

"STAMPS OF MALTA".

By EDMUND RIZZO

(Mentioned in the preceding article)

"Our $\frac{1}{2}$ d. yellow local stamp was first made use of in 1861. Although all catalogues state the Malta $\frac{1}{2}$ d. yellow stamp dates from 1860, yet from reliable information which I will quote later on, I am led to the conclusion that the above-mentioned stamp was not made use of before the subsequent year. Some months ago, a friend of mine acquired from a Maltese merchant his old correspondence since 1824. This friend of mine being himself an ardent collector, invited me to help him in classifying this correspondence.

"Among the whole lot there was a good number of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. yellow Malta on the original cover.

"We classified these Malta stamps according to date but on going back to 1860 we found that in that year no stamps were to be found on the letters and that only a Post Mark bearing the date was to be seen.

"At first I thought that the local stamp was first brought into use towards the middle or even the end of that year and I continued my researches with greater diligence. At last I found a letter bearing the date of 25th Dec. 1860, such letter had no stamp on and since by the 25th December letters were posted without being stamped, of course we may with certainty conclude that this stamp was not used before 1861.

"The first order sent by the Post Office to the Crown Agents for the manufacture of this stamp was of £40.

"As these stamps were only used locally (letters sent abroad were stamped with stamps of Great Britain), more than five years had elapsed before this first stock was exhausted.

"In classifying the above-mentioned stamp of Malta we met with several $\frac{1}{2}$ d. yellow on bluish ground used in 1861 and '62 and at the same period we also met with $\frac{1}{2}$ d. yellow on white. The first stock of these stamps was therefore printed on a different kind of paper and the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. yellow on blued paper and that on white paper were contemporaneously printed and used. To be more correct we may point out that the white paper one, although met with obliterated in the same year viz:— 1861, yet the post mark bore the date of November but the circumstance may be attributed to the fact that the sheets of those on bluish were placed above while those on white were placed among the lower row of sheets but that was only a mere chance.

"Calculating the number of stamps on bluish found in the correspondence in question and those on white paper I dare say that the difference of price between those two stamps is not adequate to their respective rarity.

"In proportion we found four times on white paper more than on bluish whilst the former is catalogued as £2 which is a fair and reasonable price. The latter ought to be catalogued not more than $\frac{1}{4}$ that price."

(TO BE CONTINUED)