

collectors, and printed in colours to suit every taste have been consigned to the oblivion of the waste paper basket.

My fourth class is a far more troublesome one ; it consists of those varieties which many of us know, or believe, to be purely *Philatelic*, and which nevertheless are genuine issued stamps, and cannot well be refused admission to our collections. Of these, the great majority are formed by surcharges, and it is these surcharged varieties that I wish to say a few words about in this paper.

First let me endeavour to explain shortly what I mean by *Philatelic* varieties. We stamp collectors, or philatelists, are apt to misapply this word sometimes ; I have seen the term " *Philatelic Legislation* " applied to postal ordinances and notices, which had no more to do with philately than with mathematics, as if *Philatelic* and *Postal* were synonymous ; but by *philatelic* varieties, I imply those that owed their origin to the fact that there are people who collect stamps and not to the actual requirements of the people by whom they were to be used.

Let me give an example :—About the end of 1881 the supplies of 1c. and 2c. stamps ran short in British Guiana, to meet this other values were surcharged so as to convert them into 1c. and 2c. stamps. The first supply thus made was at once bought up by local collectors or speculators, and, I believe a second lot, similarly made, was exhausted in the same manner ; after which the authorities brought out the square type-set stamps, with a ship in the centre, and dated 1882, the sale of which was limited to prevent their being bought up also. Some of these plainly owed their existence to philately, had it not been for collectors the first provisionals made in 1881 would no doubt have lasted until fresh supplies arrived from England ; still, all the numerous varieties were issued and used, and it is difficult, if not impossible to draw a line between them, and admit some and reject others.

But these British Guiana provisionals are some of the most respectable individuals of their class ; there are other surcharged stamps that I feel morally certain were not overprinted because stamps of those particular values were wanted, but have been produced at the instance of local collectors, or possibly in order to use up stocks of stamps that were not likely to be required, or even in some cases to increase the revenues of a post office by increased sales to collectors and dealers. There is an issue of surcharged stamps of Guatemala, which is well known as a case in point ; the provisional issues of some of the French Colonies have been surprisingly numerous of late years, either their supplies of stamps must be sent far more irregularly than they used to be, or else philately must have a hand in the matter ; the long list of surcharged varieties of the stamps of Ceylon of a few years back, may be only the result of carelessness on the part of the authorities, who were not particular what new values were surcharged upon the various obsolete ones, but philately may have had something to do with that case also. We need not, however, consider doubtful instances, there are numbers of surcharged stamps about which there is no doubt whatever that they would never have come into existence at all, but for philately. and I think that this epidemic of surcharges, from which we have now been suffering for some years, is a very great danger to our pursuit.