

**SOME POPULAR ERRORS.**

EDGAR S. BRIGHTMAN.

And errors are popular; there's no denying that. Oh, I don't mean errors in stamps—they would be more popular if less expensive—but errors in opinion and judgment; and it really seems that the more erratic the error is, the readier the unthinking public is to accept it as very gospel. The wonderful eccentricities and vagaries of the philatelic public would almost lead one to infer that stamp collectors are, as a class, deficient in intellect, were it not for the fact that we have daily proof that the whole world is decidedly unaccountable in its actions, so we may console ourselves on that score.

The first popular delusion to which I will take occasion to refer is in regard to surcharges. But perhaps it would be doing a majority of the people injustice to call it "popular," but among a certain class it has gained a considerable following, and this following makes its presence known most vociferously.

Stated briefly, the delusion is this: Surcharges are not good looking, are speculative, are bound to depreciate in value, and are not worthy of a place in any self-respecting collector's album. The last statement does not deserve any reply and the first depends largely on individual taste; although for myself, I think that a neat surcharge and they generally are neat—does not detract one whit from the beauty of a stamp, for they are, in most cases, impressed on the stamp so as to avoid defacing the design. With regard to the assertion that they are speculative, a moment's thought shows that to be fallacious. It is true that many surcharges are speculative, but that proves nothing whatever, either for or against it, for it is equally true that many unsurcharged ordinary stamps are also speculative. I believe, and with reason, that the majority of the ordinary issues are not speculative in any sense of the term, and likewise by far the greater part of those which have been surcharged were treated thus under stress of the necessity of the postal service, and not for mere sale to stamp collectors.

Concerning the value of this kind of stamps, it is an easy matter to assert in glittering generalities that they decrease in price. But these generalities mean nothing unless backed up by figures and by facts. I will give a few facts from the catalogue. Let the reader bear in mind that the fifty-seventh edition of the catalogue was subject to much greater discounts than the fifty-ninth, and that 1897 was an

era of inflated prices. Remembering this, I say notice the following figures with regard to surcharges, and then think. Opening my catalogue at random, I happened to turn to Mauritius, and a number of surcharges there attracted my notice. Number forty nine, is priced \$10.00 in the fifty ninth, only \$7.00 in the fifty seventh. Number eighty is in the fifty ninth \$1.00, and in the previous one 50c. Then casting my eye over the Natal pages, I find that numbers eighteen to forty six inclusive, are all surcharges, and that out of twenty eight stamps, there were but four which lost in price from 1897 to 1900, and the total decrease was twenty seven cents! contrast this with the gains made by the other twenty four, in one case as much as \$20.00, and then, if you can, say that surcharges are not a good investment. Or if it be considered unfair to speak only of British colonies, there is Porto (not Puerto, if you please) Rico. Numbers one to thirteen are all surcharges, and unsightly ones at that, but there is not one of them that lost a hair's breadth in their price. And so on, ad infinitum, one might give countless instances to prove that surcharges are good things financially. I trust that the public will see the error of its way and no longer vilify these innocent and desirable stamps.

But I promised at the beginning of this article to tell you about some errors, and here's only one that I've mentioned, and my space is all used up. Well, I'm sorry but maybe I will have a little more to say in the future.

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