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STAMP COLLECTING.

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Why have you such a craze on this subject? Is it for amusement, or instruction, or profit, in a pecuniary point of view? This is a question often asked. Some stamp magazines have been printing stories of wonderful finds of valuable stamps, by which the heavily mortgaged homestead was redeemed, and recommending the pursuit for the sole purpose of making money. But this is a belittling of the work of the philatelist. Let no young people engage in this work with that idea, but let no parent or guardian discourage the young stamp collector. It is a great thing to have some object, some interest in life, and every scrap of useful knowledge gained is like the ever widening circle from a pebble thrown into a pool of water, we know not how it may result or be useful in the future in far different pursuits. It is well to see young people interested in such a harmless occupation. And what is gained? The powers of observation are developed, trained, strengthened, habits of neatness are cultivated, memory improved, knowledge of countries, their history, sovereigns, coins, flags, and stores of historical lore are gained. The knowledge of geography obtained by the boy or girl collector is wonderful. The vast German empire now with one stamp, where some years ago its kingdoms, duchies, free towns had each one a separate stamp. And now we have United Italy, with the head of Humbert, where formerly were the stamps of Sardinia, Naples, Sicily, Tuscany.

How strange that from Atlantic to Pacific our Queen's head stamps has replaced the different stamps of the provinces, with their variety of codfish, beaver, Jacques Cartier, ships, Prince of Wales, Prince Albert. And south of us how are we reminded of that terrible time of tears and blood, when the nation was almost rent asunder, as we look at the Confederate stamps and contrast its pale tint with the carmine of to-day. In Spain too during the time that our Victoria has sat unmoved on her throne, what different faces do we find, Queen Isabella, Amadeus, Alfonso, the baby king, and those grim looking Carlist heads.

Who as a British subject, or indeed as the subject of any country, can fail to be impressed with the extent of that empire on which the sun never sets, on seeing so frequently recurring on the pages of his album, that serene face of majesty on the stamps of islands, dotting the sea, east and west and north and south.

There is no doubt that in Canada the pursuit of Philately has taken many strides forward in the last year, and the CANADIAN PHILATELIST has done much in this direction, with the publication of the handbooks, giving accurate information in so many points, information which is very valuable, for there are many false ideas with regard to the value of stamps. What exaggerated ideas have some, thinking anything old must necessarily be valuable. With

what an air have stamps been presented to us, as if rare, which were absolutely valueless. The collector often meets with much disappointment, from the want of close powers of observation in those whom he asks for help, often finding what was promised as a great treasure of no use whatever. Sometimes however the reverse is the case, and the collector is agreeably surprised in coming unexpectedly on a treasure indeed.

And what strange stories are there brought up by many stamps in our collection. Turning over the stamp albums of our friends is a great source of amusement, each collection having some choice stamp, valueless perhaps when placed there, but now not to be replaced by purchase or in any other way. Lately I saw several fourpence and sixpence vermilion stamps of Newfoundland, pasted down solid, and perhaps it was as well, for the owner was quite ignorant of their value. Here is a stamp from Hayti which will always bring back the thought of what was almost a tragedy. It was given to me still damp from half an hour's saturation in the waters of Lake Ontario, while ten persons clung to a sail boat, upon sight of the Stars and Stripes on one side of the river, and the Union Jack on the other. What thoughts must have gone through their minds during the suspense when death seemed so near. Here is a Canadian sixpence sent me by a friend in Scotland, preserved though many vicissitudes. Here is a new bright one cent U. S. 1857 found in a book which had been lying for thirty years in a trunk unused, the young wife who intended to use it has been in her grave for all these years and the daughter who never saw her mother comes unexpectedly upon this reminder. Here is a stamp from Turk's Island which always brings up the thought of a beautiful bouquet made entirely of shells from that shore, the ingenuity and delicacy with which the tiny shells were adapted for buds, petals, leaves, sprays, being wonderful. Here is a Siam stamp, originally in a letter from a young lady missionary who goes as a bride but soon came a telegram of her death, but still come the regularly written letters weekly for a month. Oh the pathos of it, we almost doubt in such a case the benefit of the submarine cable.

An eight cent Canadian register came to my hands the other day, all that I had previously seen were uncancelled, but this came on a letter, the eight cents to stand for the five cent registration, and the three cents for the postage; it bears the mark of cancelling.

My British Columbia stamps remind me of wonderful stories of adventure, endurance, hardships, persevering hard work at the mines when the four hundred miles to Cariboo had to be truded on foot. The letters all came by way of San Francisco, and sometimes a valuable B. C. stamp has been found covered up by a U. S. stamp.

But enough has been said to show in point of interest, for information, amusement, formation of good habits, sentiment, a collection of postage stamps need not be despised.