

## TAKE YOUR CHOICE.

THE conservative idea entertained by many collectors, which disapproves the collection of stamps, except in the established lines and manner, is now being generally disabused. In its stead, a spirit of liberality prevails, which allows one to collect anything in the way for which one may have an especial liking, and still be considered as a true Philatelist.

The one thing essential is, that he be sincere in following his particular plan, and not be an adherent of some unusual method, so as to achieve a bit of notoriety by the singularity of his manner of collecting stamps. If a person desires to collect all his stamps on the original envelopes, or in pairs, it is no longer gainsaid that he is not so ardent a Philatelist, and worthy the name, as the one who collects in the usual way.

A Philatelist is one who not only accumulates stamps, but who also studies them; but by the word "stamps," as now understood, considerable latitude of meaning is allowed.

The one who confines his collecting to Russian locals is thought to be as real a Philatelist as any: and collectors agree with practical unanimity on these and similar cases. On one point, however, it appears that the great body of collectors is divided in opinion, and that is the wisdom of collecting in the immense field of minute and trifling varieties.

That is a question on which there is a great diversity of opinion. Those who uphold the collection of the minor varieties, claim that it is scientific collecting such as demands study and research; and that those who overlook these varieties are lacking in some of the requirements of a Philatelist. Those who belittle the collecting of minute varieties, assert it borders on folly to favor the collection of such, when Philately offers so boundless possibilities in legitimate lines. Why trample on golden flowers in an endeavor to pluck those of silver? is the tenor of their arguments.

To an impartial observer, it seems as though those who view with disfavor the collection of minute varieties, stood on firmer ground. It is refining too much the study of Philately, to collect the most trifling of varieties, and a writer has said, "Few things in the world or none will bear too much refining: a thread too fine spun will easily break, and so will a point of a needle too finely filed."

An outsider who is proof against the fascinations of stamp-collecting, must be somewhat surprised at seeing a collector look unmoved upon a certain stamp, but who, at meeting the merest variety of it, shows the greatest joy. Still, it matters little what the uninitiated think: so long as the collector is satisfied, and receives pleasure from his collection and manner of collecting, the chief end is attained.

Collectors gather stamps because of the pleasure derived from so doing; and should one Philatelist's plan of collecting materially differ from that of his neighbor, each should tolerate and respect the methods employed by either one, remembering that one way gives as much pleasure to its follower as does another to you. In discussing the subject of whether or not to collect minute varieties, there is no necessity for violent argument on either side.

If one thinks the collection of such varieties would be a satisfaction and subserve his interest in Philately, he should collect them, but because of his doing so, he ought not to presume he is more entitled to the name of Philatelist than the one who gives no attention to these varieties.

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