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Side Lights on Stamps.

When we consider what a power religion has exercised from the earliest ages upon the mind of many it may not be amiss to enquire what witness is borne to this fact by philately. In pursuing this investigation one naturally turns first of all to the mythology of ancient Greece, inasmuch as its influence was too widespread and deep-rooted for its memory to have altogether faded away. Consequently we have the graceful head of mercury—the messenger of the gods—as the normal design of the postage stamps of Greece; and the same herald of news is presented to us in more or less pleasing fashion upon stamps of Austria, Brazil, Crete, and Uruguay. But when we come to the particular issue commemorating the revival of the olympic games, the range of our subject is considerably extended. There we may notice Atlas bending beneath his ponderous load, Minerva raising her shield decorated with the Gorgon's head, Hercules, and apparently Apollo, and Nike or Victory with extended wings.

The female figure on the 10cents Uruguay of 1895, is probably meant for Ceres, the goddess of corn; which

“Great Here,” otherwise known as Juno, is also supposed by some to be the intention of a well modelled head another of the Cretan stamps.

The mythology of India is likewise of great antiquity; and we are reminded of its existence by representations of idols upon the stamps of Duttia and Jhalawar; while yet a third system, almost lost in the dim recesses of the hoary past, is indicated by the unimpassioned features of the sphinx which keeps its silent watch and ward over the pyramids of Egypt.

Advancing with the march of time we note that the cross, the symbol of christianity, is emblazoned on the shields Switzerland, Modena, Tuscany, and some of the lower values of Italy.

The crescent of islam is conspicuous on most of the emissions of Turkey, and in a lesser degree as the water mark of nearly all the Egyptian issues.

The sunburst on the stamps of Persia awakes recollection of the fire-worshippers of Iran, those Ghebers who bowed in adoration before the rising orb of day; while a similar device upon the stamps of Peru preserve, the memory of the Incas—the heaven-born children of the sun—a gentle race, whom, along with their religion, the Spaniards so ruth-