

THE
POSTAGE STAMPS
OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR
SIMPLIFIED

BY

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INTRODUCTION

Of all the Indian Feudatory States the postage stamps of Jammu and Kashmir only have at any time had any thing like a universal appeal to collectors. In the eighties and nineties of the last century the circular and early rectangular stamps were much sought after, being ranked amongst the "classics." Especially were the "Die I" circulars prized, as much as £50 having been paid for a specimen of what are now known to be forgeries. Then, just about forty years ago, came the slump. Very large quantities of reprints and forgeries came upon the market, collectors were bewildered and unable to distinguish the good from the bad, and the popularity of these stamps went down with a bump, from which they have never recovered. Sir David Masson wrote the first handbook on Jammu and Kashmir, which was published by the Philatelic Society of India in two parts in 1900-01. He exposed the true nature of the "Die I" circulars, as a consequence of which they were removed from Stanley Gibbons' catalogue. Two years previously he had questioned the genuineness of the "Missing Die" circulars in the *Philatelic Journal of India*. Articles on these stamps by Major Evans appeared in *Stanley Gibbons' Monthly Journal* during 1901-03. In the meanwhile, in 1898-1900, a fierce controversy had raged in Volumes II to IV of the *Philatelic Journal of India* over the status of the huge stock of remainders of the old circular and rectangular stamps that were being sold by the Rev. Father C. B. Simons of the Baramula Mission, who had been appointed the sole Agent for the sale of all the stamps still lying in the State treasuries. These were eventually proved to be practically all reprints and forgeries, only the "New Rectangular" remainders being genuine originals. These exposures, and the difficulty of the ordinary collector, not versed in Indian scripts, in distinguishing between genuine and forged stamps, and often between genuine water-colours and reprinted oil colours as well, gave a knock-out blow to these really most interesting stamps. Even nowadays the collector who thinks of taking up Jammu and Kashmir opens his Gibbons and sees various warning notes about forgeries, reprints in numerous fancy colours, and "imitations," while no hint is given how to distinguish oil-colours from water-colours, and decides that such stamps are much too difficult and present too many pit-falls for him.

For many years the late Mr. C. H. Mortimer had been gathering together his immense collection, in 26 large albums, of Jammu and Kashmir stamps. He had bought Sir David Masson's collection and another very fine one formed by Mr. A. J. Séfi, and he and Mr. Séfi proceeded to write a great handbook on this State. Mr. Mortimer died in 1932 and Mr. Séfi followed him to the grave just two years later. In this year, 1937, the handbook has at last been produced under the editorship of Mr. P. L. Pemberton, who was Mr. Séfi's partner in their stamp business. This work, which is the last word on these stamps, can be properly appreciated only by the enthusiastic specialist; it is too advanced and