

occasioned by the paper having shrunk to some extent since the stamps were printed, and this would also count for the fact of the perforation gauging 13 instead of 12½." I agree with Major Evans, as I hope to prove later on, that there is no doubt the stamps are from the same matrices, which is, I suppose, Major Evan's meaning when he calls them plates. But, as Mr. Tapling points out in the *Timbre-Poste*, I think he is wrong in saying this can only have been occasioned by shrinkage in paper, because if so it is only a natural inference that the short Crown C C stamps, the existence of which Major Egan does not seem to have noticed, are due to shrinkage also, in which case, according to him, the perforation ought to be 13, instead of which it is 12½.

Mr. Tapling, in his article, says they cannot be due to shrinkage of paper, because they have all shrunk evenly. I am afraid I must disagree with him, as they have shrunk, if shrinkage it is, most unevenly, as you will see from this table of measurements which I have prepared. I have taken off the measurements under a strong glass with a pair of fine compasses, and from a centimetre scale. You will see that you can hardly find two stamps of exactly the same measurements in the same value, though the difference in many cases is too small to signify.

I regret to say my endeavours to get any official information from Messrs. De la Rue have proved futile, as they say they are not at liberty to give any information as to their stamp issues. Therefore I must take my dates and other information derived from catalogues as correct for the present.

Before considering the measurements, it will, I think, be better to study the die or dies, paper, perforation, and watermark, and see if any of these bear on the question. Whether they do or not, some of the facts may be of interest.

DIES.

We will start with the assumption that the die for each value through all the issues is the same, and I think I shall show that it is. I believe I am correct in stating that the imperforated and perforated star-watermarked sets were engraved and printed by Messrs. Perkins, Bacon, and Co., and that in 1860 the contract was taken over by Messrs. De la Rue, together with the dies, and the stamps printed by them on their own paper. I understand the 1863 no-watermark set are supposed to have been printed by the former firm; but I am inclined to think that the change of paper, perforation, and colours in this set (the colours agreeing much more with the Crown and CC set than with the star sets, and we know the former were printed by Messrs. De la Rue) rather denote that they were printed by Messrs. De la Rue, and that they were unable or did not trouble, to use exactly the same pigments as were used by Messrs. Perkins, Bacon, and Co.

There are certainly three distinct designs for the heads, necessitating three dies, as can be seen by comparing a ½d., 1d. and 4d. The difference is so distinct that I need not particularize much. The crown differs in each, the heads differ in size and shape, and the 1d. type has earrings, which neither of the others have.