

PHILIPPINES.—(*Provisional \$1, \$2 and \$5*). Contrary to the postal arrangements of all the other United States colonies, the Philippines are to continue to use surcharged stamps. A recent supply sent from Washington comprises 1,000 \$1.00, 1,000 \$2.00 and 500 \$5.00 values which had not been previously used in the colony.

TRANSVAAL.—(*3d. E.R.I. on 2d.*). The 3d. green E.R.I. listed in our August number has been sold out and the 2d. value converted into a 3d. stamp. Mr. Geo. Chipp, of Port Elizabeth, sends us the following interesting letter dated August 16th. "About the E.R.I.'s the 1d. value "was the first to receive this over-print "early in April and is still current, the 3d. "green, however, was not surcharged "E.R.I. until the beginning of this month " (August) and was sold out within a few "days of issue, whether bought up by "speculators, or owing to the supply "being very small, I am at present unable "to say, certain it is that an immediate "need was created for a stamp of this "value, which was met by overprinting "the 2d. value with E.R.I. and surcharging "it with HALF PENNY in black."

UNITED STATES.—(*A McKinley mourning stamp contemplated*). The U.S. cabinet has under consideration a proposition to issue the current 2c stamp with a black border around the head of Washington as a mourning commemoration of the late president. It is also proposed to issue a specially designed stamp in black with a portrait of Mr. McKinley. The question is yet undecided; a precedent for the issue of such a stamp can be found in the issue in 1866 of the black 15c head of Lincoln. As we go to press we hear it has been decided to represent McKinley on a new issue of postcards, to appear about December 1st.

VICTORIA.—(*Commemorative post-cards*). In our February number we briefly mentioned the 1d. card issued in five different colors, commemorative of the Commonwealth. We have since received these cards; the stamp is of the current type of adhesive (Scott A. 26) with the word POSTAGE and they are printed in brown, red, blue, grey black and green.

ZANZIBAR.—(*1 and 1/2 annas, colors changed.*) *Le Collectionneur* reports the 1 anna in carmine instead of blue and the 1/2 annas in blue instead of orange, also an envelope of 1 anna red of the same type as the adhesive stamps.

THE QUEEN'S STAIRCASE.

In regard to the scene depicted on the new Bahamas 1d stamp, Mr. J. S. Snas-dell, who has resided on the Islands, has kindly given us the following information:

The centre picture represents a very beautiful and somewhat mysterious curiosity in the vicinity of Nassau, the capital of New Providence, the chief of the Bahama Islands. It is a great passage-

way cut through the solid coral rock. The cut is about 1/2 mile long, 40 feet wide and about 70 feet in depth; at the end is what is called the Queen's Staircase, (cut in the rock) which leads to Fort Fin-castle, built about 150 years ago on the high land just above the stairway.

The exact object of this cutting is not known, but it is presumed it was to allow the soldiers to pass to and from the harbor and fort without observation.

SPECULATIVE STAMPS AND COUNTERFEITS.

(The stamps described under this heading, we would advise collectors to avoid, as manufactured either by official authority or by private individuals for their own gain at the expense of philatelists.)

PORTO RICO.—(*Counterfeits of the 1893 Commemoratives*). A considerable number of imitations of these commemorative stamps are in circulation; the engraving is defective in many respects, and the letters of the inscription at bottom CENTAVOS DE PESO are too large, measuring 2 M.M. in height instead of 1 1/2 M.M. The genuine stamps are perforated 12, the forgeries 11 1/2.

UNITED STATES.—(*Forgery of the 1855-60 30c.*) Mr. C. E. Severn describes in *Mekeel's Weekly* an engraved counterfeit of the rare first issued U. S. 90c., which comes from Italy. The perforation of the forgery is 12 instead of the genuine gauge 16. The eyes on the counterfeit are weak and poorly defined, and no tuft of hair is seen at the right of the head. The lettering is defective and there are other minor differences. Being engraved, this counterfeit is more dangerous than the well-known lithographic imitation of the same stamp.

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SOUTH AFRICAN STAMP NOTES.

By H. Rudd, Cape Town.

From a letter which appeared in one of the local papers, I learn that some of the Transvaal V.R.I. surcharges, fell into the hands of the Boers, who deleted the V.R.I. and then used the stamps for their own correspondence. The writer, who is in the Johannesburg Mounted Rifles, gathered this information from a wounded Boer P. O. Official, who gave him some of the stamps, and states very few are obtainable on the original envelopes. He offers to identify any submitted to him for inspection.

ONE OF THE PRIVILEGES OF PHILATELY.

Shortly before the Duke of York's arrival, several local Philatelists were asked by a prominent official to send him any good South African stamps they could spare for presentation to the Duke. An acquaintance of mine, doing this, received, shortly before the Duke's departure, a photo signed by H. R. H. and a letter of thanks for his contribution.