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NEWS OF THE MONTH

The most important event, directly affecting stamp collectors that has occurred since our last issue, is undoubtedly the absorption into the "Greatest Empire that has been" of the Orange Free State, the capitulation of the Capital of the South African Republic, and the utter collapse of the Boers as an independent power in the Dark Continent. Several of the interesting stamp issues and postal make-shifts arising from the state of war are recorded in this number. Doubtless others will come to light in course of time. The political events that will now ensue as a result of the war, will certainly be recorded in the postal issues that will take place, once more proving that philatelic science is the surest and speediest barometer of historical events. Another step towards stamps for the Commonwealth of Australia has been taken by the introduction of the Federation bill in the British House of Commons. When this measure is completed it will mean the closing of the record of the stamps for six different colonies.

In commercial philately an event of first class importance has also occurred, in the sale of Mr. M. P. Castle's wonderful collection of unused European stamps. This collection is undoubtedly the finest of its class in existence, it comprises over 60,000 specimens, and has been purchased by an English collector for £30,000, the largest sum ever yet paid for a single philatelic purchase. The purchaser whose name has not been made public, will preserve the collection intact, and being desirous of adding to it, is now advertising through the agents who negotiated the sale, that he wishes to buy fine unused stamps, especially pairs and blocks.

ENTRANCES AND EXITS.

BAVARIA. — The German papers announce the issue of two high value adhesives 3 marks brown and 5 marks light

green, of same design, perforation and watermark as the 1 and 2 marks, (A 4); also single and reply cards of 2 pf. value, printed in grey.

BECHUANALAND PROTECTORATE. — During the siege of Mafeking runners were employed to carry correspondence through the Boer lines of investment. For this service it is reported that Cape Colony stamps were used, an extra tax for the special service being surcharged on each stamp. We have seen the current Cape ½d surcharged 1d, the 1d surcharged 3d, and the 3d surcharged 6d, with the words "Mafeking" above and "Besieged" below the added values. Whether these stamps were a private speculation, or whether they emanate from the post office, our correspondent does not inform us. It seems strange that Cape stamps should have been employed instead of those of Great Britain which have been regularly used in Bechuanaland since 1897, but stranger things happen during war time. *Even's W. S. News* also reports the British Bechuanaland 3d lilac (Scott 13) and 4d green and brown (Scott 35) surcharged 6d and 1 shilling respectively.

BELGIUM. — The color of the 1 franc stamp has at last been settled, it now appears in orange on white and the 2 fr. is now printed in lilac on white instead of on a rose back ground. These changes are made by an official order of the Postal Administration dated April 17, and the new colors come into use with the exhaustion of the old.

BOSNIA. — The new series is now completed by the issue of 10 heller post cards, letters cards and envelopes in red, letter cards of 6 h. brown, and reply cards 5 x 5 h. green.

BULGARIA. — The adhesives are now printed on thin greyish paper and the colors are all changed in shade. Correcting the announcement made last month