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SURCHARGED STAMPS.

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TRANSLATED BY M. R. KNIGHT.

(Continued.)

1. Every surcharge modifying the value, the country, or the use of the stamp, ought to have been preceded by a decree or order, which prescribes it. All the probabilities are in favour of this supposition. One may venture to say that to-day there exists scarcely a country possessing stamps which does not reckon one or several collectors. It is for these to transmit to stamp journals, *copies of the decree or order.* But that is not enough. It is necessary that they send the *very No. of the local journal which publishes it*; at least, that they give the *No.*, the *date*, the *page* and *column* where the decree may be found. It is not enough to copy it, it is necessary that one may be able to verify it in the collections of public libraries, and that for the edition of stamp journals, a sight of the fragment of the local journals which has been sent to him, may leave no doubt as to the origin and authenticity.

2. In default of this capital proof, there may exist sufficient presumptive evidence. Thus, so far as the English colonies are concerned, it will be observed that the surcharge of the Delarue firm are very often in *Egyptian letters* and made *with method*. This may be considered as a strong presumptive proof; but the surcharged stamps of the British Colonies, are far from being found in this state. It will suffice to compare with one another the surcharges of the late stamps of Ceylon, to recognize that the first, known to be of native origin, are not in Egyptian letters, and yet their existence is not contested.

3. A third circumstance may render probable the existence of a surcharge in the absence of a decree or of the evidence just referred to. When a *change in the postal tariff* compels the creation of a new value, and recourse is had to a surcharge provisionally, haste is made to *prepare a new stamp without surcharge*, of the new value. It was thus with the 3 pence of the Cape. Is not this an indirect proof of the genuineness of the surcharged stamp? Also when a new series appears and we *do not find in it a stamp corresponding in value with the surcharged stamps previously issued*, we may affirm that these letters are the *work of a forger*. It is this consideration which led us to discredit the surcharge CUARTO of Columbia, which no journal, although the *Philatelic Record* may say so, has called in question until we manifested our incredulity before the Society.