

have also been imitated, on genuine stamps and on forgeries.

The stamps of Alsace-Lorraine provide a wide field for the specialist. There are mainly three considerations by which specializing and even research can be done. As far as we know, no serious effort has been made to reconstruct the various settings of the different values and to establish the plate positions of the scarce "types". The plating of the stamps will therefore be a rewarding undertaking. It is a quite formidable task, but as multiples—unused and used—exist in sufficient quantity, it should not prove an insoluble problem. The two other considerations are less involved, namely the study and collecting of the various frankings and of the existing cancellations. Much work has been done in both fields and large cancellation collections, containing tens of thousands of stamps exist. As the object of a specialized collection, without much expectation of finding new facts, a collection of frankings and/or cancellations would be highly satisfying.

There exists sufficient literature in the field to guide the new specialist. The standard work is still *Hugo Kroetzsch's* "Die Freimarken des Norddeutschen Postbezirks" (in German), but a more modern listing by *Henry Bauer*, "Catalogue Special des Timbres d'Alsace-Lorraine" (in French) also gives all necessary information. The specialized catalogs of France and Germany may also be of some help, especially the specialized parts of *Yvert* and *Michel*. Numerous articles in philatelic literature, especially in French and German magazines, deal with details in the field and may give hints and new ideas. Altogether the stamps of Alsace-Lorraine are a rewarding field for a collector with medium means, to build a collection which will satisfy himself and justifiably impress other collectors.

II. ANDORRA

Andorra is the largest of the four miniature countries of Europe. With its 191 square miles, it is more than three times as large as Liechtenstein, five times as large as San Marino and twenty-five times as large as Monaco. Nevertheless, in regard to population, it is, with about 6000 inhabitants, the smallest of all European countries. The population, consisting mostly of farmers and smugglers, had and has little contact with the outer world and it is therefore not very surprising, that the little



Fig. 4

country in the Pyrenees is still the only country in Europe without a postal administration of its own.

The political status of Andorra is of a dual nature. Being a *republic*, ruled by a council of 24 men, it dates its history back to Charlemagne, who has made it, so it is said, a free state. Actually, the country is only *semi-independent*, because it is under *Spanish* and *French protectorate*. The "protector" on the Spanish side is the Bishop of Seo de Urgel in the Spanish province of Lerida. On the French side, it was the Count de Foix, but he was expropriated and his functions were taken over by the prefect of the French department of Pyrenees at Perpignan.

The postal history of Andorra, as far as the classic period is concerned, is clouded in mystery. The postal necessities of the population seem to have been small. Domestic mail was forwarded by occasional travellers and foreign mail taken in the same way to the next Spanish or French post office and mailed there, without any distinctive markings concerning its origin. Only around 1870, there seem to have been some signs of an organized postal service. It is claimed that rural mail carriers of the neighboring Spanish and French post offices visited the capital, *Andorra La Vieija*, regularly, to deliver and accept mail. A short while later, two postal clerks, paid by Spain and France, are said to have been established in *Andorra La Vieija*, but we know of no covers which undoubtedly originated from there. The earliest sign of a postal service is a French postmark ANDORRE / VAL D'ANDORRE, which Langlois found on a Spain 1879, 10c, dated Oct. 15, 1882 (Fig. 4). It is possible that this postmark came into use considerably earlier, but we can only guess about it, as this is the only known copy and no covers of that period are reported.

That there must have been some postal aspirations in Andorra in the classic period is shown also by the existence of a series of

unissued stamps, supposedly printed in Barcelona in 1875, during the time of the Carlist insurrection. They are lithographed and show the arms of Andorra in two different frames, one for the Centimos, the other for the Peseta-values. The inscriptions aside from the value indication read "REPUBLICA DE ANDORRA" and "CORREUS", in the Catalan language of the inhabitants. There are twelve values: 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 40, 50, 75c, 1, 2, 5 and 10p. They have watermark "RA" and are either imperforate or line perforated 13½ (Fig. 5, 6). It is said, that these stamps remained unissued due to a protest by the French authorities. They became known only decades later and show some features — for example *tete-beche* pairs of all values, as well as "errors of color", 15c in color of 75c and 10p in color of 1p, also *se-tenant* — which give strong indications of philatelic influence in their manufacture and lead us to doubt, whether they were of any official origin. Maybe they are a purely bogus issue, instigated by some philatelic marauders at a much later year than 1875.

As can be seen, the study of the classic



Fig. 5, 6

philatelic period of Andorra leaves many open questions, but we doubt that fruitful research in this field is possible, due to entire lack of material. There is also no suitable literature in existence. A collector specializing in classic Andorra, would probably not be able to fill one page with the material he could acquire in ten years. Therefore we believe that classic Andorra can be safely excluded as a field for the collector, except when it is connected with a collection of modern Andorra stamps or a collection of classic cancellations of Spain or France.

(Next: III, Austria)

POSTAL STATIONERY

Some time ago we asked a very active collector who was looking for a good field for new collecting activities, why he did not consider collecting *postal stationery*. The answer came quickly. "Postal stationery is much too bulky. Where should I put all the many large size albums or boxes needed for a collection of thousands of such entires?" When we reminded the collector that he had a collection of stamps on covers, which filled several cabinets in his home, he did not know what to answer. He became pensive and started to wonder why almost all collectors have such a prejudice against collecting postal stationery.

Collecting postal stationery is in fact another step-sister of stamp collecting. In the olden days of philately postal stationery was just as much appreciated by collectors and dealers as were adhesive stamps, even being favored by quite a number of collectors. The interest in postal stationery diminished with the increasing number of adhesive stamps. When, at the turn of the century, the number of new stamps approached the annual figure of 1,000, many collectors could no longer afford to buy all new issues and they looked

for a way to cut down on their sphere of collecting interest. The collecting of postal stationery in this way became a victim of the overproduction of adhesive stamps. Before 1900, practically every collector had been interested to some degree in postal stationery — either in entires or at least in cut squares — and every dealer carried a sizable stock thereof. Philatelic magazines recorded new issues of postal stationery as faithfully as those of adhesive stamps and the general catalogs either listed them with the respective countries or in a separate volume. Articles in philatelic magazines and books concerning postal stationery were not much less frequent than those relating to adhesives; all albums provided spaces at least for cut squares.

After 1900, the interest in postal stationery slackened more and more. The new issues services favored the adhesive stamps and were glad that they could forget the new postal stationery which was much more difficult to handle. The collectors filled the spaces in their albums with adhesive stamps and neglected the spaces for cut squares. The album and catalog publishers were glad that they could reduce their products considerably by elimi-