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The Stamps of Ste. Marie de Madagascar.

The island of Sainte Marie de Madagascar, which does not appear upon the maps of the American edition postage stamp albums, is situated at the north-east of the main island of Madagascar, between Choiseul on the north and Foulpointe on the south. Lake Alaotra is nearly opposite.

In 1892, when the set of stamps for Diego Suarez et Dependences was issued, the French colony of Ste. Marie de Madagascar was one of the dependencies of the government of Diego Suarez, and consequently the stamps Diego Suarez and dependencies were in use in Ste. Marie de Madagascar.

But later on some differences were raised regarding money valuations, for a dollar in one town was sometimes worth only 75 cents in another, causing a loss for the colony on the sale of postage stamps. Therefore a set of stamps of the same type as those used in other colonies was ordered from Paris, with the name of the colony, Ste. Marie de Madagascar, printed on them.

During the time required to print the stamps the following values of the Diego Suarez colony were surcharged "Ste. Marie de Madagascar" in a double-lined circle; in blue ink. This was in April, 1894, and the values were as follows:

1—On the 1881 issue of French colonies, perforated: 35c., black on orange.

2—On the 1872 issue of stamps of Diego Suarez et dependencies: 1c., black on blue; 2c., brown on buff; 4c., claret on lavender; 5c., green on greenish; 10c., black on lavender; 15c., blue on white quadrille paper; 20c., red on green; 25c., black on rose; 30c., brown on straw; 40c., red on straw; 50c. carmine on rose; 75c., black on orange; 1f., bronze-green on straw. These stamps were only surcharged for the needs of the colony, without any speculative purpose, and were not intended to be sold to stamp dealers. As only from 30 to 35 of each value, so surcharged are known to exist, it can safely be inferred that those provisionals are the scarcest of all the French colonial stamps, and come next to the Reunion, 1852 issue, in point of rarity.

In all probability those stamps were only used for one mail, as the sets with the name of the colony, "Ste. Marie de Madagascar," printed in Paris, were received in May, 1894, and consisted of 13 values, as follows:

1c., black on blue; 2c., brown on buff; 4c., claret on lavender; 5c., green on greenish; 10c., black on lavender; 15c., blue on white quadrille paper; 20c., red on green; 25c., black on rose; 30c., brown on straw; 40c., red on