

The Collecting of Stamps.

BY H. A. CHAPMAN.

This is a thread-bare subject, but the collecting of stamps will go on just the same. The writer has been placed in years gone by where he might have accumulated a grand collection, especially of United States issues. In my days, and I can remember back to the time when the only general issue of United States consisted of the 5 cent brown and the 10 cent black, I have seen thousands of stamps thrown away into waste baskets and coal scuttles, to be burned up, and in these latter days their ghosts haunt me. It was before the days of stamped envelopes, and then letters were doubled together and stuck with wafers and sealing wax. Had I foreseen the future, I could have had a complete collection of envelopes with scarcely any expense, both entire and cut square. As it is I have scarcely any envelope stamps, and what few adhesives I possess have cost a pretty little sum.

I have a friend, who, although somewhat younger than myself, has nearly a complete collection of U. S. adhesives, and the actual cash outlay has been less than twelve dollars. Just think of it! A 90c 1869, unused can hardly be bought for that. He has been placed in circumstances where he has had quantities of stamps given him from all over the world, and by judicious saving he has "swapped" them off to advantage, and accumulated the best United States I collection have seen.

There are, of course, many ways of collecting. Some go in pell-mell, save everything in a blank album, dozens of the same kind. It isn't long before they find their mistake, and "go for a regular album," and

commence over again. Some make a specialty, and after that specialty is filled, take up another, and so on. This method is a very good one, but it is well to hold on to everything as you go along. Some specialize in United States, some in the British Colonies, and some in foreign, leaving out the United States.

The collectors of the envelope stamps are many, both entire and cut square, and the collectors of adhesives on the cover are also many, and here is a chance for a great variety, especially in Canada when the postage was three cents. I have had letters from the Dominion in every conceivable shape. Take the 1c stamps—the combinations that can be made with six of them on an ordinary letter, are many, and if a letter requires double postage the combinations are largely increased. Taken in conjunction with the 1c, 2c and 3c the varieties are sometimes very pleasing. I have Canadian letters with the old issues, Jubilees and the present issues all sandwiched together, and they are curiosities—a registered letter especially. I had a registered letter from Greece which was covered with 45 stamps of the 2c lepta denomination, which was a comical looking affair worthy of preservation.

My first attempt at collecting was twenty-five years ago. I saw one of Trifet's lists, and sent for a stamp offered cheap. It was a genuine issue, but so homely that I dropped the fad then and there. Years passed by, until six years ago I stumbled on to a box full accumulated by a young boy, and I became so infatuated that I "waded in" to the "craze," and have been trading ever since. No one who becomes interested hardly ever loses his love of the "critturs." It may not be actually necessary to have them, but "we have to have them all the same.