BE STEADFAST
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(The Philatelic Advocate, Berlin, Ontario, Vol. 7, No. 4 – October 1899)

Whatever else you may do, if you are a stamp collector, be steadfast; be persistent in the collecting of stamps. Don’t go wild over the pastime for awhile, pester the life out of our friends and bore them to death, only to become later lukewarm and finally drop collecting altogether. Instead, go slow; make up your mind to become a permanent addition to the ranks. By doing this, you will have plenty of time, and will not have to rush around like a wild man, seeking for stamps. You will find a good stamp here, a nice specimen there, will add them to your collection, and will keep this up steadily and continuously for years and years. What will be the result? Ultimately you will find yourself possessed of a fine collection, a collection worth perhaps several thousand dollars – certainly several hundred dollars.

The person who is steadfast in the collecting of stamps, is the person who is rewarded in a wonderful degree; and it is the collector who is flighty, who is all enthusiasm for a few weeks, only to let his enthusiasm ooze out after a short period, who not only does not get much benefit from the pastime, but will lose by it, as he buys specimens for his album at retail rates, and then sells them back at wholesale, losing considerable by the operation.

A case in point: The Chicago correspondent of a stamp journal says that a certain dealer in that city has within the past three or four years bought back from a collector there, several collections, the collector being attacked so often with the collecting fever and while it is upon him, buys freely, masses a fairly good collection only to have his interest and enthusiasm lapse, the selling of the collection back to the dealer following as a matter of course. Now this is folly of the worst kind. If the collector in question had been steadfast in the collecting of stamps, and had hung on to his first collection, and kept adding to it as he could, he would not have a valuable collection, and one worth considerably more than it cost, instead of having no collection at all and being out quite a good deal of money besides.

I urge all collectors who are collecting at all, to give this matter their attention. Make up your minds that you are in the ranks for good and all, that you will collect so long as you live: by doing this, you will eliminate the element – a disastrous one it is, too – of “hurry” from your collecting. You know you have plenty of time; you do not have to make a complete collection in a few weeks or months. You are enlisted not only “for the war” but for life, and you can afford to take your time. To do this insures several things: 1. Perfect specimens, since you are in no hurry, and can wait until a perfect specimen comes your way. 2. A handsome collection, because having plenty of time you can arrange the stamps in a handsome manner. 3. A good collection and a valuable one, at a low price, for the reason that being in no hurry, you can take your time and wait and watch for bargains, and when seen you can take advantage of them to your great benefit. 4. An ultimate fine collection, for all the reasons set forth above. Having plenty of time in which to make the collection, the result can not be otherwise than that you will ultimately be the possessor of a handsome and valuable collection.

It is a common thing nowadays to read of collectors returning to the ranks who were collectors years and years ago, and who for one reason or another quit collecting. Nine times out of ten it will be fond that these collectors went into the work in the first place without any set idea of making it any
permanent thing, they did not have much knowledge of the pastime but had become interested in it through hearing so much about collecting, and after they had collected for awhile, let their interest wane, and later quit altogether. Then, years later, having learned that there are thousands of collectors in the United States and Canada, and tens of thousands in the world, and having learned that stamps are valuable, that there are hundreds of publications devoted to nothing else save stamps and stamp collecting, they have become interested a second time and have started to collect again. And it is from these collectors a net bellum days that come the wails over old collections lost, destroyed or given away, which, had the owners started collecting right, and remained steadfast in the work, would have been worth enough to set said owners up in business, or enable them to take life easy for a few years at least.

Lack of steadfastness is the chief difficulty to be met with in the case of young collectors. I do not think the stamp journals, as a rule, impress this point upon the minds of young collectors to the degree that they should. If you will convince the young collector that it will pay him to become a permanent collector he will become one; if you let him think the pastime is merely a fad, to be fostered and indulged in for awhile and then dropped, you assist in keeping the percentage of permanent collectors from the ranks of the young down to a low notch. The young collector is not told to go slow and build up a collection by degrees, but to hustle and get a collection as quickly as possible, or he will get left – which results, too often, in the young collector making strenuous efforts, in the spending of all his pocket money, and finally in his becoming tired and discouraged, where, had he been taught aright and told to go slow and to take his time, buying only when he is sure he is getting a bargain and when he can spare the money, he would never have become tired of the pastime, and discouraged or disgusted. The young collector must have a little money for other pleasures; stamp collecting will not fill the entire bill. In a few years, however, he will have become a determined persistent collector, and one who will spend his money freely, when he has the money to spare, and the dealers who did not make much off his trade when he was in the incipient stage, so to speak, of the collecting fever, will then, and forever after, have opportunities in plenty of reaping profits from his trade.

Encourage the young collector to be steadfast in the collecting of stamps, to become a permanent collector; it will pay us all, for it will cause the number of collectors to grow more rapidly, and every addition to the ranks makes the collections, already formed and forming, more valuable.