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Side Lights on Stamps.

Leaving it to the enthusiastic specialist to exult over some stamp, which (by the aid of his perforation gauge) he has ascertained to be notched along one of its sides to the scale of nearly 13 instead of the normal $12\frac{1}{2}$; the intelligent and thoughtful philatelist will discover in his Album a veritable treasure-house of information, unfolding to his mind a sort of dioramic procession—a chronicle of many of the most important and striking events which crowd the pages of Modern History.

How instructive and at the same time how pleasurable it is to trace out in this way the story of the unification of Italy; the consolidation of Canada; the transition from cantonal to federal government in Switzerland; or to notice how large a number of stamp-issuing states has finally become merged into the German Empire!

But it is not merely with generalities that we have to deal. The internal commotions and political changes of many countries are also graphically described; and Spain will furnish us with a good example by way of illustration.

Beginning with the year 1850 and extending onward until 1867, we are confronted by various emissions of stamps, mostly bearing the profile of Queen Isabella. Though occasionally the royal arms.

But then a change! The next year shows the same stamps in provisional use, but having the obnoxious features defaced and overprinted with the legend "Habilitado por la Nacion" or (even more explicit and suggestive) "Habilitado por la Junta Rebolucionaria"; in the case of one particular commune the head being first turned upside down, so that no indignity might be wanting. Then we have a regular issue with an allegorical figure; giving way in turn to a kindly portrait during the brief reign of Amadeo, who so keenly experienced the bitter truth of the adage: "Uneasily lies the head that wears a crown."

Then comes more allegorical figures; followed by royal portraits once again in the successive sets of Alphonso XII possibly indicative of his sorrows and his wasting life, until we arrive at another change which prompts the student to exclaim:—

"What is this
That rises like the issue of a king,
And wears upon his baby brow the round
And top of sovereignty?"

And thus we are brought face to face with the present possessor of the Spanish crown—the only instance in modern times of one "borne in purple," a monarch from the very moment of his birth.

In addition to all this, an interesting side-light is thrown upon the narrative by the Carlist stamps, which testify of another claimant to the throne; while the war tax