

MY NOVA SCOTIA SHILLING.

BY CHAS. E. JENNEY.



introduce myself, it will only be necessary to say that I am a stamp collector. I have scraped together by various means in the course of ten years about three thousand varieties. In the course of my collecting I have met with many adventures, amusing and otherwise, have had lots of fun and have got together a collection of which I am very proud, although it is not what would be called a valuable one. Many of my stamps I have come by in queer and extraordinary manners, and I have a Nova Scotia shilling, the history of whose acquisition I must relate to you.

It was about three years ago, when my collection was about half its present size. I had a pretty fair lot of Nova Scotia stamps, but the possession of a genuine shilling was a little beyond my expectations at that time. I was on a visit to a friend in New York City and had taken in all the sights of the big city, visited all the stamp dealers and made a few small purchases, and was on the lookout for finds and I found one. I had my album with me, but had never shown it to my cousins. One evening I was sitting in the library hinging a few new purchases into my album, when my cousin Fanny, who was alone with me (the rest had gone to the theatre), asked me to play a game of euchre.

"All right," said I, "as soon as I have stuck in two more stamps."

"So you are a stamp crank, are you?" said she. "You are almost as bad as my friend, Alice Murray used to be. I never told you about it, did I?" she continued. "I guess she has got more stamps than you ever saw—an awful lot; she papered her room with them."

"What," said I, "stuck them all over the walls?"

"Yes. About three years ago she heard of somebody papering a room with old postage stamps, and, as her father has lots of stamps come to him, she thought she would try it. She asked all her friends to save them up for her, and in about a year had a whole trunkful—an awful lot—I do not remember just how many, but it must have been almost a million. Then she had what she called a papering bee. She sent out invitations to all her friends to help her stick them on the walls of her room. The trunkful of stamps was placed in the middle of the room, and there were benches and step-ladders for the boys to climb up on, for they had to paper the ceiling and top of the walls, and we girls began at the mouldings and worked upward. There were a lot of dishes of paste already made up, and we set to work. We had great fun, and every once in a while we found funny stamps with such queer pictures on them. When we got tired of pasting, we had games out in the other rooms, and refreshments. We met twice a week for seven or eight weeks, and at the last 'bee' we finished the room, having papered the four walls and the ceiling so that there was not the least speck of plastering showing through. Then we had dedicatory exercises and speeches and toasts, and all that sort of thing, you know, and then we voted for the prettiest stamp on the walls. The most of them voted for a funny square purple stamp with a pretty leaf design on it—I think it said New Brunswick, or Nova Scotia, or something like that, on it. I thought it was pretty, but I thought a little red one with a beaver on it was prettier; it was so odd, too. You have one like it? Yes, that is it."

"Who is Alice Murray? Where does she live? Has she got the stamps on the walls now? Do you suppose I could see them? Could you introduce me?"

These questions were rapidly rattled off from my tongue with an interest and energy that showed me thoroughly in earnest, and Fanny replied to them as thoroughly as she could. Alice Murray was a friend of hers—a real nice girl—she knew that I would like her. Yes, of course she would introduce me.

Well, I did not take much interest in our game of euchre that evening and Fanny beat me shamefully, for thoughts of that stamp-adorned room floated through my brain, and that purple stamp—could it be a Nova Scotia shilling?

I dreamed that night that my bed room was papered with Nova Scotia shillings, and even the morning light scarcely drove the purple mist from before my eyes.

A few evenings later, I was introduced to Miss Murray. In spite of prescribed customs on such occasions, she was not charmingly beautiful nor did I fall in love with her at first sight. She was just an ordinary young lady, with an attractive face and pleasing manner, and I mentally sized her up as tip-top. Fanny told her I was a stamp collector, and how I was interested in hearing that she had so many.

"Oh," she said, "you are interested in stamps. Well, you must come up and see mine. Everybody says it is quite a curiosity, but it has become quite an old story to me." And then she told me how she had got the idea, how she had collected the stamps and how they had been put in place. She said that she had had almost a waste basket full left over, but she had destroyed them. There were about five hundred thousand stamps on the walls. As this was a common hobby to us, we got so interested in talking it over that in a short time we came to feel like old friends. I had expressed a very earnest wish to see her room, and she had again heartily invited me to call and do so.

"Well," said Fanny the next morning, "how did you like my friend, Alice Murray? You spent most all the evening talking with her. Isn't she sweet?"

"She is very nice," said I, "and we had a fine time talking over stamps."

"Stamps!" said Fanny; "Pshaw! couldn't you find anything more agreeable to talk about to a young lady?"

"Well, we got on very nicely," said I, "and she has invited me to call and see her."

"Oh, oh, oh, you are a sly one! Shall you go?"

"Yes, of course; why not?"

So a few days later Fanny and I called on Miss Murray and found her at home. After a little conversation, the subject of which I do not remember, although the charming manner of our hostess remained impressed on my memory, she said:—

"I suppose you want to see the stamp room. Come this way, please."

I felt a little awed at entering this virgin sanctum, but my philatelic enthusiasm arose within me as I discovered at once a rare Japanese stamp just at my right on entering.

"Isn't this great!" said I.

"Here," she said, "is the stamp we thought was the prettiest."

She walked over to the opposite side of the room and raised the shades a trifle higher, and there, just above our heads, was the Nova Scotia shilling. My admiration was outspoken, and when she saw that I recognized the stamp and seemed to set a great value on it she was surprised and asked about it. I told