

The Canadian Philatelist

PUBLISHED MONTHLY

IN THE INTEREST OF STAMP COLLECTING.

VOL. III. NO. II.

LONDON, NOVEMBER 1, 1894.

WHOLE NO. 35.

Written for THE CANADIAN PHILATELIST.

FRATERNAL TIES.

BY WALTER A. WITHEROW.

THERE exists between the individual members of that class of unfortunate humans known as "faddists" or "hobbyists" or "cranks," a bond of sympathy as broad and strong as the rawhide belt of an elevator engine. So strong are the ties of the fraternity that anyone would naturally conclude that the members were linked together by steel belt-hooks, while in reality it is only flimsy bits of paper with colored ink upon one side and weak mucilage upon the other. But I am wandering, not in my mind, but from my subject.

If there be any mortal upon this earthly sphere deserving of pity it is the stamp collector. Be he a youngster yet under the paternal roof, his actions are frowned upon by his father, looked askance upon by his mother and regarded by his brothers and sisters as a convenient peg upon which to hang a joke or taunt.

Perhaps he is a man of family. His wife regards his delight over some "beauty" with wonder and concern—not unmixed with pity. Bitter is the moment when he attempts to initiate his son into the mysteries of Philately, only to discover that the young gentleman has previously been approached and corrupted. "Pa what does make you so foolish? Goin' into fits over old stamps! Ma says these filatelists is about half cracked."

His intimate acquaintances cross hurriedly to the opposite side of the street should they discover that there is prospect of an encounter. They go to avoid listening to his stamp tales. He dare not carry his hobby into the business world for it would injure his reputation as a financier. In his "mind's eye" he could see two capitalists in conversation. One, referring to him, would speak of his ability only to be checked by the other, "Yes, I have always held Jay to be a sound fellow, but the other day I hadn't got within twenty feet of him when he began to tell about what a stroke of good luck he fell upon. Said something about a New Haven postage stamp worth a thousand and he bought it for ten cents. I'm afraid his mind is giving way with the strain. He will get no more of my contracts."

Gentle reader, did you ever know of a collector who could add to his collection stamp after stamp, year after year, keeping all the enjoyment, all the pleasure to himself? Oh no!

And Jay was no anomaly. He must confide in some one, and that sympathetic party attends the meetings of the local Philatelic Society. For Jay is not the only stamp collector. Here he finds some one into whose commiserating ear he can pour his tale of woe.

Truly the local stamp society is a necessity.

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STUDYING STAMPS.

BY CAPTAIN MILDMAY.

I WAS going to tell you why I should like to be an animal, not any kind of an animal of course, but a beautiful animal, such as a monkey, an elephant a lion, or perhaps a bear, but now I think that I'll tell you about something else that will perhaps be more interesting.

Last Friday evening a lecturer gave a lecture in our church on stamps. A lecturer is a man who talks about anything, and you can go to sleep while he's talking if you have a mind to, and you had better if he hasn't any real idols or stamps. I most generally go to sleep at a lecture, but this time I kept awake because the lecturer had some curious stamps, and then father said to "listen to what the gentleman had to say and improve your mind with stamps."

But now I believe that the lecturer came here on purpose to get me into trouble, or else why did he urge the boys to study stamps?

The way to study stamps, the lecturer said, was to get a stamp album, a stamp catalogue and lots of stamps. So the next evening I asked father to get me a stamp album and some stamps, as I wanted to collect them. He said he would, but it was mor'n a week before he did, but I didn't mind because he gave me mor'n three hundred stamps and a new album; from Sue I got a catalogue and lots of hinges.

I spent most of the rest of the afternoon in fixing the stamps in my album, and after I got through I began to wonder how I'd get any more. The lecturer said something about changing, and I thought that I would change some of my stamps with father. I had mor'n a hundred of the same kind and they would do to change with for quite a while.

In the evening I got father's album, and on looking through it I found lots of stamps that were just about the same. I couldn't make out what father wanted with five or six stamps of the same kind when I hadn't any. I cut out mor'n twenty stamps with a paper knife, and of course I stuck in mor'n twenty of my stamps, which were mostly from London, Europe, France, and other foreign countries.

The next day Mr. Ivens, who, as I may have told you already, is Sue's best young man, had to go to see Mr. Simpson about the band and he let me go with him. Mr. Simpson wanted to go and see another man who lived in the next street, and of course Mr. Ivens went with him.

As I had nothing to do I looked over Mr. Simpson's stamp album which was lying on his desk. His stamps were all very nice, but, like father's, there were lots of them that were just about the