

The question arises, what can we do to put a stop to it, or prevent its doing injury to philately? These surcharged stamps are collectable, undoubtedly, but whether they are necessary to the completeness of a collection, or not, I think is fairly open to question. A collector may reasonably say, I collect small engravings issued by various governments for use as postage stamps, if I have specimens of these in all their variations as manufactured for use, I do not care what may have been printed upon them in order to adapt them to other uses: if they were complete and available for postage without the surcharge, a specimen without the surcharge is all that I require. There are certain surcharged stamps that we should still admit on the above principle; under the head of *Montserrat* we should probably think it right to include the surcharged stamps of Antigua, there are the stamps of St. Helena again, and certain of the impressions from the Bermuda plates used at Gibraltar, which do not exist in particular colours unsurcharged; also similar stamps of Ceylon, Hongkong, Mauritius, &c., only printed in certain colours for the purpose of being surcharged, and which must be collected in that state or not at all. If collectors could be persuaded to reject or at least to refuse to give high prices for all the surcharged varieties which are simply postage stamps of one kind (complete in themselves) converted into postage stamps of some other kind, I am sure that this epidemic might speedily be stamped out, to the great benefit of philately and philatelists.

I have been studying lately a paper by a great authority on stamp-collecting, Dr. Legrand, well known as the Secretary of the Société Française de Timbrologie, upon the very subject: in which he expresses the opinion that we must accept these surcharged varieties because they were issued for use, no matter what may have occasioned the issue, and that all we have to do is to distinguish the genuine from the forged. But this is the great difficulty, and this difficulty is the great objection to these stamps from our point of view.

In the engraving and printing of stamps, great care as a rule is exercised to prevent risk of forgery: but in printing surcharges there is generally no necessity for anything of the kind, as the surcharge usually diminishes the facial value of the stamp. If anyone choose to purchase a supply of the unsurcharged stamps and print upon them a surcharge resembling more or less (or perhaps even *not* resembling) the official one, there would in all probability be no objection on the part of the authorities, even if they noticed any difference in the surcharge. For instance, suppose that provisional *penny* stamps were made by surcharging those of the value of *two pence*; any unscrupulous collector or dealer on the spot might purchase a supply of 2d. stamps, manufacture a special variety, or set of varieties of 1d. stamps for himself, taking care to pass a certain number through the post, and a few years later who could say which was the official, and which the unofficial type, unless all the copies of the latter were traced back to the one individual.

This is but one of the dangers connected with these surcharged stamps, the production of which should, I think, be discouraged as far as possible.