

Trials of a Beginner.

E. W. THOMAS.

As a beginner I, like all other novices in the science of philately, experienced many trials and tribulations; but the mistakes I made only endeared me the more to our beloved pursuit. I commenced collecting in 1892 by selecting the cheaper grade of foreign stamps off approval sheets.

I had often heard of valuable finds of old stamps and one day with my mind filled with great ideas of conquest, I made a raid upon some old trunks in the garret, where after several hours of rumaging I was rewarded for my trouble by the finding of a three cent red 1861. I was greatly elated over my find for I thought I had discovered a rare stamp, which, because I had found it in an old garret thereby having an old look and by the fact that it had been used during the war, made it appear valuable to my eyes.

As I did not collect United States stamps I thought by selling my valuable (?) stamp that I might be able to increase my collection extensively. With that end in view I wrote a dealer "who bought rare stamps for cash" enclosing the stamp and the modest request that he should send two dollars in payment for the stamp. It is needless to say that I was sadly disappointed when I received the reply that the dealer could not use the stamp at the price stated, for during the interval between the sending and the arrival of the letter I had built many castles upon the manner in which I would spend the money. I thought the dealer had missed the chance of his life by not buying the stamp, so I wrote another dealer in order that he might take

advantage of my liberal offer.

Again I received a negative reply, but undaunted I wrote several other dealers each time receiving the same answer. I was now completely discouraged and the reader may not wonder that my faith in philately was somewhat shattered. I thought it was not what it was "cracked up to be."

I had heard that there was a stamp collector in a neighboring town, so happening to go there on a visit I resolved to visit the collector and show him my precious three cent red. With faltering footsteps I was ushered into his presence, where I was received with a friendly smile and kindly salutation. But alas! for my exultant hopes. When I asked him what he paid for specimens of my variety, I was nearly struck dumb by the reply that he paid fifteen cents per hundred. The good man noticed my situation and inquired what the trouble was. Then followed the sad tale as told above, after which with a few kind words from the dealer I departed with a handful of common stamps and a pocket full of experience.

-----(-)-----

The blank albums are becoming more popular as the years pass by. Time was when they were altogether unknown or like their contents looked upon only as curiosities. The beauties and advantages of this form of album have been repeatedly descanted upon and it is a fact patent to all, that fine specimens, artistically mounted on heavy ivory paper, do certainly make a most magnificent and imposing appearance,—R. S. Baker.

Advertise in the ADVOCATE.