To the Editor of THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PHILATELY:

DEAR SIR. – With reference to the arrangement of a collection of stamps, I beg to present my views. Within the past eight years I have collected in no less than a dozen different albums, and have made use of nearly every known classification. I have tried the alphabetical and geographical systems, but owing to the large increase of stamps, both have proven a failure. A friend assured me that I should be entirely satisfied with the chronological arrangement; so I began the usual task of remounting my specimens, but ere the job was half completed I abandoned the idea, because I could not determine the date of issue of many sets of stamps. Indeed I believe, that even now the precise data of a number of emissions, remain unknown. By this time I have found myself decidedly out of pocket, for I had to purchase many new specimens to replace those I had soiled or torn while changing from album to album.

So I resolved to make a final attempt, and have at last invented a plan of my own, which has at least, I think, the merit of originality. I purchased of my stationer a blank book which contains eighty leaves because I think a toned paper adds materially to the general appearance of the stamps. The only order that I have adopted is simply that of separating the nations representing the five grand divisions of the world which occupy different portions of the book. I have divided the pages (which are about twelve inches square) into quarters and halves for the better accommodation of countries which have only a few varieties, such as Antigua, Malta, &c.; in some cases, however, I have allowed two or more pages to countries which boast of new emissions every six months or a year, for example: Spain and New Grenada.

In case I require more leaves I have a quantity of loose ones which can easily be attached to the guards with a little mucilage. Being somewhat of a draftsman I have empanelled the spaces already referred to into squares, ovals and circles and I find it adds decidedly to the appearance of the specimens.

The book contains no printed headings, partly because a connoisseur requires no guidance of this sort and partly to save space. My collection is so arranged that estimating no larger increase than has been presented the past eighteen months, my album has sufficient room to accommodate all emissions for the next ten years. In one word it gives me entire satisfaction.

I availed myself of the valuable advice of the great English collector Mr. Avery Taylor in many points. Thus I always give preference to uncancelled stamps, yet I would in no wise despise the obliterated specimens, as one has frequently to content himself with this kind owing to the extreme variety of the former. As to envelopes – some I collect entire in order to preserve the watermarks which in many instances are very interesting and beautiful viz: Russia, &c., and in other cases because it is the only way to decide the issue they belong to; for example the North and South Germany sets. But as a general rule I keep only that portion of the envelope which contains the impression. I cut it from the other part about one inch from the stamp, reserving only the underneath portion which aids in mounting the stamps. I attach my adhesives merely by a single line on the back of the stamp, very similar to the idea of the “Lady Collector” in number two of your work. I reject all stamps which are not really employed as
“Postal labels” and this list includes Proofs, Essays, Telegraph and the thousand and one varieties known as local stamps to which I pay little or no attention.

Trusting you will pardon me for so lengthy a letter, I beg to subscribe myself,

LITTORIA.