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MALTA AND HER STAMPS.

The island of Malta is situated in the Mediterranean sea about sixty miles from Cape Passaro the most Southern point of Sicily, and is the largest island of the Maltese group. Its greatest length is eighteen miles and its greatest breadth is ten miles.

Malta is said to have been occupied by a colony of Phoenicians and later, by the Greeks. The Carthagivians, the Romans and the Arabs have also had possession of it at various times.

In 1120 the Arabs, who were then in possession, of the island, were driven out, by Count Roger the Norman Conqueror, of Sicily, with which country Malta was then united.

In 1516 Sicily and the Maltese islands passed to the Emperor Charles V, as heir, to the crown, who granted the islands of Malta and Gozo to the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, who had recently been expelled from Rhodes, by the Turks.

The Knights, who were practically the rulers of the islands, held them until 1798 when a French expedition obtained possession.

The French government was, however, found to be so oppressive that the inhabitants revolted and on the fifth of September, 1800 the islands

were taken possession of by the British who have held them ever since.

At present Malta is the headquarters of the British Mediterranean fleet during half of the year,

Malta is under the rule of a governor assisted by a council of six persons nominated by the crown.

The population in 1890 was estimated at about 165,500 of which 2274 were English.

Sixty years after the British took possession of the islands, Malta issued her first stamp on which the well known portrait of Queen Victoria appeared. with "Malta" above and "One half penny" below. This stamp

was printed in buff, on unwatermarked paper and was perforated 14. The following year there must have been a second printing, as we find the stamp printed on bluish paper.

The supply of these could not have lasted long, as in 1863 there was another printing, this time on paper watermarked Crown C.C. Later on the perforation was changed to 12½ and 12½ x 14.

In 1881 the watermark was changed to Crown C.A. and the perforation back to 14.

Up to 1885 Malta managed to get along with

