

OUR YOUNG PHILATELISTS  
AND THEIR PROSPECTS.

BY

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— A PAPER —

*Read before the Herts, Manchester, Junior London  
and other Societies.*

1904.

WOODFIELD,

ROCHDALE.

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A Paper (with Illustrations) read before the Herts, Manchester, Junior London, Leeds, and Sheffield Philatelic Societies.

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THE following remarks are written mostly with reference to the rising generation of Philatelists, because this is the class who will have to continue the good work which our leading men of to-day have launched forth, and the question arises:—"How must the Young Stamp Collector be helped and encouraged to become a thorough Philatelist?" I will divide my paper into six divisions, all of which, I hold, are necessary in their various spheres of influence, to help on and animate the ardent beginner towards accomplishing the object in question. They are: (1) Exhibitions, etc.; (2) Experts competent to judge and advise our Juniors; (3) Papers, Articles, etc.; (4) The better status of the "postally used" stamps; (5) School teaching; and (6) Societies.

## (1.) EXHIBITIONS, ETC.

Under this heading I would include also Displays at Bazaars, Sales of Work, Drawing Rooms, etc. By exhibiting stamps at any of the above, the interest in Philately would not only be greatly increased, but it would doubtless cause many new adhe-

rents to take up the pursuit ; the stamps need not necessarily be for sale, but such a selection could be made as would tend to attract attention, not only for the time being, but in many cases permanently.

I name Drawing Rooms; these of course are generally attended by the fair sex, but all the more need therefore to have stamps represented at them ; for I hold that Philately ought to take a better hold of the fair sex than it does at present in this country—where women, more or less, hold aloof from our various Societies, and rarely attend their meetings. One seldom sees any articles in our journals penned by our women-folk, nor have we any recognised experts among them. This is a somewhat different state of affairs to that existing on the Continent, in the United States, etc., where the Female Collector is more prominent, and even articles sometimes appear in the papers from their pens. Encourage Philately therefore more amongst our sisters, etc., for is it not a fact that in a pursuit where women enter, there is a strong tendency to raise its moral tone? Exceptions there are, but the fact remains that women, as a rule, rarely enter into any hobbies, or societies, etc., where men are recognised leaders, unless some strong social status of respectability is attached to them, and inasmuch as this status is in every way applicable to our organisations, why should our fair sex not join them in greater numbers than they do at present ?

As regards Exhibitions proper, I will allude to this more fully in part (4) dealing with the status of the "used stamp," but I may add here that I consider none of our Exhibitions has helped our young collectors much. True they may have been present and admired the various exhibits, especially the "plums," in them, and who blames them if they have done so with somewhat of a jealous feeling? But what encouragement, may I ask, have they received towards gaining a word of recognition for any of their stamps had they shown them? I reply, "None whatever." Therefore more

help should be given to our young philatelists by offering medals or prizes for collections that are not necessarily complete, but which show philatelic knowledge, careful mounting, etc. It cannot be expected that these young people could possibly possess a complete collection of a country or set of countries otherwise than under very exceptional circumstances, and even, when some years ago, a young collector was fortunate enough to secure a medal for a fine collection (although not of course a complete one), his success was somewhat discounted, and one of our journals questioned the real ownership of his collection of stamps. Unless there was ample proof that it did not actually belong to the exhibitor it was a pity to have disagreeably alluded to the matter in a public criticism. Encourage our young collectors as much as possible to show their stamps at exhibitions, and let this encouragement be considerably increased in the future if Philately is to continue prosperous.

#### (11.) EXPERTS COMPETENT TO JUDGE AND ADVISE OUR JUNIORS.

I have alluded to this in recent articles somewhat at length, and only here repeat the main points I wish to impress upon you. I hold that we should have more "experts" in many of our leading towns, not only men but also women, who would be willing to help and advise the young collector gratis, or for a small fee, according to circumstances, for you must remember that not many lads and lasses are able to pay much for an opinion about a stamp. I quote herewith an extract from my previous remarks *re* this question.

"It would be well to appoint an agent, etc., in the leading provincial towns, the question of price for his or her work to be determined upon later; let such an agent be well up in Philately, and one who could advise our young collectors as to the status of any of their stamps they are in doubt about. This would probably relieve the leading experts of much work, as naturally

they don't wish to expertise stamps other than the very rare ones, which are not often found in the possession of young philatelists."

Many of our young adherents fight shy of purchasing stamps for various reasons ; for instance, there are so many faked and doubtful ones being offered at the present time and " stamps made for collectors only," etc. ; further, the charges for giving an opinion as to the genuineness of stamps are often so high as to make it almost impossible to consult our experts. The tyros don't care to trouble the " leading philatelic lights " about their stamps, even if willing to pay the prices asked ; for what they are generally in doubt about are seldom rarities.

Another point. Why should London only (with a very few exceptions) have experts meet there ? Granted that our Metropolis is the centre of Philately, I hold that experts should be found in other towns, who would be willing to give this matter their best attention ; if they were unable to express a satisfactory opinion then some London or other A1 expert could be resorted to.

As I have previously written, the worthy " London Expert Committee " does not specially care to have stamps sent to them for their opinion which are not classed as fairly rare ones, or unique, etc., or which are not really worthy their attention, entirely apart from their charges, which have recently been raised to 5s. per stamp if catalogued under £20 ; 10s. per stamp if over £20 and under £50 ; and 20s. per stamp if £50 or more. If the stamp submitted is declared a forgery, the fee will be 2s. 6d. in all cases. For juniors, these charges are prohibitive, even the smallest of them, and consequently there is a real want of known experts with moderate fees, in many of our leading towns, which include amongst their population a considerable number of keen young philatelists. The two main reasons that discourage so many of our youthful adherents are : first, the want of such an adviser, and secondly, the existence of so many doubtful stamps, which makes the first condition absolutely

essential; having no one to apply to and fearing to lose what little money they have to spare on stamps, they abandon the hobby entirely.

### (11.) PAPERS, ARTICLES, ETC.

These should be so written as to be more applicable to our philatelic youth than most papers are at the present time, although I am pleased to say we are improving on this point every year. Many of the learned articles in our stamp journals are utterly beyond young beginners, who therefore subscribe to no leading publication, and, as a natural result, very many of the latter prove to be non-remunerative, while most of them are actually worked at a loss. Make your articles more interesting and less learned, editors, and your circulation will improve accordingly.

The scientific (?) articles are all very well for the affluent, the specialist, and the general collector of means, and all praise is due to their authors for the trouble they take in order to instruct us, but they are scarcely of any assistance to our youthful fraternity, who naturally start their Philatelic career without going into such questions as minor varieties and errors, especially where one error only may be found on a whole sheet of stamps. What care they for a whole sheet, when in many cases they may not possess even a single stamp, or only wish ultimately to have one in their collection? The great majority of our young collectors do not belong to the "upper ten," but include many who are only able to put aside small sums from time to time with a view to purchasing stamps, hence all encouragement should be shown them regarding what to collect and what to leave alone; which are spurious and which are genuine, etc.; and this can be done both by local experts as well as by simple articles which could easily be written for study with the more learned ones.

I should be the last person to wish to say anything against anyone buying what he or she wishes, but the point here is that many of our young (and experienced collectors too for that matter) invest their money in stamps with an idea that if a "rainy day crops up" they can dispose of their property at a financial advantage to themselves, but they are often disappointed. If the *wealthy* collector sells at a loss, one need not sympathise with him.

But the collectors who suffer and whom one cannot but pity, are those who can ill afford to lose money, and who often throw up the whole thing in disgust, whereas a little advice given to them from time to time would avert disaster and probably help to add many true philatelists to our fold. Philately in itself is not to blame for this state of affairs, but it should be more thoroughly explained to our youth, and although I don't entirely advocate the collecting of stamps for investment purposes, the latter question is bound to crop up from time to time, and why not? Collecting for pleasure and instruction, together with a "remunerative eye," is to my mind the ideal method, for very few of us can afford to spend a large sum of money upon our stamps, utterly regardless as to whether we lose or gain, should we wish to dispose of them later on either for want of the "needful" or through lack of interest in our pursuit, and these arguments hold good not only as regards Philately, but as to coin collecting, money spent in pictures, old and modern furniture, bric à-brac generally, &c.

#### (IV.) THE BETTER STATUS OF THE POSTALLY USED STAMP.

Whilst putting aside entirely my own views *re* the *used*, as opposed to the *unused* stamp, I have before now repeatedly asserted, and do so again here, that the *used* stamp is neglected as regards exhibitions, etc., greatly out of all proportion to its adherents, and that the *unused* has far too much attention paid to it.

Collectors of used stamps are not encouraged as they should be, and although I do not wish to lay stress upon the preference of one system over the other, I am bound to allude to the used stamp, simply because the great majority of our young collectors go in for this class of specimen, with some few exceptions such as Virgin Islands, Prince Edward Island, Revenues postally used, etc., because they cost less than unused and the young collector has generally only a little money to spend on stamps.

If your inclinations are towards unused stamps by all means collect them, but I think much more attention should be given to used stamps at exhibitions, etc., than is generally the case. Why not keep the two classes in separate divisions? If we wish Philately to advance, we must encourage the collectors of *used* stamps—the youth of Philately—but they generally get precious little encouragement at exhibitions, for should they ever send in an exhibit they do not, as a rule, even secure a passing remark of admiration. I allude, of course, to small used collections belonging to our youth and not to large ones owned by more advanced collectors; although even the latter are more or less ignored when unused exhibits come into competition with them.

The young collectors of used stamps collect at a considerable disadvantage; they never gain medals or awards and hence they are outclassed. Medals should be offered for *used* stamps quite apart from unused, a method which would do no harm to the latter class but would do great good to the former. What chance has a collection of used stamps of securing a recommendation, to say nothing of a bronze medal? Silver and gold medals are seldom given unless there be a good sprinkling of unused with the exhibit (assuming the class in which it is shown to be open to both branches), or the country belongs to an advanced specialist who is practically complete in his exhibits. I fail to see why a good collection of, say, used British, is not worthy of as much



attention on the part of the judges as one of unused, but I have never yet heard of a gold medal being awarded for such an exhibit. Surely to get together the used specimens entails as much, if not more labour than to accumulate unused! It may not be so much a matter of "£ s. d.," but it is a matter of Philatelic research, and observation as regards obliterations, condition of specimens, etc., and it is this money question at exhibitions which, in my opinion, tends to thwart us with our pursuit. Medals should be given for collections apart from their monetary value so long as they are fairly representative; by adopting such a course, the youth of Philately would have a chance of securing a prize, and would be given increased encouragement in his philatelic labours.

The young collectors of unused stamps have far more assistance offered to them than the collectors of used stamps, but in what proportion are the latter to the former? Roughly speaking in the same proportion as the rich to the poor,—a proportion which has nothing like the attention shown to it by our leading Philatelists which it deserves and ought to have.

#### (V). SCHOOL TEACHING.

Here again much might be done to increase the interesting study of Philately amongst the youth of both sexes. At the present time, it is true, there is a decided improvement in this direction, for I know many schoolmasters who are collectors, and among them are some who persuade their pupils to take an interest in stamps, but whether masters collect or not, I consider that certain studies should be taught with examples of stamps as illustrations, for instance, geography, political history, the various coinage systems, etc.

As regards geography, the Atlas is all very well in its way, but it might at least be substituted at times by the study of

various postage stamps,—making use of enlarged plates, lanterns, etc. Geography can be made exceedingly interesting by stamp illustrations, political history especially so.

Take our latest Colony, the Transvaal; what a history its stamps impart to one! We have, to commence with, the first Republic, with her Arms depicted upon the stamps, then the first British Occupation with "V.R." added as an over-print; this latter series giving way to our late Queen's Head issue of 1878 to 1879; then comes the second Republic issue in two distinct types, of which the first was a temporary one only, being the Queen's Head issue over-printed in Dutch; followed, later, by the permanent issue, depicting the Transvaal Arms again; this latter type remaining in force (with certain varieties of design) until the close of the last Boer War, when the second British Occupation became a fact. Then appeared the "V.R.I." and in turn the "E.R.I." overprints, finally followed by the issue of King's Head stamps. Truly the political history of the Transvaal is splendidly represented by its various stamps.

One more illustration of a Colony, namely the Fiji Islands. We have its first issue with "C.R." (Caecumbau Rex), and values in English coinage, then the stamps surcharged with "cents," depicting American influence: later on these were additionally overprinted with "V.R." over the former "C.R.," showing renewed English supremacy, which was finally made secure by the simple "V.R." in the design, and our late Queen's Head on the two higher values.

The stamps of foreign countries are particularly instructive for the young, although I will only point out specially those of France and Spain, and the latter's former colonies of Cuba, etc. In France we have stamps showing changes from Monarchy to Republic, or Emperor to Figure of Liberty, and in Spain, from King to Queen, with insurrections shown by "Carlos" stamps,

coming between. The stamps of her former colonies following the political history of the Mother Country, are now overprinted with "American Coinage," finally to be replaced by separate American issues. What could depict clearer political history than these stamps? From another point of view, what art gallery of able and world renowned men could be better referred to than the various United States stamps, with their portraits of Washington, Lincoln, Grant, Garfield, etc.? Such illustrations amply suffice to advance my contention that an improved system of teaching at both public and private schools by means of stamp illustrations would go far towards making Philately more interesting to our youth of both sexes, not only at holiday times, but during school hours, or what boys and girls often consider as being periods of drudgery; thus a double advantage would accrue.

#### (VI.) SOCIETIES.

Our present stamp Societies, with very few exceptions,—such as "The Junior London,"—do not in any way touch the class of collectors on whose behalf I write. They do much good I fully admit, but not as much as they ought to do, and the reasons are clear enough; for one thing the members are either too advanced in years or in philatelic experience for young collectors to join them; they naturally fight shy of associating with the "big wigs," and in many cases the subscriptions, rules, etc., bar them from entering. What we want are more *junior* societies,—formed especially with the object of encouraging our very young adherents to become members,—where expenses are normal, and where a young Philatelist may get advice and gain experience without feeling that he or she is an interloper, because they happen perhaps, at the time, to possess no great amount of spare cash or no great "rarities."

Many young collectors naturally belong to this latter category, and it often makes them discouraged and disheartened when they

cannot join a Society consisting mostly of those in similar positions, with, of course, men of standing to back them up. Why should this be so? Is there no remedy? A young collector who has only small means at his disposal to spend upon his stamps, may be just as keen a philatelist as a wealthy one, and in time, with careful consideration and instruction, may turn out as true a collector as his wealthy confrère; as he grows up he may become possessed of such means as will enable him to spend more upon his stamps, thus bringing him further into touch with the affluent collector. Why then should such a one be allowed to drop out of Philately's ranks? If we don't encourage this class, then Philately will lose for ever many of its strongest devotees, for it is collectors like these who, with help and encouragement, will eventually (if life be spared to them) blossom out into leading philatelists, putting the "monetary" value of what they may hereafter possess as regards their collection entirely aside as not being essential to my arguments. Philately has ample scope for both the instructed and non-wealthy, as well as the wealthy. Both are essential to its very existence, for the wealthy cannot rule it alone any more than our aristocracy can rule our country. They are of great service doubtless, but they are only the small proportion where any pursuit is concerned.

I repeat, that if we wish Philately to continue to prosper, to increase in popularity, and to hold its own with other sciences (call it a *minor* science if you will, but still a science, as there are certain facts and principles about it definitely agreed upon), we must study our young collectors more than we are doing. The present generation of advanced and medium philatelists must, in nature's ordinary course, give way to others younger, and if the latter are allowed to diminish for want of proper education the result must be clear to everyone. We train our youth in business habits, in diplomacy, in science, in art, etc., so that they may keep up our country's prosperity and position in the world, and I say

that even in Philately, the "boy makes the man and the girl the woman," just as much as in other things.

Let us then do all we can to help the youth of both sexes as I have suggested. There can be but little doubt that Philately will then more than hold its own with other pursuits, and the present generation of advanced adherents will be enabled to hand over their labours to those who come after them, in the full conviction that these efforts have not been in vain, but will make the basis upon which Philately has been founded as firm as a rock! "A posse ad esse." "Delectando pariterque monenda."

In conclusion, I would add that some of the examples under Division V. are taken from articles written by a personal friend, and certain of the stamps illustrating those examples were kindly lent to me for the purpose by a well-known firm of dealers, to whom I again take the opportunity of expressing my thanks for their courtesy. The other illustrations were from my own collection.

The following lines are taken from the late Gilbert E. Lockyer's little book on "Colonial Stamps." They are very applicable—especially where patience is concerned—not as regards any trouble I may have had to make up details for my paper, but touching the patience of my indulgent readers.

"When courage flagged, and patience weary grew,  
It was thy voice which turned my strings anew  
Soothing encouragement, when needed most,  
You gave, and sent me fresher to the post.  
So, cheered when wavering, I stuck to letters,  
Adhesive to the last, and felt no fetters,  
Perfect or imperf., now at length 'tis done,  
Accept then the results, thou friendly one."

