

## THE PHILATELIC CANADIAN.

of the postmaster-general until it is delivered. The reports give many instances of the painful results of haste and carelessness: "On one occasion a gentlemanly-looking person called and expressed a fear that he had enclosed two letters in wrong envelopes, and that all his prospects in life depended on his having his letters back, and correcting the mistake; inasmuch as they revealed plans which he had adopted to save two mercantile houses in the same line of business, whose interests clashed at every point." A similar blunder occurred in a more delicate affair, when a young lady was most urgent to have her letters returned as she had accepted the wrong offer of marriage.

The local postmaster was unable to resist her earnest entreaties, and thus prevented a painful catastrophe. But a whole romance might be written on the following incident:—

A young lady, who had been engaged to a prosperous young manufacturer, was informed, a few days before the marriage was fixed for, that the firm was insolvent. Not a moment was to be lost, and a letter was written and posted, breaking the engagement; when, within two hours, it was discovered that the report was entirely unfounded.

The report continues: The daughter with her parents rushed to the post-office, and no words can describe the scene—the appeals, the tears, the wringing of hands, the united entreaties of the family, to have the fatal letter restored, but, alas! all was vain, the rule admitted of no exception."

### NATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS DISPLAYED IN POSTAGE STAMPS.

The qualities of a nation like those of an individual are very often indicated

to the world at large, by the manner in which such nation does an action. It is not at all likely that the same national characteristic would be displayed in every action but in every action something characteristic of the nation could be discovered. Give £20 each to a Scotchman, a Frenchman and an American and tell them to go and buy themselves a suit of clothes. Sandy would come back with a grey or brown suit of strong material that would last him five years. The representative of France would probably return with a dress suit of inferior quality which would dazzle the eyes of the beholder on first sight but which in a few weeks would present a decidedly "have seen better days" appearance. The American would very likely rejoice in a coat which, buttoned up would present a neat business appearance but which unbuttoned would reveal a breadth of glistening shirt bosom which would grace any drawing room. In this small matter of dress we have examples of national characteristics. The canny Scotchman, the improvident happy-go-luck Frenchman and the versatile American. So when nations are placed in contrast, we can generally see a proclivity of its people in every detail in any certain line of conduct. To my mind many nations have certain of their qualities exhibited in their postage stamps.

Take for instance the United States of America, we find there that one issue of stamps succeeds another with lightning rapidity. We scarcely become familiar with one set of stamps when, lo! the scene is changed and a new set of actors come rushing, a La Francis Wilson, upon the stage, yet the federal government have nothing to gain by so often having a change of stamps. Instead of pecuniary gain there is a considerable loss. Every new set of dies cost some thousands of dollars, and if the dies are cast aside after having served