

### THE BOY TRADE.

This is a phrase that is going the round of our publications of late, with more of a space-filling tendency than anything else since the happy days of "Is Philately a Science?" The subject itself, unfortunately, has not yet been fairly defined. Once, when I sold stamps, young people were among our best customers, and to serve them was often much more of a pleasure than the service of older ones who bought not for the delight of stamp collecting, but for the probable mercenary gain that might come from careful selection.

Very often the parents of these young folk would be as much, if not more, interested than they, and many of our strong men in Philately originally bought stamps for their children. No one questions the desirability of this sort of patronage, either at the office or through the mail, but the term "boy trade," in dealers phraseology, at least, covers another province. There it denominates all that is undesirable in business with small boys who are the cause of no end of trouble and waste of time. Visions, too, of the old packet list and glue pot arise with the suggestion. But to call our self-respecting young people in Philately "boy trade" or "kid trade," and then to appeal for their more general support, is like slapping a man's face and then asking him to lend you five dollars.

To try to attract the trifling and undesirable class of youngsters commonly called "boy trade" is exceedingly undesirable. The only class of dealers who wish to attract this class of trade are those who wish to dispose of undesirable stock, knowing well that Mexican remainders and packets of damaged or poorly centered specimens are not eagerly grabbed by the cognizant collector.

Much has recently been said about the issuing of catalogues and albums which shall be made so simple that a little child can use them. This scheme has recently been proposed by an earnest and devoted collector who has more stamps and more knowledge of stamps than most of us hope to have, and is justly honored for these: but the best of us make mistakes, and, in our opinion, he has made a mistake. If stamp collecting is anything it is educational, and young people who are old enough to adopt and hold to our fascinating hobby are old enough to use our perforation gauge and are prone to enjoy rolling out philat-

elic technicalities as much as even the youthful stamp clerk of a Boston salesroom.

Our present standard catalogue, with its explanatory preface, so carefully prepared by Mr. Krauth is designed to satisfy this natural tendency, and does it to perfection. The pleasure of acquiring this knowledge is apparently very keen to young people, and perhaps the highest ambition of some of them is to grow great enough to append to their names the "Expert Philatelist" that some of their older brothers have had the poor taste to assume. Why dispel this illusion? it is pleasing and harmless. Furthermore, we have watched the growth of this little hobby of howling for simplicity in catalogues and albums, and it seems not to have been prompted by the desire of the younger collectors. It is the direct outcry of certain of the older ones who think scarce varieties cost too much, and seem to think it possible to lower the market generally by crying them down and introducing a fad of slipshodism.

Both hypothesis and conclusion are impossible. Simplicity is never a very clinching argument in itself, and we imagine that while a schooner yacht is preferred to a mudscrew, electricity to mule power, this will remain a fact. No, simplicity is not what we need. What we need is a great deal of common sense in letting the croakers croak. This peculiar species of idiocy is much in evidence everywhere.—*The Eastern Philatelist*.

### A CIRCULATING LIBRARY.

There was proposed in the State of New York some years ago a plan for the State Library to be moved to some of the larger cities at stated times, so that the greatest number of the people could have access to it and borrow from it.

The writer, knowing the value of philatelic literature as a reference library, thinks that in order to get some benefit out of the library of the American Philatelic Association, some circulating plan should be adopted, so that the works that the Association is now in possession of, can be brought to the members in a form that they can be made use of.

A plan of having the publications in the librarian's hands bound and sent on a circuit to the branch societies, could be put out as an experiment and tried say for two years. If this is a success, then the plan could be extended to the principal cities.—*Daily Stamp Item*.