A PLEA FOR PHILATELY AND PHILATELISTS
BY “COSMOPOLITAN.”

“Let those collect who ne’er did it before,
“And those who do collect, do it the more.”

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Many well meaning sensible people, smile and scoff at the idea of persons, who are perhaps, as sensible as themselves, collecting what they profanely term “Dirty little bits of paper.” Yet perhaps these very individuals are accumulating at home, and guarding with the tenderest care and solicitude, a heap of dirty coppers in the shape of pennies; paying fabulous prices for some, because our wise and beneficient Uncle Samuel does not see fit to issue but a limited number. Or others whose sole object in life, is to possess a certain Beetle, or Butterfly, others of whom an old black letter worm eaten tome is a mine of wealth. In short all men have their hobbies, just as little girls used to have their dolls some few years ago, before they became ready made women. Now, brother collectors of minerals, prints, coins, plants, engravings, buttons! books, &c., why should not I have my hobby, and follow it out interest of being ridiculed? My friend of the button-mania, what interest is it to me, that you possess a collection of 15,000 different buttons. All I care about them is that my “Cara Sposa” supplies them to my clothes when needed. The idea of collecting buttons, ha! ha! I have just as good a right to laugh at you, as you sneer at me for being a philatelist. My friend the herpetologist, I don’t care for your fine specimen of “Issthognathus DeKagir,” or “Phyrsnosonas Donglasie.” What to me are birds, serpents, coins, books, ferns, &c., when I revel in the beauties of a rare and valuable postage stamp. Let us then as we all require a certain degree of forbearance, from the eminently practical people of our country, for our little foibles; cling to each other and bringing home to our minds, the old age, “One man’s meat is another man’s poison.” cease to ridicule each other’s fancies. Let us take a view of the few benefits to be derived from the study of philately, and ask ourselves why it is preferable as an amusement and occupation to the thousand and one, other subjects for collectors to expend their mental energies upon. A person collecting minerals, or other objects of a like nature, can never expect to make his collection complete; besides even to possess a respectable collection of books, coins, &c., requires a very large expenditure of time and money, much more than many collectors could afford, even were they willing to give. These collections are bulky, require great care for their proper preservation, and much study, to be properly posted up as to their history. To none of these objections is philately liable. For a moderate expense an excellent collection of stamps can be procured, a collection can be made complete, at least, during the lifetime of the collector. It requires very little trouble to keep it in complete order, and can be carried about in a small parcel. To the young school-boy who is supplied by his doting parents, with a sufficiency of spending money, for his little wants, apples, tops, kites, &c., and a little over, there can be nothing more improving and interesting, than the study of philately. He supplies himself at a very moderate cost, with a good album and catalogue, and goes to work. In the interval of study and rainy days, when outdoor sports have to be given up, he can always find an inexhaustible store of amusement in his album.

In pursuing this study, he becomes acquainted with a part of the history of different countries, some of which perhaps he would never otherwise have heard of. He learns who the sovereigns were, and naturally turns to his history to find out all he can about them. He comes across a stamp of “Heligoland,” or the “Orange Free States,” and straightway consults his geography to find out the localities of these heretofore unknown lands. He sees many different varieties of paper, good, bad and indifferent, and is
led to inquire the process of manufacture, how the watermarks are put in, &c. Viewing with an artistic eye
the engraving on a stamp, his mind naturally inquires how it is done, - how the perforations are made, - in
short there are many of these little points of interest, that are as a sealed book, to the “profane.” He further
becomes acquainted with the currency of different countries, and heraldry if he has a taste for armorial
bearings, his fancy can be amply gratified in this occupation – as many of the stamps are simply a picture
of the coat of arms, of the country, to which they belong.

If his means will allow, let him take a good journal, and keep himself well up in the changes
taking place in stamps, new emissions, and withdrawals. I would say to my school boy friends, and they
area ll my friends, for I have a most kindly feeling for them and their amusements. If you have time,
funds, and disposition, collect, and by all means, take my word for it, you will find in it pleasure and
profit. I don’t know whether school boys now-a-days eat molasses candy or not, (they did when I was a
boy not a great while ago,) but if they do, let them, instead of ministering to their appetites for sweets,
invest in something that will certainly improve their minds. In case they become tired of stamp collecting,
they can always sell their specimens for a fair price. Now, what I have been saying to school boys applies
just as well to children of larger growth. Any one who will give himself the slight trouble to investigate
the subject of Philately, will be sure to find in the science, a vast fund of general information, and
pleasure. Some days since, I had the pleasure of conversing with a middle aged gentleman, who I
discovered purchasing stamps, and upon my expressing my gratification, at so practical a man as himself
making a collection; he informed me that his pet hobby for years, had been the collecting of minerals, but
accumulating, they took up too much room to be properly displayed, so he had packed them in boxes and
commenced stamp collecting, and found it more interesting to him by far than minerals.

It is a well known, and recognized fact, that one of our prominent New York merchant princes,
has the finest collection of stamps in the world, and when we take into consideration the fact that in
Europe celebrated “Savans” have not considered i beneath their dignity, to devote their valuable time, to
the study of Philately – we should not judge ourselves wrong in following their footsteps. I propose in a
future paper, to give our friends who feel sufficiently interested to follow me, a complete description of
the manufacture of our own stamps, embracing the making of the paper employed, describing how they
are engraved, printed, perforated, and embossed, the quantities used in the course of a year, and a variety
of information which I think will prove interesting and useful to all collectors of Postage Stamps.