

Written for THE CANADIAN PHILATELIST.

THE FUTURE OF THE COLUMBIAN.

BY W. H. PLANK.

IF CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS could have lived to the ripe old age attained by some of the patriarchs of Biblical fame, and beheld the wonderful development of his continent, or seen the wonders that the White City had gathered together in commemoration of his discovery, the high honors that would have been heaped upon him would surely have overwhelmed this daring navigator.

If he could behold the representation of the little fleet, as depicted upon the three cent Columbian, or the other scenes through which he passed as the other denominations illustrate, he could hardly decide which of the two were the greater honors.

This series of stamps, so artistic and executed in the highest degree of workmanship, has excited and enthused the stamp collecting fraternity, that those who have never thought of forming a collection have almost become maniacs over the question of collecting. Those, too, who have laid away their collections years ago have rummaged through chest and drawers and brought out their old collections, and have been imbued with a new life, and once again follow in the pleasant ways of stamp collecting.

The past year has been a jubilee year for stamp collecting, and will cause such a revival of stamp collecting that has never yet been seen.

While the Columbian stamps have been a boon to the cause of stamp collecting, it has also been an injury. It has, in a great measure, caused a large number of Philater's stamp followers, if I may use this phrase, who are nothing more than speculators, who have harbored up every obtainable stamp, not for exchange, but for speculative purposes. And now, in so short a space of time, many collectors only think of their collections as representing so many dollars. They have forgotten the pleasant hours spent in gathering and arranging their collections, and the little "finds" that all delight to think of.

Will the Columbian speculator reap his expected reward? We emphatically say, no! Do not think because the stamps have been issued only for a year that they cannot be had later. It is a mistake. There has never been an issue of stamps of any government that has been so religiously and systematically saved as the Columbian. Every school boy, collector and dealer, besides our side parties, have them in such quantities that it will be a long time indeed before they are worth the price many persons expect to receive for them. Don't think because you have been "cornering" the three, six or eight cent that your neighbor has not. But he has, and can probably exhibit as many as you.

So let us not, for the sake of the past pleasant recollections of moments spent with our collections, wander into ways that will cause us to throw away our collections for ever. And the future of the Columbian, you ask? Only time, which can answer all questions, and solve all mysteries, can answer what is the future of the Columbians.

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PHILATELIC LITERATURE.

BY A. W. BULLOCK.

PHILATELIC literature, in these days when so much is claimed for the advancement of Philately, is not what it should be.

Not that there is a lack of magazines, and so-called magazines, all of which aspire and pretend to fill the popular demand for high class publications. There are, alas, too many of these, a glut which only time can and surely will reduce.

But after the years of experience, that some of our journals have had, and the undeniable genius of a few well known contributors, there should be a better literary style and a higher order of writing prevalent. Literary genius, directed into the channels of philatelic journalism by inspiration, and the natural tendency of its authors, has certainly a field for much wider scope of subject, thought and treatment, than is at the present time given. And that we have literary genius in our ranks is an undoubted fact, for it has shown forth in our writers in the past, and is daily becoming more apparent. It is unnecessary to mention the names here, for our principal writers are known to the world of our fraternity.

A writer of genius is not he who expresses his own sentiments, but the deep, united feeling of his class or people. There is ample room for thought, and subject for study, and brilliant expression in the article which is in its nature wholly philatelic. What thoughts, what sentiments, what memories, are there not in the dreamings of every true lover of our fascinating pursuit? They are, I venture to say, unlimited. Let them then be expressed in deeper, more serious and carefully composed productions.

The publications which lay claim to being philatelic magazines in America are of a large and widely varied order, but of these there are few which can truthfully hold the name of first class journals. There are, I believe, at the present time journals held in high regard in the philatelic reading circles, which are considering the question of a better class of matter, and making an endeavor to obtain it. Their enterprise is to be commended. It should have come before, but it is never too late to mend, and their reward will be prosperity, certain and sure, whether they be young or old. The ambition of the rising generation is unbounded, and of the American youth, who after a year's stamp collecting, does not think he can start a great stamp journal, there are few indeed. This, in a measure, accounts for the number of weak would-be stamp journals which have in the past two or three years rose, and which are now rising monthly, and dying a natural death after a few issues, in such astonishing numbers.

This class of publication has, without a doubt, done much to retard the development of better philatelic literature. The publisher does not appreciate the value of it, nor could he pay for it if he did, consequently the demand is not stimulated. Let the heavier and more enterprising of our magazines take up the matter, and their readers and the public generally will show their appreciation in stronger support.