

should at least use its influence to improve the unsatisfactory conditions.

Some people are alarmed about the adverse effect which the popularity of television may have on stamp collecting. It is true that sitting in a darkened room and looking at pictures on a small screen does not allow one to work simultaneously on stamps. With radio this has always been possible, thus enabling one to combine two pleasures. But we believe that television is only a scapegoat offered by those who do not like to look for the real reasons why philatelic business has lost in volume. These people do not like to hear the truth that cornered and bogus issues together with an overproduction of new issues—there were more than 2,500 new stamps in 1952—have alienated many new collectors and have influenced them to give up collecting after a feeble start. Much has also been said about the competition to philately which has arisen and is clamoring for the interest of the youngsters, not only television, but also radio, movies and various sports activities, and measures have been discussed for getting our young folks interested in stamps. But no action has been taken against certain trade practices which profit through the

ignorance of young collectors by selling them practically worthless stamps, misrepresented as rarities, at high prices, or when stamps of some real value are provided, charging many times the true market value for them. Such practices are no exceptions but almost general as the advertisements of many firms in youth magazines prove. Sums of 50c, \$1 or a few dollars in each case only, but aggregating hundreds of thousands of dollars in one single year, in this way are paid by unsuspecting youngsters for worthless stamps. When they later find out that they were cheated, they become disgusted and lose interest in philately, leaving only the hard core of real philatelists, whom no disappointment can rob of their love for stamps. We believe that special efforts should be made to give the great majority of young collectors the opportunity to buy good stamps at fair prices. Collector and dealer organizations should combine in an effort to curb the vultures who prey upon the young philatelist, giving him worthless or greatly overpriced stamps for the little money he is able to spend. If such a way can be found, we will not have to worry about television or any other competition, but we will grow a fine crop of young philatelists who will continue the high traditions of our hobby.

EUROPEAN CLASSICS

VI. BELGIUM

Belgium, the fourth European country to issue postage stamps, was one of the youngest countries of the classic period, having gained its independence only in 1830. Situated on the western coast of Europe, on the North Sea, it was bounded on the north by the Netherlands, on the east by Prussia and Luxembourg and on the south by France. Covering about 11,500 square miles, it had a population in 1831 of 3,786,000, which increased rapidly, so that it reached 5,336,000 by 1876. Belgium was divided into nine provinces, namely Antwerp, East Flanders, West Flanders and Limburg, which had a predominantly Flemish population, Brabant, which in its northern portion had a Flemish population, in its southern part a French one, and Hainaut, Liege, Luxembourg and Namur, with a predominantly French population. The language problem from the beginning was one of the main ob-

stacles of the country; about 45% of the population spoke Flemish, a dialect derived from the Dutch language, 40% spoke Walloon, a French dialect, and about 15% were bilingual. But during the classic stamp period, the official language of Belgium was French, the language problem being solved only much later. Nevertheless, for the convenience of the users, most postal and telegraph forms were bilingual, French-Flemish, from the beginning, while on the stamps French alone was used. Belgium's capital was and is *Brussels* (*Bruxelles*), a city of 196,000 in 1846 and 302,000 in 1866.

The territory which later formed the Belgian State, has a long history. Its name is derived from the Belgic tribes, probably of Celtic origin, which settled there in the 4th century B.C. The Romans conquered the territory at the beginning of the Christian era and called it, together with the northern part of France to the Seine, *Gallia Belgica*.

After the decline of the Roman Empire, the territory, its population considerably mixed with Germanic elements during the Roman rule, was invaded by the Franks in the 4th century A. D. In the 9th century, when the Franks ceased to dominate the region, it was divided, the northern part, which included a large part of the later Belgium, was called Duchy of Lower Lorraine in the 10th century. Feudal states created during the 13th century took over and in the 14th century unification of almost all of the "low lands", including both the later Netherlands and the later Belgium, took place. In the 15th century, the territory started to become involved in the century-long fights of the European powers for domination of the continent and its history is closely connected with that of the Netherlands. From 1477, it was under the Habsburgs, therefore being a part of the German Empire. In 1555, after the death of Charles V, the territory was inherited by the Spanish branch of the Habsburgs. The draconic Spanish rule, which discriminated against the non-Catholic population, led to continuous unrest and eventually to the separation of the Protestant northern provinces, which in 1579 formed the Union of Utrecht, which later developed into the Dutch Republic. The southern provinces, containing the greater part of later Belgium, were consolidated into the Spanish Netherlands. The Spanish rule lasted until 1713, when after more than a decade of bloody fighting, the Austrian branch of the Habsburgs again gained control and established the Austrian Netherlands. A period of rather mild and peaceful rule followed which was terminated by the French Revolution. In 1789, the Belgians revolted and created the "United States of Belgium", but a year later, Austria regained the territory. In 1792, the French occupied the country, were driven out again by the Austrians in 1793, but regained it in 1794. In the peace treaty of Campo Formio (1797), Austria ceded the territory definitely to France, which had previously divided the country into nine "departments", namely Jemmapes (86), La Lys (91), Escout (92), Deux-Nethes (93), Dyle (94), Meuse Inferieure (95), Ourthe (96), Sambre et Meuse (97) and Forets (98); a small part belonged to the department Ardennes (7). In 1814, the Allies occupied the country and in 1815, at the Congress of Vienna,

it was united with the former Dutch Republic and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg to the Kingdom of the Netherlands under William I of the House of Orange. But the friction between the Catholic Belgians and the Protestant Dutch soon led to the dissolution of the new state. In 1830, the Belgians revolted and declared their independence. After serious fights, in which the Belgians, with the help of a French army, eventually were victorious, Belgium was recognized by the great European powers, which guaranteed its independence and neutrality in two special treaties in 1831 and 1839. In a final settlement with the Netherlands in the latter treaty, Belgium relinquished in 1839 a small strip of territory in the east as well as the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg in exchange for recognition of its independence. In 1831, Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg became Leopold I, the first king of the country. A liberal constitution, created in 1831, brought the country safely through the unrest of 1848. Leopold I was succeeded by his son, Leopold II, in 1865, whose reign extended into the 20th century.

The territory of the later Belgium had no separate *postal history* until an independent state was created in 1830. Before that, under Spanish and Austrian rule, the family of *Taxis* was in full charge of the postal administration from as early as 1551 and this was interrupted only when the country was occupied by the French. Even after the fall of Napoleon in 1814, the *Taxis*, on March 1, 1814, regained the postal administration of the territory, but when it was incorporated into the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the *Taxis* administration ended in March 1815 and an independent postal administration for the entire kingdom was established. When, in 1830, Belgium became an independent state, it immediately organized its own postal administration, which was first under the *Ministry of Finances* and later, from 1836, a sub-division of the *Ministry of Public Works*. In 1841, a complete reorganization of the postal service took place and in 1847, an "*Administration des Chemins de Fer, Postes et Telegraphes*" was created which conducted the mail and telegraph service as well as the railroads. This connection with the railroad administration lasted until 1877, when a definite separation took place. Under the Netherlands administration, there had been two kinds of post

offices, "Bureaux de Direction" and "Bureaux de Distribution", the latter ones providing somewhat restricted service and being subordinated to the former ones. Under Belgian administration, the "Bureaux de Direction" changed their name to "Bureaux de Perception". With the decree of Nov. 2, 1864, the distinction between the two kinds of post offices was abolished, by elevating all "Bureaux de Distribution" to "Bureaux de Perception". A rural mail service was introduced in 1836, by employing rural mail carriers, who made their rounds from a supervising post office and collected and delivered mail in the neighboring rural districts. Post offices on railroad trains—Belgium had, in 1835, the first railroad on the European continent—were regularly established in 1850, after several trials, even as early as 1841. Belgium had close postal connections with France, with which country it concluded its first postal treaty. Treaties with other neighbors on the continent as well as with Great Britain, the United States and other overseas countries soon followed. Belgium became one of the founding members of the *Universal Postal Union*, the first general postal treaty coming into force on July 1, 1875.

In 1830, when the independent Belgium was created, there were 106 post offices in operation, of which 62 were "Bureaux de Direction" and 44 "Bureaux de Distribution". Until July 1, 1849, 132 new post offices were opened and 26 post offices closed. Fifteen post offices were in territory lost in 1839, namely 7 to the Netherlands and 8 to Luxembourg. On July 1, 1849, when the first stamps were issued, there were 135 "Bureaux de Perception" and 62 "Bureaux de Distribution". When the distinction between these two kinds of post offices was abolished in 1864, there were altogether 410 post offices, which increased to the end of the classic period in 1869 to something less than 450. The postal service in the country, which had a strong trend toward industrialization, developed quite fast. In 1849, there were more than 10 million letters mailed, in 1853 more than 15½ million and in 1859 more than 21¾ million. The amounts of newspapers and printed matter mailed during the same period were even larger, more than 18½ million in 1853 and almost 23½ million in 1859.

Belgium had from 1850 a post office for

the exchange of mail on Prussian territory, at *Herbesthal*, which was elevated to a "Bureaux de Perception" on June 29, 1857. It is also claimed, that in the Sixties, Belgium had its own postal service at *Alexandria (Egypt)* but no covers or stamps used there are known.

The Belgian currency was closely related to the French currency, 1 Belgian frank (fr) divided into 100 Belgian centimes (c). The metric system was in use for the units of weight, therefore 1000 grammes (g.) equivalent to 1 kilogram (kg.), as well as for distances, which were measured by kilometers (km.), divided into 1000 meters (m.), 1 meter in turn being divided into 100 centimeters (cm.) and 1 centimeter into 10 millimeters (mm.).

The classic stamp period ended in Belgium comparatively early, for several reasons. The country was philatelically one of the most developed; one of the earliest dealers, J. B. Moens, a man of great foresight and philatelic knowledge, contributed much to philately. This led, on the other hand, to early philatelic chicanery, of which the imperforate sheets of contemporary stamps, delivered in 1870 to the French Baron Arthur de Rothschild, are an outstanding example. But for practical reasons it also seems convenient, to close the classical period with the year 1869, because some values of the issue 1869-70 were replaced by new issues only late in the Eighties therefore coming definitely outside of the classic period. Although we close the classic period of the Belgian stamps earlier than for most other countries, we are still not as strict as the Belgian philatelists themselves, who consider only the early recess-printed issues as classic ones, therefore excluding even the 1865-67 issue, which we consider classic.

Belgium issued its first *Postage Stamps* on July 1, 1849. Except for *Telegraph Stamps*, which appeared on Jan. 7, 1866, no other kinds of stamps were issued during the classic period as we define it. Of stationery, no postal items appeared, but *Telegraph Forms* were issued on Dec. 1, 1865.

The classic Belgian stamps picture the head of the sovereign, *Leopold I*; only on the low values of the 1865-67 issue and on the stamp imprinted on the telegraph forms it was replaced by the Belgian coat of arms. Two groups of issues of the postage stamps can be formed, the engraved designs, recess-

printed from 1849 to 1865, and the *typographed designs*, letter-press-printed from 1865-67 to the end of the classic period. The first issue was obviously strongly influenced by the first stamps of Great Britain, which have several features in common. On the engraved stamps, the head of the king was full face and first set in a rectangular frame showing the epaulettes on the shoulders of the sovereign, which fact gave these stamps the name, "*Epaulettes*". Within a few months, a new design was created, which showed the same portrait of the king, but in an ornamented frame and with the head in an oval medallion, without epaulettes, a design which seems to have been strongly influenced by the first United States stamps of 1847. The stamps in this new design are known as "*Medallions*". The typographed stamps of 1865-67 show the head of Leopold I to the left, on a horizontally lined circular or oval ground, for which a coin obviously must have been the model. Here the frame was different for each value; for the telegraph stamps, which show the same head, the frame was hexagonal. The low values of the 1865-67 issue show the coat of arms of Belgium in an ornamented frame, which had a different background for each value. All classic Belgian stamps omitted the official name of the country ("*BELGIQUE*"); "*POSTES*" (or "*TELEGRAPHES*") and value indications were the only inscriptions. The stamp on the telegraph forms was in many respects an exception. It was applied in colored embossing while the text on the forms was typographed. The oval design, showing the Belgian coat of arms with thunderbolts in the center, was negative, the inscriptions being colorless on colored ground. The inscriptions were "*TELEGRAMME ORDINAIRE*" at top, "*POUR LA BELGIQUE*" at bottom, "*20/MOTS*" at left and "*50/CENT.*" at right. The King's head on the "*Epaulettes*" and "*Medallions*" was taken from a picture made in 1841 by *Charles Bagniet*; the engraving used for the stamps was the work of *John Henry Robinson* of the firm of *Perkins, Bacon & Petch* of London. The design of the frames seems to have been furnished by the Belgian State Printing Works, the "*Atelier du Timbre*" at Brussels, of which at that time the engraver *Jacques Wiener* was the director. For the typographed issues, the head was cut in steel by the en-

graver *Ferdinand Joubert de la Ferte* of the firm of *De La Rue & Co.* of London, who had previously done similar work for the stamps of Great Britain. The frames were supplied by unknown artists of the same firm. The coat of arms design was the work of *J. Delpierre*, the steel cut is attributed to *M. Dargent*. The designer of the stamps on the telegraph forms is unknown. The first die for that stamp was the work of an engraver of *De La Rue & Co.* of London; the later dies were made by the engraver *Fisch* of Brussels.

When the postage stamps were introduced, their use was immediately made *obligatory* for domestic *letters* and *samples*, with an additional postage due of 10c for unpaid postal matter of these categories. To foreign countries, all postage had to be paid in cash, but the first postal treaty which provided for the use of postage stamps, with France, came into force as early as Oct. 1, 1849, and the use of postage stamps on mail to other countries was gradually introduced, to Great Britain on Feb. 15, 1850, to Luxembourg on April 1, 1850, to Switzerland on July 1, 1850, etc. *Printed matter* and *newspapers* were first not affected by the introduction of postage stamps and the reduced fees on domestic matter of this kind continued to be paid in cash. Only on June 1, 1861, the use of postage stamps for printed matter and newspapers was introduced, but it remained voluntary, as payment in cash continued to be permitted without postage due. *Parcels* were handled by the post offices only to 10kg weight, the shipment of heavier parcels was left to the railroad stations. Payment of the fees in cash had to be made, either by the sender or the addressee. From August 1866, the addressee had to use postage stamps for payment of the fees on parcels mailed at the post offices. *Postage Due* was collected during the classic period in cash. The use of *telegraph forms* with imprinted stamp was obligatory from Dec. 1, 1865, that of *telegraph stamps* from Jan 7, 1866, but for domestic telegrams only.

The *postal rates* during the stamp-issuing period were quite simple. Domestic letters paid 10c up to 10g. weight and up to a distance of 30km., and 20c for distances of more than 30km. Letters over 10g. and up to 20g. paid twice these basic rates, over 20g. and up to 60g. four times, and then twice

the basic rate more for each additional 40g. Samples paid the same fees as letters. For money letters, an additional fee of 10c was collected for every 5fr value. The registration fee was 20c. Printed matter and newspapers paid reduced fees which were computed in a different way. The printed matter fee was 1c for each sheet of paper, the newspaper fee was also 1c, for each issue including all supplements. The domestic telegraph fee was 50c for each 20 words. While the domestic fees remained unchanged during the whole classic stamp period, the foreign rates were gradually reduced, first on Oct. 1, 1849 for letters to France to 40c for each 7½g. which rate came into force shortly thereafter also to Great Britain, Luxembourg, Switzerland and to the other countries of Western and Central Europe. For the border traffic between Belgium and France up to 30km. distance, a reduced rate of 20c was charged. A further general reduction of the foreign rates took place after Nov. 1, 1865, when the rate for France was reduced from 40c to 30c and the same rate was introduced gradually for letters to the other European countries.

The first issue of *postage stamps*, which made its appearance on July 1, 1849, consisted of only two values, 10c and 20c, corresponding to the two domestic letter rates. The first additional value, 40c, was issued on Oct. 17, 1849, for letters to France. Until 1861, these three values remained the only ones, then a fourth one, of 1c, was created and first issued on June 1, 1861, to pay the reduced rate for printed matter and newspapers, which until then was accounted for in cash. The 1c stamps were valid only for payment of postage on domestic printed matter and newspapers, but were not recognized for postage on other mail, while the 10c, 20c and 40c values could also be used on printed matter if necessary. Therefore the 1c stamps are actually not real postage stamps, but printed matter and newspaper stamps, forming a separate group of stamps. Four more additional values were created in 1865-67, 30c and 1fr for heavy letters and for letters to foreign countries, especially France and overseas countries, on Nov. 1, 1865, as well as 2c and 5c for printed matter and newspapers exclusively, on March 1, 1867, and Sept. 1, 1866, respectively. At the end of the classic period, the postage stamps consisted of five values (10c, 20c,

30c, 40c and 1fr) and the printed matter and newspaper stamps of three values (1c, 2c and 5c). The latter were only valid for postage on printed matter and newspapers, a regulation, which was abolished on Sept. 15, 1873, only, from which day they could also be used on letters. The *telegraph stamps*, two values, 50c and 1fr, which appeared on Jan. 7, 1866, covered the main telegraph rates. A *telegraph form*, with imprinted 50c stamp, had preceded them on Dec. 1, 1865.

For the engraved issues, the *original dies* were all manufactured by the "Atelier du Timbre" at Brussels, with the help of the engraving of the head by Robinson. For the "Epaulettes", two working dies were made, to which the head engraving was first transferred and on which then the frame and the inscriptions ("POSTES", figures of value at top and value indication at bottom) were engraved for each value separately. For both values, outlines of an ornamental design were inserted to the right of the head, which are different for each value and are quite faint for the 10c. The completed working dies served then as original dies for each value. For the "Medallions", the original die was created by first engraving the frame, with the inscription "POSTES", but without the figures of value and the value indication, and then transferring the part of Robinson's head engraving, to fit the center oval. From this original die, three working dies were made and the figures of value and value indications for the three denominations (10c, 20c and 40c) engraved on them. Later (in 1861) a fourth working die, for the 1c, was prepared in the same way. The completed working dies were then used as original dies for the specific values. The dies for the typographed stamps were made entirely differently. For each value in the head design (postage stamps 10c, 20c, 30c, 40c and 1fr, telegraph stamps 50c and 1fr) the original dies were manufactured by the firm of De La Rue & Co. of London, with the steel cut of the head, made by Joubert de la Ferte, as the basis. For each value a separate original die was created by cutting the complete design of the frame including inscriptions in it—a work done by unknown engravers of the firm of De La Rue & Co.—and then transferring to it the steel-cut of the king's head as the center of each design. For the values in the coat of arms type, the com-

plete designs of the original dies were cut in steel, separately for each value.

As for the *printing material*, the plates for the engraved issues were manufactured by the Atelier du Timbre at Brussels, while those of the typographed issues were made by the firm of De La Rue & Co. of London; from 1866 additional plates for the 10c and 20c and the plates for the 1c, 2c and 5c were manufactured by the firm of Smets of Antwerp, later by the Atelier du Timbre at Brussels. The printing plates of the engraved stamps were made with the help of transfer cylinders, to which the design of the original dies was transferred by embossing. In turn, these transfer cylinders, after hardening, were used to emboss the designs into a soft steel plate in more or less regular spacing and so many times as the plate, which was later hardened, was intended to contain. There were two transfer cylinders for the "Epaulettes", each containing three designs of each value, which were upright in relation to the circumference of the cylinder. For the "Medallions", there were first transfer cylinders each with four designs of the same value, also upright. In 1861, new transfer cylinders came into use, also each with four designs of the same value, but now sideways. Altogether twelve transfer cylinders for the "Medallions", five of the first and seven of the second kind, were used. The typographed plates were obtained by casting of matrices from the dies, in lead, assembling them into blocks and using these matrices for the production of block-electrotypes, which usually contained 10 or 20 designs. By soldering together the necessary number of such block-electrotypes, the printing plates were obtained.

The *plates* of the "Epaulettes" consisted of 200 designs, in two panes of 100 (10x10), side by side. The stamps were spaced horizontally and vertically about 1mm. apart, with deviations up to $\frac{1}{2}$ mm. up and down. The gutter between the panes was about 12mm. wide. There was no margin imprint of any kind. For the 10c one plate was used, for the 20c two plates were used, the latter for some time simultaneously. The plates of the "Medallions" were first arranged in the same way as those of the "Epaulettes", with two panes of 100 (10x10) each, side by side. For these plates, the transfer cylinders with upright designs were used and

the rocking movement by which the designs were embossed in the plate was a vertical one in relation to the design. The spacing was somewhat irregular, the stamps being still about 1mm. apart, but with variations up to $\frac{1}{2}$ mm. more or less. The gutter between the panes was about 8mm. wide. There were eight plates of the 10c, six plates of the 20c and one plate of the 40c. The first plate of each value—Plate I—had no plate indication or other marginal inscription. Beginning with the second plate of the 10c and 20c, the plate number and the year date of the manufacture of the plate was given twice on the bottom margin, below the first and below the last stamp of the last row, for example "2 51" or "1858 6". For the last two plates of both values, the plate number was omitted and only the year date given. From 1861—the first such sheets were sold by the post offices on April 1, 1861—the size of the plates was changed and increased to 300, in two panes of 150 (10 rows of 15 each), one above the other. For these plates, the new transfer cylinders, with the designs arranged sideways, were used and the rocking-in motion was horizontal in relation to the design. The spacing remained the same, the horizontal gutter was about 6mm. wide. There were five plates of this kind of the 1c, three plates of the 10c and one plate each of the 20c and 40c. They had plate numbers as well as the manufacturing date, namely the month and year, on the margin. The plate number appeared twice on each plate, either in the left margin, at the left of the first stamp in the first and last row (1c, Plate I and all plates of 10c and 20c), or in the right margin, at the right of the last stamp in the first and last row (1c, Plates II, III, IV and V, and 40c). The date was in the same margin as the plate number, outside between the two panes.

The plates of the typographed postage stamps also contained 300 designs, in six panes of 50 (10 rows of 5), arranged in two rows of 3 each. The stamps were spaced about 2mm. apart, varying up to $\frac{1}{2}$ mm. up and down. The vertical gutters were about 5mm. wide, the horizontal gutter had the height of a full stamp. The telegraph stamps were printed from plates of 200, in four panes of 50 (10 rows of 5) each. The typographed plates, made by De La Rue & Co., resembled in their set-up, especially in regard to the marginal inscriptions, the con-

temporary stamps of Great Britain, which were printed at the same time by the same firm. They had a plate number—in all cases "1", as only one plate of each value was manufactured by the London firm—white in a colored circle, at the bottom left and the top right corner of each sheet, as well as an "order number", colored in a rectangular frame with indented corners, also twice on each sheet, in the bottom right and the top left corner. Obviously in order of their manufacture, the 40c had the number "1", 30c number "2", 10c number "3", 1fr number "4", 20c number "5" and of the telegraph stamps, 1fr number "6" and 50c number "7". Furthermore, there were small colored crosses for the fitting of the perforating devices in the centers of the sheet margins. The typographed plates, made by the firm of Smets of Antwerp and the Atelier du Timbre (second plates of 10c and 20c, as well as all plates of 1c, 2c and 5c) had no margin imprint except the crosses for the fitting of the perforating devices. The stamps from the second plates of the 10c and 20c, which were made in Belgium and came into use in 1866 and 1868 respectively, can be distinguished by the slightly smaller size of their design from the stamps printed from the first (London) plates, which is 18½mm. x 22mm. instead of 18¾mm. x 22¼mm. for the 10c and 18½mm. x 22mm. instead of 18½mm. x 22½mm. for the 20c. The difference in the size was corrected by appropriate spacing of the designs, to bring the plates to the same size and make them fit for the perforating devices.

The stamps on the telegraph forms were embossed directly from the hardened dies, which had been engraved in soft steel. One such die was made in London and three more in Brussels. Dies I and II are rather similar, both having the inscriptions in Roman capitals and an oval single line border; they can be mainly distinguished by their different size, die I being smaller (35½mm. x 26mm.), than die II (36½mm. x 27mm.). Die III has the inscription in Gothic capitals and an oval border of pearls; die IV is similar to die III but has the lion in the coat of arms facing to the right while in the three other dies it faces to the left. The text of the telegraph forms was type-set, bilingual (French-Flemish) and underwent several small changes during the various printings, so that specialists

divide them among five settings, of which the first comes with the stamp embossed in Type I, II or III, the second, third and fourth with the stamp in Type III only and the fifth with the stamp in Type III or IV. Every form had the printing number and the year date included in the text at the bottom.

The two different kinds of transfer cylinders used for the "Medallions" are responsible for a marked *difference in the size* of the design of the plates of 200 compared with those of the plates of 300. On the plates of 200, which were made by upright rocking-in of the design, the designs are distinctly shortened, while on the plates of 300, on which the designs were rocked-in sideways, this was not the case. Therefore, the stamps from the plates of 300 are generally higher than those from the plates of 200. Specialists distinguish between "*Small Medallions*", about 21¼mm. high, from the plates of 200, and "*Large Medallions*", about 21¾mm. high, from the plates of 300. The contraction of the paper, caused by the wetting for the printing, has somewhat disturbed this simple classification, as we will see when recording the paper varieties, but generally all stamps about 21¼mm. high can be considered as printed from the plates of 200 and those about 21¾mm. high as produced from the plates of 300.

The number of *plate varieties* is quite large for the engraved issues. A large number of these varieties originated in the manufacturing process of the plates. The *re-entries* are rather numerous but only on some plates, while on others they are absent or only insignificant. Two principal kinds can be distinguished, either being the result of embossing a design out of line, erasing it and rocking it in again in the correct position, or originating in a slight shift of the plate during the rocking-in process. In both cases, more or less conspicuous parts of a second design are visible, being constant varieties characteristic for certain positions in the plate. As a result of the different movement of the rocking-in process of the designs, re-entries in the plates of 200 designs show the fragments of the second design usually shifted in a vertical direction, while those in the plates of 300 designs almost all show horizontal shifting. Of the 10c "Epaulettes", sixteen positions of the plate show re-entries, some of them rather



Fig. 22

distinct, as the double "10" variety (Fig. 22), while of the 20c only two distinct re-entries, both in Plate I, have been recorded. Of the "Medallions", only the 10c shows three distinct re-entries (one each on Plates I and II of 200 and one on Plate II of 300), aside from a few small ones, while no such varieties are known of the three other values. From insufficient rocking-in, there resulted some *incomplete designs* as well as distinct "*short entries*", which were mostly corrected by retouching. Such *retouches* are especially remarkable on the 1c "Medallion" (Fig. 23, left stamp, at bottom), but they are frequently confined to the frame lines. Most of them were made before the plates were put to print, while later retouches became necessary by the wear of the plates and attempts to strengthen those shallow parts of the designs which no longer printed well. Retouches can be found in a few cases on the "Epaulettes", but are more numerous on the "Medallions", especially on the plates of 200 of the 10c and 20c, as well as on the plates of 300 of the 1c and 40c. Another curious plate variety are the *colored circles* which occur in the margins of the sheets, but also in a few designs and which can be explained by the removal of defects of the soft steel plate before the designs were embossed. Such faults of the plates were removed by drilling a circular hole through the defective spot and filling it with a steel peg, which was carefully leveled off on the surface of the plate, but nevertheless shows in the printing as a dark circle of about 4mm. in diameter. The slight unevenness of the plates in some spots, partly caused by the strong pressure during the rocking-in process of the designs, shows up in the printing in more or less distinct *colored spots and strips* between the stamps, which are mostly constant; but some of them were caused by wear and appeared only later, as characteristic colored smudges in the spaces between the stamps. During the printing, the plates frequently suffered slight damage, mostly scratches, which show as colored lines on

the stamps. Altogether, the diversity of the plate varieties of the "Epaulettes" and "Medallions" have made these stamps a favorite field for the specialist and have proved a big help in the reconstruction of the various platés. The typographed stamps are less diversified but are rich in plate flaws and therefore also provide a rewarding field.

The *printing* of all Belgium stamps, with one exception, was done by the "*Atelier du Timbre*", which was first located at *Brussels* but moved to *Malines* in 1868. The one exception was the first printing of the 1fr of 1865, which was done by the firm of *De La Rue & Co. of London*. The engraved issues were printed on hand presses and show few printing varieties. The carefully manufactured *early prints* stand out by the fine appearance of the design, which showed all details very distinct. Otherwise, the appearance of the stamps was, as for other recess-printed stamps, greatly influenced by the amount of ink used and by the wiping of the surplus ink before the printing. When the wiping was thorough, stamps on entirely *white paper* resulted, while insufficient wiping produced stamps which have the paper more or less strongly *tinted* in the color of the stamp. Insufficient inking sometimes led to *incompletely printed designs*, while in rare cases a shifted felt during the printing resulted in margin stamps of which part of the design was only faintly visible. Slight shifting during the printing process produced stamps with *doubled design*, more or less distinct, sometimes only in part of the stamp. Copies which show the whole design distinctly doubled are considered by specialists as double prints, but we doubt that they come from sheets which were run twice through the printing press and therefore they do not deserve this classification, being actually only distinct shifts. More or less distinct *paper folds*, which occurred during the printing, can be found on all values and, when opened and showing an unprinted band through the design, are sometimes quite attractive.



Fig. 23

The typographed issue of 1865-67 as well as the telegraph stamps show many more varieties of printing. The first printings—of the 1fr and trial printings of 10c, 20c, 30c and 40c—made in London, were very careful and used the “*hard printing*” method, by skillfully applying an extensive make-ready to the cylinder. These printings, of which only the 1fr was actually issued, are *fine*, showing all dots and lines clearly defined. The following printings were made in Brussels, either by printers who were sent over from London to instruct the Belgian printers, who had little experience in letter-press printing of stamps, or by these Belgian printers under the supervision of the British printers. These printings were again very careful and the results were fine prints, sometimes even very fine, accomplished by use of extensive make-ready, as the “*hard printing*” method requires. After the British printers left, the printing work deteriorated considerably and although from time to time an effort was made to attain the old standard, most of the prints were now *coarse*, the dots and lines of the designs thickened and frequently blotted, in extreme cases giving the stamps a smeared and untidy appearance. It seems that after the departure of the British printers, the make-ready, the proper use of which is an art in itself, was neglected more and more; this eventually made the change to the “*soft printing*” method necessary, by using a felt cover on the cylinder, with little or no make-ready, resulting in the generally coarse appearance of the later printings. There are noticeable efforts from later years to improve the appearance of the stamps, for example, in a printing of 1868, when by use of negative make-ready the white parts of the designs were conspicuously enlarged (10c and 20c only), and in a few other instances, where in later years one or the other printing is almost as fine as the early fine printings. But generally, the fine printings of the early period are quite a contrast to the coarse printings which characterize those after 1865. Except for some more or less conspicuous *printing flaws*, there are no major printing varieties of the typographed stamps on record. The stamps on the telegraph forms were embossed singly by special handpresses. There exist “*errors*” of these forms with *two stamps*, the second one either in color or colorless.

In the selection of the *colors* for its first stamps, Belgium leaned strongly to Great Britain, by selecting for them *brown* (10c) and *blue* (20c), the same as used for the contemporary 1p and 2p stamps. For the new additional 40c, *red* was chosen, possibly copying the color of the highest value of the French stamps, the 1fr. For the new 1c stamp, introduced in 1861, *green* was used, this being the color of the contemporary French 1c stamp. When in 1865 new values were created, the 30c stamp, needed for letters to France became *brown*, because the French 30c stamp was that color. For the new 1fr, *violet* was chosen and the new low values, 1c, 2c and 5c, also adopted an independent color scheme, *gray*, *blue* and *brown*. For the two telegraph stamps, *gray* (50c) and *green* (1fr) were selected as colors, the stamp on the telegraph forms was embossed in *black*, the same color in which the text was printed. The inks used for the printing were mostly mineral inks and did not vary considerably during the use of the engraved stamps although some printings are distinguished by marked shades. In a few instances, distinct oily prints can be noticed. Of the “*Epaulettes*”, there are of the 10c distinct yellow brown and reddish brown shades, both scarce, while of the 20c, the two extremes, milky blue and blackish blue, as well as a shade with a lilac tint are scarce. Of the “*Medallions*”, no spectacular shades of the 10c and 20c are noticeable, only lighter and darker colors, with little variations as to shades. For the 40c a distinct change of color took place during the printings on paper with unframed watermark, from a rather deep carmine, almost claret, to brick red and later to several shades of red, vermilion red, rose red and carmine rose. The 1c value was rather unstable in its color, first strongly varying from light to dark, later going partly to a pale color, with distinct shades, as yellowish green and bluish green. Of the colors of the typographed stamps, the blue of the 2c and 20c suffered a pronounced change to ultramarine in 1868, dividing the printing of these two stamps into two distinct color groups. Earlier, the blue had shown a rather strong tendency to shades, from blackish blue to pale blue and the same was the case with other values, the gray of the 1c and 10c varying to almost black, the brown of the 5c and 30c from

dark brown and reddish brown to yellowish brown, while the red of the 40c and the violet of the 1fr as well as the colors of the telegraph stamps show only lighter and darker colors without any pronounced shades.

The *paper* of the Belgium stamps was first a *hand-made* paper with *watermark*, supplied by the firm of Olin Brothers, later Olin & Robert, of Brussels. The sheets of paper used for the printing of the "Epau-lettes" and the first printings of the "Medal-lions" showed 200 watermarks, each consisting of two interlaced script letters "L" in a rectangular frame, in two panes of 100 (10x10), side by side, exactly fitting the printing plates, so that each printed stamp received one such "*framed*" watermark, the interlaced "L" placed sideways. As the heads of the "L's" on both panes pointed towards the gutter of the sheet, the stamps of the left pane always have the watermark reading downward, while those of the right pane have it reading upward, which fact proved a big help in the reconstruction of the plates. Every sheet had a symmetrical margin watermark, in double-line Roman capitals, "MINISTERE DES TRAVAUX PUBLIC", upright at the top and inverted at the bottom, and "TIMBRES DES POSTES" on the sides, reading upward on the left and downward on the right. There was a similar watermark in the vertical gutter, consisting of the word "BELGIQUE". The paper was used for the printing indiscriminately in all four positions, but as the watermark on the stamps and in the margins was symmetrical, these show only in the watermark in the gutter, making the watermark "BELGIQUE" reading upward or reading downward, both regular and reversed (mirrored). When the printing did not register perfectly, which was quite often the case, this resulted not only in "split" watermarks, but also caused parts of the margin watermark and the watermark in the gutter to be shifted on the margin stamps, which fact proved of great help in establishing their plate positions and aided considerably in the reconstruction of the plates. In 1851, a change in the watermark took place, by removing the frames around the individual watermarks. The sheets with these "*unframed*" watermarks had the same layout as those with the "*framed*" ones, especially also the same margin watermark. The gutter

watermark read also "BELGIQUE", but was now in considerably smaller letters. Both kinds of watermarked paper show, due to their primitive manufacture by hand, great variations in texture and thickness. From very thick paper, almost of the thickness of thin cardboard, to almost pelure paper, thick and thin paper can be found indiscriminately. The last printing on paper with "*framed*" watermark and the first ones on paper with "*unframed*" watermark are characterized by the use of a thin to very thin paper, which has somewhat the features of parchment. Frequently such paper has a fine but distinct ribbing. The later paper with "*unframed*" watermark had no special characteristics and was of various thickness, from thin cardboard to pelure. Frequently, this paper has a faint coarse ribbing, either horizontal or vertical, which sometimes becomes quite distinct, but horizontally only. In 1858, the watermarked hand-made paper was abolished and *machine-made* paper without watermark was introduced. It was of even texture and thickness, first rather thin and smoothed (plates of 200), later thicker and eventually thick (plates of 300). The distinct coarse ribbing, horizontally only, can also be observed on this paper. The paper of the *typographed* stamps, including the telegraph stamps, was first *thin*. On this paper, which was *machine-made* and of *British origin*, the London prints of the 1fr and the first Brussels prints of all values were made. From 1866, paper, also *machine-made*, *manufactured in Belgium*, was used, first also rather *thin*, later becoming of *medium thickness* and eventually even *thick*. But occasional use of thinner paper can be also recognized at later printings, even of a very thin paper for a printing of several values in 1868. For the *telegraph forms*, a special *yellow paper* was used, which comes in a number of shades and had a watermark "ROYAUME DE BELGIQUE. TELEGRAPHES", in double-line letters, arranged in four lines.

For the engraved stamps, the wetting of the paper, necessary for recess-printing, caused a *shrinkage* of the paper after the printing which resulted in *different sizes* of the designs of these stamps. As long as the paper sheets were hand-made and had a watermark, these differences were small and of little significance. For the stamps on

machine-made paper without watermark, the shrinkage of the paper is more important, as the paper could now be cut in two different ways from the paper roll, causing typical differences in the sizes, depending on whether the stamps were in an upright or a sideways position in regard to the length of the paper roll. This fact caused differences in the height or width of the design up to $\frac{1}{2}$ mm. As these differences can be found on the stamps printed from the plates of 200 as well, although in a lesser degree, on those printed of the plates of 300, it is sometimes not so easy to distinguish between the "small" stamps from the plates of 200 and the "large" stamps from the plates of 300, because the characteristics related to the different manufacture of the plates are occasionally distorted by the shrinkage of the paper after the printing. Characteristics of the printing and color must be considered for correct classification.

The *gum* used for the classic Belgium stamps was a vegetable glue, rather thick and more or less yellowish on the recess-printed issues and thinner and almost colorless on the typographed issues. It was applied by hand with broad brushes, but the use of gumming appliances for the typographed issues, which have partly a very even gum, especially the 1fr London print, seems possible, although no specific information is available on this point.

Until 1863, all Belgium stamps were issued *imperforate*. Late in 1862, the firm of *Gouweloos Freres* of Brussels constructed a perforating device of their own and offered it for use to the government. Without waiting for acceptance, the device was used in the meantime, it is claimed, to perforate sheets submitted by some private firms, but we have not seen any copies undoubtedly from the period prior to issuance of the officially perforated stamps. The postal administration eventually accepted the offer and the first *perforated* stamps in the "Medallion" type were issued in March 1863. They were *line perforated*, *LP* $12\frac{1}{2}$, the perforation running through the sheet margins and through the gutter. Early in 1864, a new kind of perforating device was put into operation by *Gouweloos Freres*. Although it has been claimed that this new "home-made" machine was not a simple comb perforating device, its products are very similar to comb perforation so that we can

call it *comb perforation*. It worked vertically in respect to the design of the stamps and the perforations run through one side-margin (usually the left one) only; the top and bottom margins as well as the other side margin and the gutter are not crossed by the perforation. The long perforating line of this perforation was quite irregular, measuring $12\frac{1}{2}$ on the one end and $13\frac{1}{2}$ on the other end, with $12\frac{1}{2}$ to $13\frac{1}{2}$ measurements between. Therefore we can distinguish several varieties of this comb perforation, namely *CP* $12\frac{1}{2}$ (12×14 perfs), *CP* $12\frac{1}{2} \times 13$ (12×15 perfs) and *CP* $12\frac{1}{2} \times 13\frac{1}{2}$ (12×16 perfs). In September 1865, *Gouweloos Freres* started to use a new perforating device, again a *comb perforation*, this time without varieties, *CP* $14\frac{1}{2}$ (14×16 perfs). This device worked horizontally in respect to the stamp design and crossed the gutter as well as the top or bottom margin. All these devices were not very carefully handled and perfectly centered stamps are scarce, as only a very small percentage of the stamps in each sheet were well centered, if at all.

For the *typographed stamps*, the perforating devices previously used for the engraved stamps did not fit; accordingly, *Gouweloos Freres* returned to the use of a *line perforation*, by discarding the short perforating lines of the *CP* $14\frac{1}{2}$ device and using only the long line, perforating $14\frac{1}{2}$ in combination with another line perforating device, perforating 14, in this way creating a *LP* $14\frac{1}{2} \times 14$. This perforation was used for all values except the London prints of the 1fr, which were perforated by *De La Rue & Co.* at London and received exactly the same *comb perforation* as the contemporary stamps of Great Britain which were manufactured by the same firm, namely *CP* 14 (14×17 perfs). It seems that one of the perforating devices for Great Britain stamps had been adapted to fit the different-sized sheets of the Belgium stamps, but it was used only for this one printing of the 1fr and not any more for Belgium stamps. In 1866, the available perforating devices of *Gouweloos Freres* became insufficient to meet the demand and this made it necessary to leave several printings of the 1e stamp of the 1865-67 issue *imperforate*. The *imperforate* stamps were delivered from August 8 to Dec. 15, 1866 to the postal administration. In the meantime, the postal administration wanted to make itself indepen-

dent of the perforating devices of a private firm and purchased its own perforating device in Vienna, which was put into operation at the *Atelier du Timbre*. The new perforation was a *comb perforation*, CP 15 (15x18 perfs) and perforated the sheets neatly and efficiently; the first such stamps came into use early in 1867. For the telegraph stamps, due to their hexagonal shape, Gouweloos Freres used a special *harrow perforation*, HP 13½ (10 perfs on each side).

Of the typographed stamps, *part perforated* and *imperforate* stamps are known. The former are the result of improperly working perforating devices and as accidental varieties are of secondary interest. More interesting are *pairs, imperforate between*, of which horizontal pairs of the 10c (used) and vertical pairs of the 30c (unused) are known. Of the *imperforate* varieties, most come from proof sheets of London or Brussels printings and are unused, although it is claimed that some copies were also used fraudulently for postage. But it does not seem doubtful that some completely or partly imperforate sheets were also overlooked by the controlling officials, issued to the post offices and regularly used. Such doubtless imperforated copies are known of the 2c, 5c, 10c (Plate II), 20c (Plate II), 30c and 40c (Fig. 24), all used, the 5c and 10c also unused. They should preferably be collected in pairs, as very wide-margined line perforated copies exist, which are an invitation to fakers to trim them. In 1870, *Baron Arthur de Rothschild* of Paris, an ardent collector, who had requested and obtained from the French Postal Administration about a year earlier imperforate sheets of the current French stamps, made the same request to the Belgian postal administration. It was granted and he received imperforate sheets of all current stamps, supposedly one sheet of each. Of the classic stamps in our sense, this concerned only the two telegraph stamps, of which such imperforate "Rothschild" stamps, on thick paper, are known.



Fig. 24

The printed sheets were not divided but were delivered to the post offices unbroken; therefore, *post office sheets* contained 200 stamps up to March 31, 1861, and 300 stamps from the day after; the telegraph stamps were in sheets of 200. While the sheet margins contained either no printing at all ("Epaulettes", first plates of "Medallions" and locally made plates of 1865-67 issue) or plate numbers and date (later plates of "Medallions") or plate numbers and order numbers (London made plates of 1865-66 issue and telegraph stamps), there were additional markings applied from 1858, —after the watermark had been abolished— before the sheets were delivered to the post offices. The sheets of the "Medallions" have two such markings, both in black ink. One is the *serial number* used for accounting purposes, reading "Timbres Poste Series" with a letter, a number and the year date, typographed in one line in script letters; on the sheets of 200 it was placed horizontally in the top right sheet corner, on the sheets of 300 on one of the side margins vertically. The second marking, a real *control mark*, was handstamped and reads "ATELIER DES TIMBRES-POSTE (CONTROLE)", in three lines, in an octagonal frame; for the perforated "Medallions" it was abbreviated and read "TIMBRES-POSTE CONTROLE", in two lines and without frame. For the typographed 1865-67 issue the typographed serial number was similar to that on the "Medallions", but either on the left margin of the first pane or on the right margin of the sixth pane; on some sheets it was one the back instead of on the front. The control marking "TIMBRES-POSTE CONTROLE", the same as on the perforated "Medallions", was handstamped on the bottom sheet margin. The telegraph stamps had the same handstamped control mark and in the same position, but instead of the typographed serial numbers, large numbers only, typographed in black in the top left sheet corner. The telegraph forms had similar typographed serial numbers as the postage stamps, but no control marks. The serial numbers and control marks were sometimes inaccurately placed on the sheet margins and then also partly covered some margin stamps. Copies overprinted with parts of these marginal markings are sought after by specialists.

(To be continued)

pertizing or "sheet reassembling" purposes can readily consult them, and the average reader of philatelic magazines will not be frightened by the endless descriptions of plate positions which are completely meaningless to him.

One of the significant characteristics of "plating" is usually that those who practice it *overestimate* its importance, either philatelically or materially. The collector, who has finished a "sheet reassembling" job usually believes that the completion of his task has greatly increased the value of the stamps used for the reassembling. But experience, especially auction results, show that there are practically no collectors who want to buy such reassembled sheets because the whole fun is had in reassembling, not in possessing them. Such reassembled sheets are usually only bought by dealers and at a low price—especially when the collector, as is mostly the case, was not too particular in regard to condition when buying the stamps needed for the reassembling—to be broken up, the singles and strips to be sold again to collectors who are still in the process of reassembling a sheet of the same stamp. We even know of one case where a collector cut up into single pieces a full sheet of 20th century stamps he had, mixed them up with others and then required quite some work and diligence to reassemble the sheet again.

The serious philatelic student who has completed the arduous job of a difficult plate reconstruction is equally inclined to overestimate the importance of such an achievement. In most cases, such reconstruc-

tion proves little or nothing and the only philatelic value lies in the possibility that others may use the pattern of the reconstructed plate for expertizing purposes or sheet reassembling. It is the philatelic student who derives the greatest gain out of plate reconstruction for which he is responsible, by having the satisfaction of success in a difficult and strenuous task. There are various ways of keeping happy in philately and when enjoyment, the main purpose of collecting, is achieved, it does not matter how ridiculous the collecting activities of one collector may seem to another. The work of the philatelic student, who works year after year on the seemingly insoluble problem of a specific plate reconstruction and eventually succeeds, should not be considered queer by his fellow philatelists. To find the last link in his reconstruction job, to close the last gap in his plating, provides a thrill which makes the pleasures of the simple philatelist fade into insignificance and amply repays the philatelic student for all the strenuous work he has performed. And he cannot understand his fellow collectors who can find pleasure in much less ambitious philatelic activities and are only frightened away by the work he is doing. We do not have to "plate" ourselves when we have no desire or no talent to do it and we are nevertheless just as good philatelists as anyone else. But let us be tolerant and let the "plating" enthusiast have his fun. He has his philatelic thrills and pleasures and does useful philatelic work on the side, as every other real philatelist does.

EUROPEAN CLASSICS

VI. BELGIUM *

All classic Belgium issues were either used up or else the remainders were destroyed. This resulted in all imperforate issues being rare in *mint* copies and also the perforated issues uncommon in that condition. Of the "Epaulettes", which are the rarest in mint condition, singles are rare and multiples are great rarities. The largest known block is a block of nine of the 10c. Of the "Medallions", several mint panes of 100 of the three values with framed watermark are known, probably found in the files; they

*) Concluded from page 207

seem to have been divided except one sheet of each, which still exists. Of the "Medallions" with unframed watermark and without watermark no full sheets or panes are known, but large blocks exist, although they are all rare, of the 40c value very rare. Of the perforated "Medallions" and the 1865-67 issue mint blocks are somewhat easier to obtain, although they still are all scarce. We do not know of a mint block of the 1fr London Print, nor of the 1fr telegraph stamp. Margin copies of the imperforates are very popular with the specialists because they are a great help in the plating especially those which show part of the

margin watermark. All margin copies which show plate numbers or dates are rarities; with a few exceptions, mainly of the plates of 300 of the "Medallions" (Fig. 25, 26), no such unused items are known. Margin copies with serial number or control mark are also scarce and sought for; only a few are known unused. Great rarities are also mint gutter pairs; they are unknown of all imperforate stamps except the 1c "Medallion". Margin stamps which show the gutter and part of a stamp of the other pane are also desirable items and unused very scarce. Of the perforated "Medallions" mint gutter pairs of all four values are known but are less rare; they are of no special value for the 1865-67 issue, being rather common.

All classic Belgium stamps are much more common *used* than unused. Even in multiples they are less rare used than unused, except the 1c, 2c and 5c values of which used multiples are somewhat rarer than unused. Of the "Epaulettes" used blocks are rarities; the largest known block is a block of ten of the 20c. Of the "Medallions" with framed watermark, we know no used block of the 40c; the other values, also with unframed watermark and without watermark, are rare in used blocks. The perforated "Medallions" and the 1865-67 issue are equally rare in used blocks; of the 1fr London print and the 1fr telegraph stamp we know no used block. Very popular are all margin copies of the imperforate issues, especially when they show plate numbers, dates or control marks; they are all scarce to rare (Fig. 27, 28). Used gutter pairs of the imperforates are less rare than unused ones but still are rarities. They are unknown of the "Epaulettes" and of the "Medallions" with framed watermark. Of the "Medallions", only 10c with unframed watermark, 10c and 20c without watermark from sheets of 200 (Fig. 29) and 10c from sheets of 300, as well as 10c perforated are recorded. Less rare are imperforate stamps with gutter margin which show only part of a stamp from the other pane. They are known of almost all values but are still rare. Of the 1865-67 issue, used gutter pairs are scarce but can occasionally be found.

Belgium's policy in regard to the *withdrawal* and *demonetization* of the older issues, when new ones were introduced, was rather inconsistent. The "Epaulettes" were



Fig. 25



Fig. 26

not withdrawn when the "Medallions" were introduced but were used up. When the perforated "Medallions" were introduced the imperforate sheets were withdrawn from the post offices. The same was the case when the typographed stamps of 1866-67 appeared. The corresponding values of the engraved stamps were withdrawn immediately after the typographed stamps had become available and only one month after



Fig. 27



Fig. 28



Fig. 29

the last value had been replaced, the "Medallions" and at the same time also the "Epaulettes" were officially demonetized on June 30, 1866. The remainders were destroyed in 1867. The typographed stamps were withdrawn from sale on Sept. 30, 1870, after corresponding values in new designs had been issued (1c, 10c Nov. 15, 1869; 2c, 20c Jan. 1, 1870; 5c, 30c March 1, 1870; 40c, 1fr April 1, 1870), but they were demonetized only on February 28, 1911. The telegraph stamps were used up after stamps of new designs were issued on June 1, 1871; they were demonetized when the use of telegraph stamps was abolished on February 28, 1911. The telegraph forms had been abolished much earlier, by a decree of Aug. 8, 1876, but were used up and demonetized together only with the telegraph stamps. Except for the perforated "Medallions", all stamps were demonetized many years after their regular use had ceased, and therefore no "last day" cancellations or covers exist, although occasionally copies which were used very late, can be found. Of the perforated "Medallions" a few last day covers (June 30, 1866) are known, but they are very rare.

All classic Belgium postage stamps are rather common on *entires*; there are no "cover rarities" among them. The 1fr of 1865 is somewhat scarce but still not really rare on cover. Also less common are the 1c, 2c and 5c, on newspapers or printed matter for which they were used. They are rare on covers as their use for paying postage on letters was not permitted and a decree of July 1861 ordered letters to be considered unpaid when franked with 1c stamps, a regulation which in 1866 extended to the 2c and 5c stamps. Contrariwise, use of the higher values was permitted for postage on printed matter and newspapers. The use of 1c, 2c and 5c stamps on letters seems to have been tolerated by some post offices, probably as a result of ignorance of the regulations. But in some cases they may have been emergency frankings, due to a lack of higher values. All such covers are rare. Real emergency frankings seem to have been the few known *bisects*, all vertical, which exist of the 20c "Medallion", both with framed and unframed watermark. They seem to have been recognized or at least tolerated because the use of *bisects* was never expressly forbidden. Several such

covers are known; they are rarities of a high order.

All Belgium stamps had their *first day of issue* on fixed dates and only the changes in the paper, which were officially not recognized as changes of issue, but as different printings, were not issued on previously announced dates but after the previous printings had been used up. First day *entires*—except for the 1c, 2c and 5c no first day cancellations off cover can be found, as the stamps were cancelled with numeral cancellers and only as exceptions with dated town cancellations—can be collected of the "Epaulettes" (July 1, 1849), the "Medallions" (40c Oct. 10, 1849; 10c, 20c Aug. 10, 1850; 1c June 1, 1861), the perforated "Medallions" (April 11, 1863), the typographed issue (30c, 1fr Nov. 1, 1865; 10c, 20c, 40c Jan. 1, 1866; 1c June 1, 1866; 5c Sept. 1, 1866; 2c March 1, 1867), the two telegraph stamps (Jan. 7, 1866) and the telegraph form (Dec. 1, 1865). They are all rare to very rare. The "Epaulettes" were sold by the post offices from June 25, 1849, a week before they could be used for postage, and a few prematurely used copies on "pre-stamp" covers are known of the last days of June 1849.

Mixed frankings between the various issues are known but all are scarce. Only few possibilities existed for mixed frankings between the "Epaulettes" and the "Medallions", while the perforated "Medallions" and the 1865-67 issue were in simultaneous use for only a few months. Even mixed imperforate and perforated "Medallions" are uncommon.

Of the perforated "Medallions", the values 10c, 20c and 40c are known *overprinted with a "G"*. This is a marking applied for a period of about two years by a banking house of Mons, the Banque Paternostre-Guillochin, Emile Siraut & Cie., for the stamps used on the mail of that firm. It is not known whether or not an authorization for this overprint was obtained. Regularly, the "G" was red on the 10c and 20c, and blue on the 40c, but there exist also "errors", blue on the 10c, and red plus blue on the 40c. Double and inverted overprints are also known. All "G" overprints are scarce, some varieties and all unused copies are rare.

Of all classic Belgium stamps, *Reprints* were made at several times, either to satisfy the requests of collectors and dealers, or for

official exchange and presentation purposes. All reprints, except part of the last reprint (1929), were made from the dies, singly on small sheets of paper and are imperforate. The dies of the engraved issues had an ornamented frame and this shows on untrimmed reprints. The first reprints were made as early as 1866, of the two values of the "Epaulettes" only, just after they had been demonetized. They were on thick unwatermarked or on thick laid paper, in original colors. In 1882, a second reprint was made, this time of the two values of the "Epaulettes" and all four values of the "Medallions", on thin smooth paper, in original colors. The third reprint was made in 1895 of the two values of the "Epaulettes", 1c, 10c and 20c of the "Medallions"—the 10c from a die in slightly different design—and the eight values of the 1865-67 issue, all on thin smooth paper and in original colors. The last reprint, of 1929, included the two values of the "Epaulettes", the four values of the "Medallions" and the eight values of the 1865-67 issue. These were all printed from the dies, on thin paper, in black. The four values of the "Medallions" and the 10c and 20c of the 1865-67 issue were also simultaneously printed from plates, on thin paper, in black. Both values of the telegraph stamps were reprinted twice, both times from the dies and in the original colors, in 1897 on sheets of 150mm. x 75mm. and in 1902 on sheets of 90mm. x 55mm. size. These latter reprints also exist perforated.

There exist relatively few *forgeries* of any importance of the classic stamps of Belgium. Crude forgeries only, mostly lithographed, are known of the "Epaulettes" and "Medallions", while a rather good forgery of the 1fr of 1865 exists. Quite dangerous forgeries are known of the 1c, 2c and 5c of the 1866-67 issue, all three perforated as well as imperforate. There are few *fakes* in existence, mostly of some rare varieties or cancellations. More frequently we can find stamps, simulating the scarce unused stamps, which are actually pen cancelled or lightly cancelled copies which have been cleaned. In general, the collector of classic Belgium stamps does not have to worry too much about forgeries.

Upon frequent occasions, the Belgian postal administration needed *presentation copies* of postage stamps as gifts to foreign postal administrations or foreign dignita-

ries, of current as well as of obsolete issues. In some cases, such stamps were marked by a handstamped "SPECIMEN". It comes in red on the 1895 reprints of the "Epaulettes". On originals, it can be found on all four values of the perforated "Medallions" and—in red, blue, violet or black and in three types (19 x 3mm., 13 x 2mm. and 16 x 3mm.)—on all values of the 1865-67 issue, the two telegraph stamps and the telegraph form, as well as on imperforate stamps of the 1865-67 issue. In 1902 and 1903, instead of being handstamped "SPECIMEN", presentation copies were cancelled with a contemporary postmark "BRUXELLES-DEPART"; dates from Feb. 25, 1902 to Jan. 19, 1903 are known. Of the "Epaulettes", plate proofs of the 10c and the 1895 reprint of the 20c are known cancelled in that way. Of the "Medallions" the unwatermarked 10c and all four perforated values as well as the 1c and 20c reprints of 1895 exist. Of the 1865-67 issue, 1c and 30c originals, as well as reprints of 1895 of the other values can be found with this cancellation. The telegraph stamps can be found similarly cancelled "DIRECTION DES TELEGRAPHES".

A special kind of marking was used in 1866 for *remainder sheets*, supposedly one of each of the two "Epaulettes" and the 40c "Medallion" with framed watermark. These were sold at that time to the Brussels stamp dealer J. B. Moens, after a red ink line was drawn through each stamp. The rarity of unused stamps has led in many cases to removal of this red pen line from the remainder stamps, to be offered as unused. This in turn has made these copies with red ink line rarer than mint stamps and they are appreciated by connoisseurs.

In regard to *condition*, the job of the collector of Belgium stamps is not too difficult but also not too easy. The imperforate engraved issues, the "Epaulettes" as well as the "Medallions", are rather closely spaced and therefore a rather large percentage of them is cut into the design. But there is sufficient material of the 10c and 20c values to enable even a small collector to obtain full-margined copies. Only the 40c value and, to a lesser degree, the 1c stamp, are somewhat harder to find in satisfactory condition. Stamps with super-margins, meaning about 1mm. margin all around, are rare of all values and condition-minded col-

lectors pay high prices for them. The perforated "Medallions" are more difficult to obtain in a condition which will be entirely satisfactory to a collector whose main concern is centering. The spacing between the stamps was in many cases narrower than the size of the perforation holes, with the result, that even on perfectly centered copies, which are in any case very scarce, the frame lines are always partly cut into by the perforation. Almost all copies are more or less off center and even a discriminating collector will have to be satisfied with only fairly good centering, which is also found infrequently. The typographed 1865-67 issue, as well as the telegraph stamps, have wider spacing and well centered copies are, although also not plentiful, within the reach of every collector.

The task of collecting Belgium stamps in satisfactory condition is made more difficult by the *cancellation* rather than by the margins. Almost all stamps of the imperforate issues are rather heavily cancelled. The regulations for the cancellation provided that each stamp had to get a full strike of the circular canceller. This was carried out in almost 100% of all cases and caused the fine engravings of all early stamps being covered by the more or less heavy bars of the canceller. Stamps, on which the head is free and not covered by the canceller, are rare exceptions and looked for by connoisseurs; they rate much higher prices than regularly cancelled stamps. Only the introduction of the dotted diamond-shaped cancellers of 1864 provided for a less heavy cancelling and the perforated "Medallions" as well as the typographed stamps can be found much easier with satisfactory cancellation.

Belgium's *postal history* is rather old, as the first postmarks are known as early as 1695, but only from those parts of the country which were at that time under *French administration*. They replaced manuscript markings with the name of the post office, which appeared from 1663. The first postmarks were small straight lines, with the name of the post office in French, in Roman capitals. In the part of the country under *Austrian administration*, after the extensive use of manuscript markings, postmarks were introduced in 1707 in Brussels and from 1714 in other towns, also straight lines, but of larger size, with the name of

the post office in French, in Roman capitals, including a few postmarks with negative lettering. From 1787 we find such postmarks also with the Flemish town name, in Roman capitals, occasionally also in script letters, some preceded by "De" ("From"), but also again many manuscript town markings. A special kind of postmarks, small circles with only one letter in the center—the first letter of the name of the post office—appeared at about the same time. Paid letters now received a marking "P.P." ("Port Paye") on their face, applied with small handstamps, showing the P.P. without or within a frame. For registered letters, from 1791 handstamped markings, "Charge" or "Recommandee" were used.

During the *French Occupation* of the country, the old postmarks were first used without change, but, after the annexation of the territory by France, from 1796 new postmarks of the same type as those used in the other parts of France were introduced. They were straight lines in Roman capitals, with the town name in French and the department number on top. On Belgian territory, the numbers 86, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97 and 98, for a few post offices 7, were used. For paid letters, special postmarks, with a "P" at left and at right of the department number, were introduced. For forwarded letters, similar markings, but with "D." and "B." or "DEB." or "DEBOURSE", were used on the back of the letters.

The 17th and 18th century postmarks are generally black, but red postmarks can be found occasionally.

After the end of French rule, the French department numbers were removed from the postmarks, but the P.P. was frequently retained. New postmarks were again straight lines with the name of the post office only; under *Netherlands administration* they were, as much as possible, in the Flemish spelling. From 1816, all larger post offices received straight line postmarks with the word "FRANCO" ("Paid") in a second line, for use on paid letters; several used similar postmarks with "DEBOURSE", for forwarded letters. A decree of Jan. 26, 1829, ordered the inclusion of the date in the postmarks of all "Bureaux de Direction" and the result was a new type of postmark, single circles, with the town name (in Flemish) on top, day and month (the latter in

letters) in the center and a small asterisk at bottom. The "Bureaux de Distribution" continued to use the old straight line markings. Other markings were all in Flemish, for example "Aangeteekend" for registered letters and "Na Posttijd" for "too late" letters. Arrival postmarks, which had been introduced in 1801, consisted almost exclusively of the date or a number, without the name of the post office. The postmarks under the Netherlands rule were black or red, sometimes a brown mixture of both inks.

Under *Belgian administration*, first the old postmarks were continued in use, but after a few months—in Brussels as early as 1830, elsewhere beginning from 1831—a new type of postmark with the name of the post office in French spelling, was introduced, but only at the "Bureaux de Perception". They were large double circles of about 29mm. diameter, with the town name at top, day and month in the center (the latter in letters) and the year date at bottom. The first of these postmarks had small oval ornaments at the left and right. In 1838, the diameter of these double circles was reduced to about 23 to 23½mm., with the name of the month now sometimes in italics. In 1840, the first single circles, of about 24mm. diameter, started to appear, identical with the double circles but the inner circle omitted. From now on, double circles as well as single circles were provided to new post offices and as replacements, seemingly without any system as to which of the two kinds was assigned. The "Bureaux de Distribution" first retained their old straight line postmarks and they were only replaced by new postmarks, again straight lines, a few of them now with oval frame, to eliminate offending Flemish spellings. In 1836, a new type of postmarks was generally introduced at all "Bureaux de Distribution", namely small single circles of about 18mm. diameter, with the town name at top, day and month (the latter in Roman figures) in the center and a small curved line ornament but no year date at bottom.

All post offices first used the old FRANCO postmarks for paid letters; they were replaced beginning from 1830 by new "P. P." postmarks, with or without frame, some with the full wording "PORT PAYE". From 1838 the large post offices received special postmarks similar to their regular single or

double circle town postmarks but with "P. P." included in a segment at the bottom instead of the year date; they were used mainly for printed matter and newspapers. The "Debourse" postmarks were continued and some new ones, with oval frame, with or without town name, were added. New registration postmarks, which were also introduced from 1830, showed "CHARGE" in a rectangular frame. The "Too late" markings of Netherlands origin were replaced by new markings "Après le départ" from 1832, as were other markings by new ones in French. In 1836, "PAR ESTAFETTE" markings for letters sent by special messengers were introduced. For the rural mail service, special markings were introduced in 1832, boxed "S. R." ("Service Rural"), with additional "C. A." ("Correspondence de l'Arondissement"), also boxed, for letters which were delivered in the same rural district in which they had been mailed. The latter was replaced after some time by a boxed marking "C. C." ("Correspondence Cantonale"). There were aside from that also mail box markings, circles including one or two letters, initials of the name of the village. These handstamps were attached to the rural mail boxes and were stamped in the top right corner of letters collected from them. The use of arrival postmarks was continued but from 1845 new types very similar to the regular town postmarks were introduced. The postmarks of the few experimental travelling post offices, which operated for short periods from 1841, mostly single circles with the route indication, are rare. The five Brussels branch offices used special additional markings from 1845, with "B'eu" and the letters A, B, C, D, or E in a box. There were no Belgian field post markings, but numerous foreign field post markings are known from Belgian territory, especially during the Napoleonic wars and during the struggle for independence after 1830.

Mail to foreign countries received special "Paid" markings, depending how far postage was paid. Letters which were prepaid only to the Belgian border received a handstamp "Franco Frontiere", those franked to the destination, "Franco Tout". Later those markings were replaced by markings "P. P." and "P. D." respectively, with an additional marking "P. F." for letters which by special treaty were franked to the French

borders.

In regard to the ink of the postmarks, under Belgian administration this was strictly regulated. The postmarks of the "Bureaux de Perception" had to be red, those of the "Bureaux de Distribution" black; from 1836 the postmarks of Brussels were applied in blue. For arrival postmarks black ink was to be used. These regulations were obeyed rather strictly and "errors"—use of the wrong ink, for example, black for the postmark of a "Bureau de Perception" or blue for an arrival postmark—are scarce and sought for by specialists.

When the first postage stamps were introduced, on July 1, 1849, the post offices had uniform postmarks, namely the "Bureaux de Perception" single or double circles with the town name at top, the date in center and the year date at bottom, while the "Bureaux de Distribution" had small single circles of about 18mm. diameter, with the town name at top, the date in center and mostly a small ornament at bottom, but no year date. All these postmarks were not used as cancellers, but the stamps were cancelled by *special numeral cancellers* introduced concurrently with the issuance of the first postage stamps; the town postmarks were stamped only on the letters, alongside of the stamps. Belgium also followed in this respect the example of Great Britain, which had introduced special numeral cancellers five years earlier. Belgium even copied somewhat the British cancellers by introducing circular cancellers of bars, with a rectangular box, containing a numeral, in the center. For the "Bureaux de Perception", the cancellers had horizontal bars, for the "Bureaux de Distribution" vertical bars; the cancellers of the rural mail carriers were plain circles of bars, without numeral. The two kinds of post offices were numbered separately, each starting with "1". The original list of the "Bureaux de Perception" contained 135 post offices, from Aerschot to Zelzaete, numbered in alphabetical order. For the "Bureaux de Distribution", the numbers ran originally to 62 only, containing the offices from Aeltre to Wuestwezel in alphabetical order. Newly erected post offices received the succeeding numbers in order of their opening date. In this way, the list of the "Bureaux de Perception" eventually ran to 208, that of the "Bureaux de Distribution" to 145. When

post offices were abolished, their numbers were assigned to newly opened post offices, so that the list was always complete. The post office at Herbesthal on Prussian territory received a numeral canceller "140" on June 29, 1857. Horizontal bar cancellations with numbers above "200" and vertical bar cancellations above "120" are generally scarce.

The numeral cancellers of the "Bureaux de Perception" were first of a uniform type, having 17 horizontal bars. All numbers, from 1 to 171 incl., except 4, 24, 45, 166 and 168, exist in this type. The box in the center with the numeral was for the numbers up to 99 joined with the bars and had thin lines all around, while for the numbers of 100 and more the box was either joined with the bars, but had a thick frame line at top or bottom, or it was separated from the bars and stood free. All cancellers had only the numeral in the center, except for the canceller of a branch office of Verviers, which had 123/A.1 in two lines (A.1 means "Annex 1") instead. The four largest post offices ("4", "24", "45" and "73") had a special type of canceller, which had 18 instead of 17 horizontal bars. There existed also a small number of irregular cancellers, with 14 bars only ("23", "24" and "45"), or with 26 bars or 10 thick bars ("24" only), and with the bars cut up into dots ("24" with 12 rows and "54" with 9 rows of dots), most of which are scarce to rare. In 1858, a change in the design of the cancellers took place, when cancellers with 8 thick horizontal bars were introduced. The rectangle in the center with the numeral was now either connected with the bars or stood free. The cancellers with the numerals 166, 168 and from 172 up exist only in this new type, while of the lower numbers only those post offices which needed replacements, together 36, received the new type of cancellers. In 1861, the four post offices of Brussels received this type of canceller, with the four cardinal points instead of numerals, namely "EST", "MIDI", "NORD" and "OUEST". The cancellers of the "Bureaux de Distribution" were of similar type, all with 18 vertical bars, the box in the center with the numeral stood free. The cancellers of the rural mail carriers, without numeral, had uniformly 14 bars.

The travelling post offices received also special cancellers, but with route indication

instead of the numeral in the center. They had first two letters and a numeral, later only one letter and a numeral. In the first type, two such cancellers, with "AN1" and "AN2" ("AN" means "Ambulant Nord") are known; they have 17 horizontal bars, the rectangle in the center with the numeral joined with the bars. The other cancellers of the travelling post offices, replacing this earliest type, have one letter only and 17 horizontal bars, the rectangle in the center stood free. The indications were "EI" to "EIII" ("E" means "Est"), "MI" to "MVI" ("Midi"), "NI" and "NII" ("Nord") and "OI" to "OIII" and, as exception, "O5" ("Ouest"); of "MIV", "MV" and "MVI" exist also cancellers with 18 vertical bars.

The regulations provided that the travelling post offices had to mark on each letter the name of the railroad station, from the letterbox of which it had been collected. Originally this was done by a manuscript marking, but from about 1860, special *letter box markings* were created, which were attached to the letter boxes in the railroad stations and were applied to all letters collected therefrom. They show the name of the station only, straight line in Roman capitals, without or within a rectangular box. In a number of cases, these letter box markings were used as cancellers on stamps, the use of which is scarce to rare.

The two different lists of numeral cancellers together with the additions proved bothersome and it was decided to combine the list of the "Bureaux de Distribution" with that of the "Bureaux de Perception" into one single list. This took place on April 15, 1864, on which day all post offices received new cancellers with their new numbers assigned; the old cancellers were withdrawn at the same time. The new numeral cancellers were an almost exact copy of the numeral cancellers, which had been introduced in France in 1852. They consisted of a diamond of dots, in 6 rows, with a numeral in the center. The new list of post offices contained 410 names, in alphabetical order from Aeltre to Zele. Newly formed post offices received the succeeding numbers, the highest number being 455. The post office at Herbesthal (Prussia) now received a canceller with the number "175". There was no change in the cancellers of the rural mail carriers, which remained in use, but new cancellers of this kind now had 18 instead

of 14 bars.

The travelling post offices also received new cancellers consisting of a diamond of dots, in the same shape as those for the regular post offices, but with indication of the route in the center. They were now "E1" to "E3" and "EIV" and "EV", as exception also "Est 3B", "M1" to "M6", "N1" and "N2" and "O1" to "O3", as well as "AM. BR.AR." (meaning "Ambulant Bruxelles-Arlon").

The ink used for the numeral cancellers was black, other colors being exceptions. Red, green, and blue cancellations are known; they are all very rare and most of them are from the period before 1860; they are still rarer on later printings and issues.

The use of the special numeral cancellers was abolished only after the end of the classic period, in 1872-73. Therefore, town cancellations on stamps before that time are exceptions and the "Epaulettes" as well as the first printings of the "Medallions" are practically unknown with such cancellations. From June 1, 1861, this changed somewhat because printed matter and newspapers, for which up to that date payment of postage in cash had been continued, now had to be franked also by means of stamps. The new value of 1c, issued on that day—and equally the values of 1c, 2c and 5c of the issue 1865-67—were created solely for the purpose of paying postage at reduced rates on printed matter and newspapers; their use for other kind of mail was strictly forbidden. A special regulation which came into force on the day on which the franking of printed matter and newspapers started provided that the stamps on such pieces of mail were not to be cancelled by the special cancellers used on letters but that the regular town postmarks or the special newspaper postmarks which were similar to the regular town postmarks, but with the letters "PP" or "PD" more or less prominently included, should be used for that purpose. This regulation was rather strictly observed and resulted in the fact that numeral cancellations on the 1c stamps of 1861 and 1863 are exceptions and are very rare. But it now provided also the possibility that higher values, used on heavier parcels of printed matter and newspapers, could receive a town cancellation or the special newspaper marking and they did in fact. But even then, town postmarks on the stamps of 10c

and higher denomination are still rare. In 1868, a new regulation permitted the use of the special cancellers for the stamps on printed matter and newspapers; nevertheless, they are scarce exceptions on the 1c, 2c and 5c of the 1865-67 issue.

The telegraph stamps from the beginning were cancelled with the regular town postmarks of the post offices, which also functioned as telegraph offices. Only from 1870 special telegraph markings were introduced, with octagonal frame but otherwise similar to the postmarks, with or without an inner circle.

By way of *summary* it can be stated that the postage stamps of 10c and more normally come with the special numeral cancellers only and town or other postmarks on them are rare exceptions. The "Epaulettes" can normally be found with the circular bar cancellation, with 17 and 18 horizontal bars and, somewhat less common, with 18 vertical bars, and much rarer with the rural cancellers and the cancellers of the travelling post offices. Of the "Medallions", the conditions were similar for the imperforate issues, while on the perforated stamps the regular cancellation was the diamond of dots; the circle of bars, 17, 18 or 8 bars, is scarcer, as in turn, the diamond of dots is rare to very rare on the imperforate issues. But diamond of dots cancellers on "Medallions" with numbers above "411", which came into use after the 1865 issue was introduced, are also rare. On the typographed 1865-66 issue the regular cancellation was the diamond of dots, while the circle of bars cancellers, except the rural cancellers which are scarce, do not exist on this issue. Town and other cancellations are rare exceptions as on all previous issues. For the low values, 1c, 2c and 5c, the conditions are entirely different, as on these stamps the regular town postmarks and the special printed matter and newspaper markings are the regular cancellations, while the numeral cancellers are rare exceptions. The telegraph stamps are usually cancelled by the special octagonal telegraph markings and are somewhat scarcer with town postmarks. Telegraph cancellations on postage stamps are rather scarce. All colored cancellations, without exception, are rare to very rare.

The *town postmarks*, which from July 1, 1849, were stamped alongside the stamps on the covers, showed few changes during the

classic period. First the postmarks of the pre-stamp period were used, single and double circles, with day, month (in letters) and year for the "Bureaux de Perception" and small single circles with day and month (in Roman figures) only, mostly with a small ornament at bottom, for the "Bureaux de Distribution". Beginning in 1850, but generally from 1855, the hour was added to the former, between the month and year date, and in 1851, the distinction between the postmarks of the two kinds of post offices was abolished, the "Bureaux de Distribution" now receiving the same types of postmarks as the "Bureaux de Perception". In 1858, the distinction was resumed, by inserting small asterisks on both sides of the year date in the single and double circle postmarks of the "Bureaux de Distribution". In 1860, a slight change took place, the month was now given in figures instead of letters in both the single and double circles and from Jan. 1, 1864, the indication of the hour changed places with the year date and was now at the bottom of the postmarks. In 1864, the distinction between the two kinds of post offices was definitely abolished and all post offices received from that time on the same postmarks as the "Bureaux de Perception". Single and double circles of smaller diameter (about 20mm.) again were introduced and remained in use, together with many postmarks of previous types, until the end of the classic period. The travelling post offices had during the whole period postmarks similar to those of the "Bureaux de Perception", always double circles, with the indication of the route, for example "AMBULANT OUEST No. 2" or "NORD II ANVERS".

For printed matter and newspapers, mailed at reduced rates, franking with stamps was introduced only on June 1, 1861. Until then, the postal fees on this kind of mail had to be paid in cash. The post offices stamped their regular postmarks on such mail, with an added handstamp "PD" or "PP" to show that postage had been paid. A number of larger post offices, to save work, had "PD" or "PP" included in postmarks of otherwise regular type. When the use of stamps for payment of the fees on printed matter and newspapers started, either the regular postmarks or these special postmarks which included "PD" or "PP" were used as cancellers, to which from 1862 a

few more, double ovals with a large "PD" or "PP" at top, were added. Even when the low values were used in rare cases and against regulations on letters, such stamps were usually cancelled with the town postmarks and not with the numeral cancellers.

Usually, the regular postmarks were also used as arrival markings; only the large post offices had special postmarks for this purpose, mostly in types similar to the regular postmarks. In Brussels and in a few other towns, letter carrier markings, showing a numeral in a small circle, were added to the arrival markings.

The inks used for the town postmarks first followed a strict system. For the postmarks of the "Bureaux de Perception" red ink was used, except at Brussels, where it was blue. The "Bureaux de Distribution" used black ink for their postmarks. These regulations were very accurately obeyed and lasted until the end of 1857. From 1851, the distinction by color replaced in some respect the distinction by different types of postmarks for the two kinds of post offices. At the same time when the two kinds of post offices again received different types of postmarks, the color distinction was abolished and from Jan. 1, 1858, the use of black ink for all postmarks was ordered. Except for very rare exceptions, no colored postmarks can be found after that date. Manuscript cancellations which come occasionally, are mostly accidental, on stamps left uncanceled by oversight by the post office of mailing.

Belgium is a country where *philatelic research* is far advanced and especially in the last thirty years has made remarkable progress, so that almost all major problems have been solved. Therefore, the *philatelic literature* about Belgium stamps, written in French, is very large, but less in books than in articles in philatelic magazines, especially "Le Philatliste Belge" and "Balasse Magazine", both of Brussels. The result of all research has been used in a Specialized Catalog of Belgium, published by W. Balasse, of which the last edition was published in 1949, compiled by R. Delapierre and J. Du Four, and which is an excellent piece of work, giving competent information concerning the stamps and their varieties, as well as their cancellations. The collector who can understand French has in this handbook an entirely adequate guide for his

specializing activities. Only if he wants to go in for research will he need to consult other literature, especially the articles in the two magazines named above. Of books, the classic two-volume monograph of J. B. Moens "Les Timbres de Belgique depuis leur origine jusqu'à nos jours", published in 1880, is still valuable for its data and contemporary information. The Belgium part of Dr. Munk's Kohl Handbook is a fine piece of compilatory work, although partly outdated by new research and anyway only usable for those who can understand German. For the postmarks, the large monograph by L. Hanciau "La Poste Belge et ses diverses Marques Postales 1814-1914", published in 1929, gives competent and accurate information concerning the 19th and 20th century postmarks, but the presentation of the material is rather confusing, mixing very unimportant details with important ones. Much clearer and more usable is a monograph by L. Herlant "La Poste aux Lettres et les Marques Postales en Belgique de 1648 a 1849", published in 1946, although it covers only the pre-stamp period, but makes an excellent survey of the field. In English, there is very little the collector can use. A small booklet by B. W. H. Poole is entirely insufficient and mostly outdated, as are several large articles in American and British magazines, except two by M. A. Studd in "The London Philatelist", 1941 and 1946. The collector who does not understand French and wants to specialize in Belgium stamps will have a hard time as he will miss many important points published in the literature. He will get no results in research, either, because work of this kind on Belgium stamps or postmarks, without exact knowledge which facts were already ascertained and described in the literature, will be a waste of time.

The classic stamps of Belgium, as we have defined them, consist of only 26 *main numbers* in the Scott Catalog. All stamps are priced unused higher than used and for some stamps the difference is rather big, so that the total catalog value is about \$120 for the used and more than \$1100 for the unused stamps. There are among the used stamps nevertheless quite a number of rather cheap ones, as seventeen of the 26 stamps are priced at \$5 or less, twelve at \$1 or less, eight at 50c or less and four at 25c or less. The cheapest used item is listed at

Se, the highest at \$20. Therefore, the collector will not only be able to assemble a fine used collection of Belgium at relatively little cost, but there is also plenty of material available for the specialist, whether he goes in for shades, plate or printing varieties, perforations or cancellations. But the collector, who wants perfection or goes in for exceptional items will be able to spend quite a lot of money, as such material has been taken out of the market and has been assembled in big collections in Belgium whence it is offered only occasionally and at very high prices. Equal difficulties await the collector of unused Belgium stamps, as really mint copies of the earliest issues are very hard to obtain and the Scott prices, going up to \$100 and \$200 for some of them, still do not reflect the prices actually paid for perfect items of this kind. If a collector wants to collect classic Belgium and he does not have much money available, he should confine himself to used stamps which offer plenty of interest and which give the specialist, who can base his work on the excellent literature, much satisfaction and pleasure. The philatelic student will find it much more difficult, for the field is thoroughly explored and all of the main problems have been solved, but just such a seemingly hopeless task may encourage some ambitious collector to try to make important finds and new discoveries in this field anyway. Ardor and patience, as well as plenty of material will be necessary for such an undertaking. But in any case, Belgium in a fine field to collect and, when the considerations stated above are headed, collecting Belgium stamps should satisfy every collector.

(Next: VII. Bergeedorf)

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

● The next issue of the *MERCURY STAMP JOURNAL* is scheduled for September, 1952.

● Our Office will stay open this summer on a five-day basis with a reduced staff and shorter business hours. From June 21 until Labor Day, business hours will be from 10 A.M. to 2 P.M. and from 3 P.M. to 5 P.M., Monday to Friday; the office will be closed on Saturdays. After Labor Day, normal business hours will be resumed.

● Eric F. Hurt, one of the foremost pioneers of collecting local stamps and a true lover of postal history, died on Jan. 30 at the age of 61. Collector since 1905, he became a dealer in his special field in 1930. He wrote several books and catalogs, as well as numerous articles in the philatelic press. His death is a severe loss to all who like the philatelic side lines in so far as they are important links in postal history.

● The *ITEP, International Centenary Exhibition of Utrecht (Netherlands)*, which will be held from June 28 to July 6, 1952, has published its *Fifth Bulletin*. It contains the final instructions for the mailing of the exhibits and for visitors. Although seriously hampered by the decision of the F.I.P. to allow two other international exhibitions in the same year—of which the *REINATEX* of Monte Carlo proved a serious and successful competitor, draining away exhibitors and especially visitors—the show promises to be a success and nobody who will be in Europe at the time of the show should miss visiting it.

● For the *New York International Stamp Exhibition 1956*, preliminary preparations have already started. The *Association for Stamp Exhibitions*, the organizers of the show, are presently looking for a suitable location for the exhibition.

● The new catalogs can be expected all in the early months of the fall, the first (Zumstein, Michel Europe) around Labor Day; of the Scott Catalog, Part I and II are scheduled to appear at about the same dates as last year.

● The *Friedl Expert Committee*, which was set up more than four years ago and since then has rendered its opinion on many thousands of foreign stamps, providing signature of one of the experts (Otto W. Friedl, Herbert J. Bloch and Edwin Mueller) or, for valuable items, issuing certificates, has adopted new expertizing terms, effective March 1, 1952, which clarify the scope of and simplify the conditions under which the expertizing service is provided. Among others, for stamps cataloguing \$200 or more, the issuance of a certificate is now obligatory. The new terms will be sent free on request.—The Committee will not hold any regular meetings between July 1 and Labor Day, but occasional meetings are scheduled. Items submitted for an opinion