

Union is likely to be extended through all the countries that enjoy its advantages.

A registered letter was formerly, and in many countries is still, acquitted by the receiver at the office of the address, and unless a complaint is made through the channel of a number of officials of both or of more countries there is no assurance of its having reached its destination. The improvement consists in obliging the *addressee* to sign a card acknowledging receipt as well as signing the old form of office receipt. The card is intended for the information of the sending office, to which it is transmitted by return mail and thus verification is perfect as regards the receipt of all registered letters from or to countries which adopt this system. As far as we have learned these are among the countries so profiting: Brazil, Porto Rico, Venezuela, Turkey, United States.

UNPAID LETTER STAMPS.

THE use of these is already extensive in the postal world. United States, Peru, Montevideo, and other countries, have adopted them, and the advantage of employing them is evident. To-day a letter is either sent to the Dead Letter Office to be opened and returned to the sender (a slow coach course still prevailing in Canada) or it is surcharged by a pencil mark on the face at the office of delivery. Either course is bad, the course of Canada certainly the worst, for the delay of an important communication sent in good faith may cause immeasurable loss, not alone of fortune but of family peace and comfort.

On the other hand the surcharge made in pencil may be employed by a fraudulent letter-carrier as a means of imposition, trifling it may be, but none the less annoying.

The great trouble and the small one would be obviated by the use of these unpaid letter stamps; system is the life of a postal department and this is a part of that life.

ALL THE BRITISH EMPIRE SHOULD BE IN THE POSTAL UNION.

A Kingdom with appanages all over the globe is perhaps a novel and yet is a geographical view of the British Empire. A British subject, that is, a dweller under the crown in either kingdom or appanage, is one who can claim his rights of protection from the sovereign's representative anywhere on the globe, and does so effectually. Why then, if the common-sense of the great kingdom and of its great colonies has advised the acceptance of the advantages of a Postal Union—why should petty isolated colonies neglect to profit by a measure that enhances the commercial value of their connection? We hope soon to learn that the system of the postal union follows the drum-beat of Britain all over the world.

TOO LATE STAMPS.

JOHN THOMAS writes a letter and by his neglect or that of his subordinates it reaches the office after the parcel

for the destination is made up and closed. At present the letter, if mailed in Canada, lies over until the next mail, although five minutes or twenty minutes pass before the mail really leaves. Now, John Thomas and his correspondent would, either of them, gladly pay a fine for the neglect which made them late if thereby they could secure prompt transmission; and here comes in the use of Too Late Stamps which the sender can purchase and stick to his letter, thus insuring a despatch which may be important to him in many pounds or dollars.

The use of these stamps has been adopted in several British Colonies and foreign countries.

REPLY CARDS.

THE postal card is already a great convenience to our mercantile community, and any extension of its facilities would be eagerly accepted. The title of this paragraph is given to a style of card in use in Germany, France, Holland, Italy, Spain and its Colonies, Brazil, and even in San Domingo. The style of the card is thus: A double length postal card, perforated in the middle and folded in two, the upper card is inscribed on its face with the address and on its back with Mr. John Smith's address, the lower card printed with the word *reponse* (reply) is torn off by the receiver and inscribed on its face with Mr. John Smith's address, and on its back with an assurance that his order will receive immediate attention. Prompt business men will avail themselves of this and thank goodness for a postal department that fosters trade by despatch.

STAMP-COLLECTING

is instructive to big as well as little people. It teaches history, or rather, it insists upon the study of history. Take the changes in stamps produced, in the last twenty years, by changes of nationality or by the assemblage of States hither, individual and separate. We have the German Empire created; the Italian Kingdom completed; the Roumanian, Servian, Roumelian, Montenegrin States assuming the powers of autonomy; we have the rise and fall of the Confederate States; we have the creation of a new and solid confederation of the British North American Colonies, covering half a continent with its sovereignty, and of course its postal system. Here is enough of historical change to make alone a wonderful change in the kaleidoscope of nations and countries. Stamp-collecting obliges a study of facts like these; and *en revanche* this study makes collecting not a trivial amusement, but a scientific occupation.

RETURNED LETTERS.

OVER 5,300,000 letters were dealt with in the British Returned Letter Office last year, 475,000 of which it was found impossible to deliver or return. About half a million of post cards, four millions of book-packets, and 400,000 newspapers found their way to the same office. More than 27,000 letters, an increase of 3,000 over last year, were posted without any address, 5,000 furnished no clue to the name of the sender and 1,340 contained articles of value to the amount of nearly £5,000.