

THE
London Philatelist:

THE MONTHLY JOURNAL OF
THE ROYAL PHILATELIC SOCIETY, LONDON.

VOL. XX.

APRIL, 1911.

No. 232.

The Catalogue of Philatelic Literature.



“HAPPY is the nation that has no history” is one of those proverbs that possess a substantial modicum of truth, and indeed applies as much to the individual person as to the aggregate population. Whether it is equally applicable to a science or pursuit is, however, doubtful, while, judging from the records in the “Crawford Library” elsewhere referred to, the reverse of the proverb would appear to be the case. Stamp collecting is barely fifty years old, and the stamps themselves only twenty years older; but an array of literature has grown up round them that is absolutely surprising, nor do we believe that its parallel can be found with regard to any other kindred pursuit. Nor has the “happiness” of Philately ever been doubtful!

The fact that it requires one thousand columns, of pages fourteen inches in height, to place on record practically all the known existing philatelic writings is truly extraordinary. To the ordinary collector of philatelic literature it may well give pause and raise the question as to what he shall collect. To be a general or omnivorous collector is to woo an impossibility, except to the very few; and the vast majority of those interested in philatelic literature must inevitably limit the scope of their acquisition if any idea for completeness is entertained.

The analysis of the enormous number of publications in Lord Crawford’s library would reveal that only a very small portion of these works are of any permanent interest, while the absolutely essential volumes can probably be numbered by the hundred. The future of philatelic literature will probably resemble that of British Entomology, where there are many collectors of the limited number of butterflies, and only the ultra-scientific who can aspire to the acquisition of the thousands of species of British moths and “bugs” generally. These small fry—both philatelic and entomologic—exist, however, and it is absolutely essential that their several existences should be duly “entered upon the minutes” of the science, hence do we most gratefully acknowledge Lord Crawford’s magnificent efforts in the collection of philatelic literature.

The growing importance of the limitation of collecting as regards postage stamps themselves is emphasized by the foregoing reflections. If the time has already arrived when the collection of all the literature of stamps is impossible, how long will it be before the objects themselves will fall under the same category? The present catalogues, which incline more and more to smaller varieties, and the enormous quantity of new issues are rapidly rendering general collecting impossible, and the day must come—and before long—when, like the literature collectors, completeness will be out of the question, except within circumscribed areas.

The moral of the present instance is: that the existence of every variety, however small, must be acknowledged and catalogued, whether in stamps or its literature, but that the attempt to successfully collect more than a section is impossible to the ordinary individual.

Some Comments on the Stamps of Uruguay, with particular reference to Mr. Hugo Griebert's Book.

The Errors in the Plating of the *Diligencia* 1 real,
the Discovery of Varieties of the 60 Centavos,
and the Plating Guides for the 80 Centavos.

A PAPER READ BEFORE THE ROYAL PHILATELIC SOCIETY, LONDON, ON MARCH 2, 1911.

By CHARLES LATHROP PACK.*



MR. HUGO GRIEBERT'S book on the stamps of Uruguay published last year by Stanley Gibbons, Limited, has added largely to our knowledge of these philatelically interesting issues, and full credit, I am sure, is given him for the results of long study at a time when little was known as to the arrangements of the plates of the earlier issues. I think his best achievement is the successful plating work done on the 80 centavos, and the partial plating of the 1 real. All students realize that his has been a work difficult to accomplish. There remains, however, now something more to tell, and without any pretence that I have completely covered the subject, I will undertake here to give some of the results of my own study of the early stamps of Uruguay. I hope what I have to say may be of some help to other collectors.

Students of the stamps of Uruguay will recall that on p. 3 of *A Study of the Stamps of Uruguay*, Mr. Griebert says, in reference to the *Diligencia* issue of 1856, "There is not the slightest variety in any of the 60 centavos, with the exception of the face and hair in the centre of the sun." On p. 5 we also read, "There not being any varieties of the 60 centavos, no comment need be made." I found it difficult to understand these statements, because I have felt for a long time that important varieties

* In the unavoidable absence of Mr. Pack, his stamps were displayed and his Paper read by Mr. Thos. W. Hall.