

## THE CANADIAN PHILATELIC MAGAZINE

betrayal" and the ignominious "scuttle out" though somewhere found who called it "magnanimity"! The depth of degradation to which portion of the globe is well typified by a pair of succeeding stamps, one overprinted with the Dutch value Een Penny, and the other having the Queen's head defaced by the surcharge—

TWEE PENCE

Z. A. R.

a disgrace which is happily without parallel in British philately, but which at last bids fair to be blotted out, now that our victorious flag floats once more above the government buildings of Pretoria. And before these lines appear in print, the current stamps of the South African Republic will be arriving in this country overprinted V. R. I.; to be followed in due course by a new and permanent issue, recording on the philatelic page the last extension of the Empire.

More gratifying is it to the average Briton to turn by way of contrast to the story of another race for supremacy, as revealed to him by the stamps of Fiji. First he will notice C. R. (Cæcumbau Rex), surmounted by a crown, and the value expressed in pence. The next issue with the value surcharged in cents in suggestive of American influence prevailing for a time. Then C. R., appears overprinted V. R., and the cents give place to pence once more. Finally C. R., and cents alike entirely disappear; while V. R., is engraved as part of the permanent design on the stamps of the lower values, and a bold profile of the Queen on those of 1sh. and 5sh. Rivalry being at an end, a peaceful sunset scene fitly closes an interesting historical chapter.

## Chinese Postal System.

One of the most peculiar institutions in China is the organization of the postal service. With the increase of the population and with the gradual opening up of the coastline of the country, it became imperative to devise some means of facilitating intercourse, and the mercantile firms therefore joined hands and established Postoffices; since that time the system has gradually developed a certain form of postal service in the busiest districts of China. The Chinese government adopted a neutral attitude toward the activity of these "postal firms," but the latter had to pay large sums of money to the authorities. The most important postal agencies are carried on by the inhabitants of Ming-Ho, and have branches in many towns in the empire. As a rule there are but few places in which no postoffice is to be found, and in the more important centers there are always several. Thus, Shanghai has more than 200, while Hong Kong has thirty Postoffices. It often happens that the various postal agencies compete with one another, and their agents then are compelled to go from house to house in order to secure clients. Nevertheless, there is some degree of combination between these agencies, and they render mutual service in case of need. If a new Postoffice is to be established in the locality, it frequently happens that the various agencies will combine their forces and found a common branch.

Horses or mules are generally used as the means of transport, although in some places a postman conveys the mail bag.