

Written for the CANADIAN PHILATELIST.

A PHILATELIST'S "LOOKING BACK- WARD."

A FANTASY.

BY NEMO.

"It is now the year 1942 when I look back to my first passion of stamp collecting, my initial adherence to Philately, and my incipient career of cultivating and tilling my future as an advocate and defender of our noble and common cause. It is with not a particle of regret that I glance back to that memorable period just half a century ago when I was blessed with the first vision of the elements and ingredients of Philately's developments, and was glorified with the first view of the faculty and potentiality of stamp collecting in its reality as a pleasure-afforder, comforter, and trainer and cultivator of the mental, and perchance the moral, systems. It is not without gratitude that I now turn to that eventful date, from which my real pleasure and happiness in the Philatelic world records. But what is more extraordinary and interesting than the initiality of the culture is the progress, advancement and promotion of the same, and the magnanimity of the rapid strides it has made, step by step, during the epoch covering the grounds of the last fifty anniversaries within my memory. It has progressed with the progress of civilization, has advanced with the advancement of age, and has been promoted with the promotion of enlightenment of a more modern century. It has grown from infancy to mature age and from childhood to manhood. Such is, in general, the distinction between stamp collecting as it was in 1892 and Philately as it is in 1942. But as to particulars of the grand advancement it can be told, and yet would not form a very small fragment of the reality. I cannot but look back to that time, which now seems to me a time of barbarism in Philately's reign, without being reminded of the fair and yet ignoble title of *CRANK* adorning my name and fame, and which displays a more quaint and remarkable aspect when contrasted now with the much honor-implying appellation and dignity of *PHILATELIST*, a distinction not less becoming than many of the other three score and ten titles of honor, distinction, nobility, and even royalty. I vividly recollect the accompaniment of scoffing and derision, with outward sentiments of esteem from the more intelligent and reasonable specimens of mankind at that date, and have inflexible reasons to remember the amalgamation of extrinsic and apparent appreciation with intrinsic and inherent ridicule and satire from not less equitable personages. And how much more observable it is when placed in contrariety with the very unassuming and unpretensive manner now so familiar to me, from both intelligent or unintelligent, opulent or indigent, master or servant. Thus far is conformable of the transfiguration of Philately as far as publicity, outside its limits, is concerned. But now I turn to the spacious territory occupied by Philately and review the modern advancements effected during the periodical jubilee since my enlightenment.

Socially, the promotion extends to far past the average. I have a faint remembrance of an agitation, the initiality of which prolongs to my own incipency as a collector. It was a perturbation of collectors, having for its aim the then termed radical notion of social union in the ranks of Philatelists of

our fair realm. It was a controversy—nay, even an acrimonious contention, which, in the more modern period of existence, would have been immediately and unanimously sustained, but which, nevertheless, in the then obscure age, was greeted with intrepid and ardent inconsistency and repugnance by an illiterate multitudinous contestant, and which required the most skilful, toilsome, striving and strenuous exertion of the more intelligent agitating minority. However, although battling a cogent opposition, their efforts were finally rewarded with a gratification of their aspiration, in that innumerable and otherwise ineffectual organizations were formally joined in union with the most valid ties of coalescence under one gubernatorial sway, not, however, without dissatisfaction and discontent. But even they, who had prided themselves with the fruits of their laborious endeavors, did not for a moment foresee to what general satisfactory consequences their course would tend to lead. They did not for an instant divine that in this enlightened period their course would be initiative and predominant. But such is the fact. Twenty-five eventful anniversaries have appeared and disappeared when this first social union in North America generated in the result that a similar production and enactment occurred among the innumerable collectors of Europe, and which a brief time ago resulted in the harmonious concurrence of the myriads of collectors of the entire Philatelic world, who united in the perfect unity of our common cause. Thus, that at present a body then disunited and far asunder, form a coalescent community, who though disjoined personally, are yet united in concord and uniformity of common causes and principles. But Philately has not only conquered a general social union, but has also subjugated impartial and unconcerned harmony, and has vanquished superciliousness, superiority and prevalence, such as had long characterized a large part of the abstinent and withholders from the ranks of Philately at that date, in that, at the present, royalty nobility, clergy, laity, peasantry, yeomanry and every variety of rank, position or situation, are all united upon one cause, and possess their full and adequate share of Philately's guardianship, patronage and benevolence. Such is the advancement of Philately during the last jubilee as regards social, individual and progressive union.

Literary, the progress has been adequately magnanimous. I recall, and even originally view the specimens of literature devoted to our cause in those by-gone days. I cannot but admit that they were unexcelled in quality in that dark period, but when reviewed in this civilized age the magnanimity and excellence attached are suddenly dethroned and deposed. Aye—those representatives of Philately may have been executed with the entire accomplishments, but what a different aspect do they now assume. My reminiscence is revived to those pride-regarded Philatelic magazines of yore, who, in this period, are mollified and subdued. And this is not superamazing or over-marvellous. Is it very prodigious to view the downfall and overthrow of perfection when placed in similitude with superiority? And thus was it with Philatelic journalism. They bore up generously, but declined when confronted by the obtruder of the advanced present. Gaze down upon those *very few suitable and valid monthlies*, as those are the only meritorious and deserving of mention in my estimate, and then kindly tender your attention to their competitors of the twentieth century. What a gap meets your observation! What a chasm disunites them and