

"My dear, why this lack of perception? It is true my boy made the quixotic vow that he would stand the Queen on her head every chance he would have until Canadians had the national spirit to print the features of their Premier on their postage stamps. I am certain the lad intends no disrespect to the Queen, and forgets any indignity he offers her in his disgust at the inane worship of royalty in Canada. But I cannot understand why he should vent his anger upon the postage stamps of a Republic."

Grace softly whistled over her blunder, and acknowledged her father's superior cleverness by an affectionate kiss.

"And now that we have devoted full fifteen minutes to an expression of our surprise and delight at receiving the letter, suppose we open the wonderful package," said Mr. Lester, and he reached for the scissors.

Grace caught his arm and uttered a faint shriek.

"Oh, papa, it is tied with a funny sort of ribbon. Let me untie it," she expostulated.

Her father handed her the letter, and tenderly watched her vain endeavors to open the knot. With the charming inconsistency of woman, she impatiently picked up the scissors and cut through the tough fibre which she at first supposed to be silk. Then she attacked the wrapper.

"Why, papa, it is birch bark!" she exclaimed, exchanging the clumsy scissors for her dainty pen-knife, that the fracture might be more neatly accomplished.

Carefully she emptied the envelope of its contents,