letters.

"The proper study of mankind is man," and the proper study of journalism is journals. To have a man suggest and recommend innovations in philatelic journalism, who has had no experience in this direction, and deals only with the theoretical principles, without one whit of practical knowledge, is a grotesque and amusing sight, yet one which is not unfamiliar.

To me it seems that there is one step to be taken ere our philatelic journals reach that stage of progress where we may be content to allow them to pursue the even tenor of their ways without continually being obliged to listen to advice from the would-be reformers. There are a few journals, even now, progressing on the line to which I refer.

The needed reform is in the line of illustrations. The ordinary stamp journal could be much improved by pen-sketches or photo-engravings, and I am sure such a departure would be warmly welcomed. Scarcely an article which is set in type by the philatelic publisher but would be made more clear and explicit if accompanied by sketches or photo-views.

At one time, in the not far distant past, such a course required a considerable outlay of money, if satisfactory work could be expected, but at the present day the cuts can be made cheaply and quickly. And with a few good pen-and-ink artists in our journalistic ranks the reading public would soon see a new era dawn in philatelic journalism.

The average stamp paper is printed on a good quality of paper and this would make the task of creditably illustrating the magazine a pleasant one. That there are in our ranks those who are inclined towards sketching with pen or pencil seems conclusive to me, and I hope to see them advance to the fore and ally themselves with those who have the advancement of philatelic journalism so much at heart; that the artist and editor may go hand in hand and force the press of our hobby to take, what seems to me to be, the next step.