

is however not advisable to immediately rush in for these stamps as from past experience they will doubtless be obtainable in a few years' time at or under face value.

One of the most interesting stamps that has ever been issued is that recently brought out by the Fins in opposition to the Russians who have decreed that henceforth only Stamps are to be used in their country. The stamps are large square shaped and totally black with the exception of the Finnish arms in one corner, the value being expressed on the back of the stamp. After being in use a few days the Russians prohibited their being employed and even if the Russian stamps fully frank the letter they are always returned to sender when this stamp is affixed as well. They are naturally very rare in a used condition and even unused are difficult to procure. I obtained a few from a friend just returned from Finland and he informs me that the greater part of the nation are in mourning on account of the cruel way in which they have been treated by the Russians, their little liberty that was granted them in years gone by now being denied them.

Two of the specimens of the Cape of Good Hope wood block were sold at auction last week, realizing 45 and 55 pounds each; both were very indifferent specimens. At the same time a U. S. 1869 inverted centre, fetched £22.

The Strand where all the principal London dealers have their premises has been all astir lately, what with Mafekings Orange Free State and Transvaal V.R.I. and trade in these is at present very brisk.

I have just received a letter from a correspondent in South Africa, in reply to my inquiry for the above

stamps, in which he says that O.F.S.V.R.I. are fetching 6os, the set up to 5s. in Cape Town, and also states that several of the values are already obsolete and advises the purchase of a set without delay.

Although it has been announced that all Finnish stamps were to be withdrawn and Russian substituted, it is now stated that this will be the case, but the Finnish currency will be still employed. It may also be of interest to note that the Finnish people are very much enraged with the Russian Government on account of this and as a result have issued a stamp of their own, but the Russians declining to recognize it have returned all letters franked with same to the senders and the stamp has now been placed off nearly all the notepaper of the various commercial houses as a protest and is of course not procurable in a used state, the color is almost black.

It is stated that the Mafeking besieged stamps have been very extensively forged and the Stamp Collectors Fortnightly in proof gives an illustration of four of these stamps all postmarked but undoubtedly forgeries. A complete set of these stamps realized in auction last week the sum of £39, at the same time the Mafeking monkey which sounded a bell whenever a big shot was fired by the Boers realized £44.

A new 2 franc French stamp has been issued provisionally until the design has been fixed for this value, this stamp is in appearance very much like the 4c. and may be easily mistaken for such as was the case in a club to which writer belongs, when this stamp was marked in a sheet at 4c. and passed by a dozen members without recognition. It is stated that it will only be issued for a few weeks. The new stamp will be of a larger size.