

directly to the central bureau to obtain reliable information at once on any point of interest.

We are willing to exercise to the full the patience that we know will be required for the perfection of the system, but would, meanwhile, urge upon our friends and correspondents everywhere to assist us as far as they can, for they may be certain that they will reap, in the long-run, the benefit of all that they may do in this regard.

### THE FIRST COLLECTION.

The question as to who was the first philatelist to make a collection has been frequently mooted, but it will probably never be settled. Dr. Viner a well-known authority on all philatelic matters, says that the first he ever saw was in 1854, and other authorities refer to about the same date. The one cited by Dr. Viner would be a curiosity in the present day when the science has so much advanced. We are sorry that there is no means of ascertaining whether this "first collection" is now in existence or not. If it is and its authenticity could be credibly established the fact that it was the first or at least one of the first on record, would make it priceless. Its arrangement was at once original and in keeping with the infancy of the study which has grown to such vast proportions in our day. It was in the shape of a large chart in which the names of the countries stood in a column on the left and the stamps of each were placed in horizontal lines opposite the names. This collection is reported to have comprised only about one hundred stamps.

It is really astonishing to reflect that from such a feeble beginning has been developed the noble science in which we all delight. Though many thoughtlessly deride it as a "childrens' craze," and fancy—they do not think on the subject—that it will soon pass away, still the incontrovertible FACTS remain that it occupies the time and engages the talents of thousands of able, thoughtful MEN, that it publishes hundreds of papers throughout the world that pay for their publication and are read with eager interest by millions of people. It is growing daily in strength and in the numbers of its varieties. It has evidently a splendid future before it.

It is indisputable that to the patient, earnest efforts of philatelists the world to-day enjoys the benefits of the system known as "The Universal Postal Union," whereby its correspondence is conveyed to regions the most remote at rates the cheapness would have surprised the men of even twenty years ago.

We are happy to note that in some countries the postal authorities labor hand in hand with philatelists and ask for and accept their suggestions as to the best methods of serving the public interests. This advice is necessarily perfectly disinterested and, being the result of careful study and deep thought, is, its nature, valuable. We note that those countries who most rely upon such advice have the most efficient postal system. Philatelic Exhibitions recur more frequently as time advances and they are projected, organised and carried out under the open, direct auspices and encouragement of the postal authorities of the countries in which they are held.

Grave Ministers of State and Royal Princes lend the influence of their names and give their own labors and presence to ensure the success of these exhibitions.

With all these facts to encourage philatelists and with all the aids now at the hand of students in the science he must be a "doubting Thomas" indeed who hesitates as to the permanence and usefulness of PHILATELY.

### A POST OFFICE THIEF SENTENCED.

We took occasion in our July number to allude to the frequency with which the Canadian mails have been robbed by the clerks who are entrusted with the duty and responsibility of handling them. We then strongly urged that the law as provided for such cases should be rigidly administered without favor or affection, and a detected thief in the Post Office should be punished for his crime besides being dismissed from the service.

We are glad now to report that our advice has been followed in a case that recently came up in Montreal. Of course we regret that the young man in question should have yielded to temptation and by his action have blighted his young life and disgraced his friends. But the interests of the public demanded that an example should be made, which we trust may be a warning to others in similar positions who may feel an inclination to tamper with the mails.

A Montreal paper gives the following account of the trial scene, which occurred on the 10th of December last:

The Post Office clerk, J. O. Avila Chartier, appeared in the dock to answer a charge of having stolen a letter and its contents, the property of the Post Office. The prisoner was a young and respectable looking man, with a slight moustache and apparently twenty-two years of age. He wore spectacles and was neatly dressed. He appeared to feel his position very acutely, and he never once raised his head during the passing of sentence. Chartier pleaded guilty to the charge, and, when asked if he had anything to say, he said that he threw himself on the mercy of the court. Judge Desnoyers said that in this case he could extend very little mercy to the prisoner. The offence was so grave that the law provided that the minimum penalty was five years penal servitude. Prisoner was a young man of good education and with excellent recommendations which obtained for him the position in the post office. It was unfortunate to see a young fellow in his position beginning his career in such a way, but it was especially unfortunate in this case because the evidence showed that from the first time the prisoner entered the Post Office he had commenced to steal letters. The sentence of the court was that prisoner should be imprisoned in the Penitentiary of St. Vincent de Paul for five years. The prisoner was then removed.

Since writing the above another case is reported from Manitoba, in which the amount of the peculations is stated to be several thousands of dollars. The robber in this case fled to Chicago, whence he was taken back to Winnipeg. As he has not yet been tried we cannot give the result.

ONE of our English exchanges notes that the remaining stock of the pence issue of Mauritius, having been bought up by private parties, has been fraudulently surcharged with a post office obliteration and is now offered for sale as genuine used stamps of that colony. We would caution our readers to be on their guard against these.

Our Approval Sheets are the finest in the world—contain 104 stamps each.

We are always happy to exchange with other Philatelic Publishers.