CURRENT STAMP FORGERIES
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I have met with the two following varieties of the red (green centre) stamp of Livonia, the better executed of the two I presume to be a genuine one. I can find the following amongst other differences between the two specimens. Genuine: a distinct five-rayed star in each corner, on a red plain ground, separated from the extreme background of the stamp by an ornament with three ends. In the forgery, the star in corners is indistinct as to the number of rays, and the ornament mentioned above has but two ends, the central one being indiscernible. The background of the genuine stamp, a close but distinct pattern, which in the forgery, although evidently a pattern, is not everywhere clear. Again, in the forgery, from W to H of WENDENSCHEN, there are seven scalloped marks round the centre, whilst, in the genuine copy, we only observe six marks, the letter H coming just past the centre of the sixth one. The colourings of the false stamp are bright, but poor; those of the original are bright and good.

BREMEN – 1855, 3, 5, 7 grote, 5 silb. gr.; 1863, 2 grote. – The whole set of these stamps is probably forged, but as yet I have not met with the 10 grote. They are very good forgeries, but have the new, glazy appearance, and shining postmarks, which cannot deceive the experienced collector. The following points occur in the 5 silb. gr. Forgery: the colour too bright, G of S. GR. Is badly formed, the top half being too small, and the bottom too broad; the top of the figure 5 inclines upwards very strangely, and the dot after the S. Gr. is rather an oblong one. In the genuine, we find this dot is a rounded-square one. In the forgery, the ornamental work over numerals V. in the lower corners is, on the left hand side, thinner than it is on the right side. A little care will prevent one’s being ‘done’ by these imitations, as they all show discrepancies in lettering as pointed out above: for instance, the outline of shading to the letters of BREMEN on the 3 grote will not bear examination, - the shapes of the figures 3 in the corners differ. The colour of the 2 grote is too deep in the forgery.

FINLAND – Envelopes, 1845, 10 kop. Rose, 20 black. – The forgeries of the reprints of these formerly unattainable stamps are very close imitations, though the letters are so shaped as to render any one with a knowledge of stamps at once suspicious, without comparison with genuine ones. The following differences between forged and genuine are very patent. Forgery: the letter S of STEMPEL is below the level of T, and is badly shaped in the lower half, being smaller there than it should be; the letters are none of them nicely finished, none being square and clear as they ought to be; also the marks in the band of the crown are, in the forgery, five transverse ovals, with a dot between each. In the genuine stamp they are long diamond-shaped marks, the upper halves of which are seldom clear. The word KOPECK is in thick bold letters in the reprint and original, but in rather thin ones in the forgery, and also the cross on the top of the crown is, in the forgery, decidedly crooked. The forgeries have an indistinctness in colouring not observable in the first reprints; the later re-impresions are far from equalling the earliest in paper, colour, and clearness. The greenish-black 20 kop. does not exist as an original that I am aware of.

PAPAL STATES – Forgeries are in extensive circulation of the 50 baj. Blue, and 1 scudo red – both rather rare stamps. The following are the most perceptible differences which occur betwixt the
forged and genuine 50 baj. Forged: the end of the key has only a semicircle in the handle, though there is a clear circle in the original, and the shading of the extreme border is too coarse. Genuine. The letters RA of FRANCO, and TAL of POSTALE, are joined to one another at their bases, - not so in the forgery. The 1 scudo I have unfortunately had no opportunity of comparing, but hope to remedy this in my next paper.

WURTEMBURG. Retourbriefe. – Nearly every specimen of this rare stamp in English collections is forged. I am unable to give the exact points of the genuine stamp, but can mention the following which do not occur in combination in any forgery I have. The genuine RETROURBRIEFE is upon a white paper, with a tinge of blue, although it could not be called bluish paper; it is clearly and deeply printed, and there is always a stop after the RETROURBRIEFE.

With the commencement of the new year it is very probable that a great number of fresh forgeries will appear, and therefore the readers of this magazine will do well to exercise the greatest care in making their purchases. This will especially apply to the juvenile portion of our community, to whom a seemingly beautiful impression of an old stamp has immense attraction; and youth being very unsuspicious, it is to it that such things as reprints and well executed forgeries are principally offered. Many of the common stamps are forged in quantities, solely on purpose to make up the marvellous packets of stamps at marvellously low prices. I allude to the lower values of Greece, Lubeck, Baden, the oldest Wurtemburg, Bremen, Bavaria, &c., &c. The only way to avoid deception is to buy only from dealers of well known honesty; these latter, though sometimes deceived themselves, are not likely to deceive intentionally, and therefore the risk is much less than in buying from those who are known to deal in fac-similes and their brethren forgeries.