

the first plates for the Mauritius stamps might have multiplied his original designs by means of electrotyping, had he been acquainted with that process and had he possessed the necessary apparatus; but this it appears was not the case. When therefore it was found that the single stamp plates could not produce a sufficient supply of impressions, he set to work to engrave fresh plates with twelve types upon each, and these twelve types being separately engraved by hand, naturally no two of them are exactly alike, thus producing twelve typical varieties of each value of the stamps. These varieties differ very slightly from one another for the most part, it requiring close examination to discover the various types; there is, however, among the two-penny stamps one well marked variety formed by the engraver, having made the "c" of the word "Pence" an "o"; thus reading "Two Penoe." This curious error was apparently never altered, which it might very easily have been, for the letters on these stamps were not cut into the plate, but were left in relief, the portions which are dark in the stamps being cut away in the plates so as to receive the ink, so that by cutting away a small portion of the "o" it could have been made into a "c."

Looking at the general design of these stamps, if we disregard for a moment the lettered labels at the sides, I think it is evident that it is a rough copy of that of the English penny and two-penny stamps, a profile to left of the Queen with a diadem, the word "Postage" above, and the value below; it was then no doubt thought necessary to add some indication of the locality to which they belonged, accordingly the word "Mauritius" was placed on one side of the label. Something was necessary to balance this on the other, the words "Post Office" were natural enough, and, owing to the curious manner in which "Mauritius" is made to read from below upwards, if a stamp of the first issue be looked at from one side, its labels read "Post Office Mauritius." Why, when fresh plates were engraved, the words "Post Paid" were substituted for "Post Office" is hard to say, for with the word "Postage" at the top "Post Paid" was unnecessary.

These plates continued in use for about ten years, during which time they gradually became worn out, so that the later impressions from them only show traces of the original design, the lettering even becoming almost if not quite illegible; in consequence of this the postmaster in the early part of 1858 requested that the plates of the two-penny stamps (that value being the most used and that plate being consequently the most worn) might be re-engraved or a new one made. The old plate was placed in the hands of Mr. Sherwin who undertook to re-engrave it, but, who after some delay, returned it in an unfinished state in the latter part of the year, stating that he had no time to complete it. This plate was then submitted to another engraver, a Mr. Lapirot, whose opinion was, that it was too much worn to be of any further use, he at the same time undertook to engrave a fresh plate, which he apparently did early in 1859, for at all events before the end of March in that year a new variety of two-penny stamps made its appearance, also printed from a copper plate engraved in a similar manner to the earlier ones, and thus also showing twelve different types.

The design of the stamps engraved by Mr. Lapirot is, if anything, more curious than that of their predecessors, and although he attempted, what