

YOUTH'S CORNER.

GOOD LUCK AND BAD LUCK.

My sister Lydia, in her school-days, not unfrequently sheltered some instance of neglect or carelessness with, "Well, it could not be helped: it is not my fault. I am quite out of luck's way to-day." On the other hand, if she had accomplished anything in a satisfactory manner, and was commended for her performance, she would often say, "It was more by luck than by wit, as the cripple chanced to catch the hare," or "as the blind man shot the crow."

"I know," said my aunt, "this is how I learned to make a plum cake. I never used to succeed, let me put in what ingredients I would; and when cake after cake proved heavy, I was ready to say, as Lydia does, 'Well, it seems as if I am to have no luck.' But after trying various experiments of my own without success, I happened to see a neighbour making a cake, and I observed that she reserved the eggs till all the other ingredients were well mixed, and added them last of all. I tried this plan myself, and found it succeeded; and now I may appeal to both Lydia, and Charles, whether or not I can make a good plum cake."

CHINA.

Chinese Names.—A child's first name is given when about a month old. This is called the *milk-name*; and is usually some trifling epithet, as the name of a flower for girls, and of some distinguished virtue for boys. This name is dropped when the child grows up.

The children associate together till they are about eight years old, when the boys are sent to school, and the girls kept secluded in the house. When a boy enters school, he receives another name, called the *book-name*, which is conferred with much ceremony, and which he afterwards retains. In the family, however, he is often called familiarly by his milk name.

Persons engaged in business have what is called a *shop-name*, not putting their own proper names on their stores. This shop-name is somewhat analogous to our names for hotels; consisting sometimes of such phrases as "mutual advantage," "abundant profits," &c. A man's last name is given to him after his death, on account of his moral qualities, and is equivalent to the epitaph on our tombstones.

Education of Children.—Wealthy families prefer to educate their children at home, and sometimes two or three families will unite and engage the services of a teacher. In such case the daughters are sometimes instructed; and perhaps nine-tenths of all the educated females in China obtained their learning under such circumstances.

their nine classics, the whole of which are learned by heart; but neither history, geography, natural philosophy, religion, nor arithmetic, are taught in the schools.

Literary Examinations.—These are peculiar to China. They are four in number, and progressive in degree. The first Examination takes place in the town or village, and all persons are eligible as candidates. Those who pass this trial are said to have "a name in the village."

The second examination is held in the district town, before the literary chancellor. All in the district who were successful at the first examination are eligible for the second; and sometimes as many as thirty or forty thousand students are collected on these occasions at Canton. The examination lasts three days, and on each day a theme is given on which the candidates are to write an essay. The successful candidates receive the first literary degree.

The third examination is held in the provincial town every third year, and is open to all the students in the province who have received the first degree. Two examiners are sent from Peking, who, with the literary chancellors, form a board of twelve examiners. In the place of examination are several thousand small cells. The competitors give their names, age, lineage, &c., and are carefully searched to see that they have not secreted any copy of the classics about them. They are then furnished with writing materials, and shut up separately in small cells for two days, during which time they are required to compose essays and poems on given subjects. The same subjects are given to all the candidates, and each is expected to use at least two hundred characters in his composition. At Canton there will sometimes be seven thousand candidates at this examination, of whom only seventy-two can be successful; the diplomas being limited to that number.

To read and determine the merits of seven thousand essays on the same subject is a tedious and laborious work; but sometimes the examiners lighten their task by passing over many of the essays without reading. A student who suspected this, once wrote an essay severely criticizing the chancellor, knowing that if it were read he should be called to account for it. He heard nothing of it, however, and rightly concluding it had never been read, he published it; and the result was that the officer was discharged. Bribery is often effectual in procuring a favourable award from the examiners; but not to such an extent as entirely to vitiate the benefits of the examination.

The names of the candidates to whom the degree is awarded are announced at midnight from one of the watch-towers, and placarded next morning over the city. The candidates themselves are honoured with a feast in the governor's palace, and afterwards receive the congratulations of their friends.

Unsuccessful candidates are allowed to try again at subsequent examinations, as long as they please; and there have been instances of father, son, and grand-father, appearing as competitors at the same time.

The fourth examination takes place at Peking; and all who have passed the previous examinations are allowed to compete. The manner of proceeding is similar to that pursued in examining for the second degree. Those who are successful receive the third degree, and are eligible for important offices; but it is said that in the distribution of honours and offices the Manchous are more favoured than the Chinese.

The fourth degree is an office of itself. Those who obtain it reside at the court; and by this policy the men of the greatest talents are collected at the capital, where they can be best directed and controlled. The emperor's son passes through these examinations the same as other persons.

Effects of this Plan.—The benefit of this system of examinations is, that it excites the mass of the people to apply themselves to learning, and keeps up a high standard of literature, as the books they are required to study are the best in the language; and to have any chance of success, they are compelled to make themselves so thoroughly acquainted with their contents that they can never forget them. Those who are not successful in reaching the highest degree have not spent their time in vain, as they generally obtain situations as schoolmasters, government clerks, &c.

HISTORY OF THE POST OFFICE.

The duties of the office of chief postmaster of England at first related rather to the superintendence of the system for facilitating travelling, by the establishment and regulation of post-houses, and had little or no immediate connexion with the collection and distribution of letters. It does not appear certain when he undertook the latter task. In 1514 the aliens resident in London appointed their own postmaster. Letters were committed to his charge, and it devolved upon him to provide the means of forwarding them to their destination. Sometimes the Flemings, at other times the Italians, appointed one of their own countrymen to this

office; but his nomination was confirmed by the postmaster of England. At length the aliens of London presumed upon exercising their choice as a matter of right, and in 1568 a Spaniard was appointed their postmaster through the influence of the Spanish ambassador; but the Flemings had at the same time chosen one of their own countrymen, who was confirmed in his office by the postmaster for England; and to decide the matter an appeal was made to the privy council, the substance of which is given in a paper entitled "Articles touching the Office of the Post of London." In this document it was alleged that "The strangers that had been postmasters of London had always been occasion of many injuries and much damage unto the merchants of England, as well by the means of staying and keeping their letters a day, twain, or more, and in the mean delivering the letters of strangers; and also by staying the ordinary post a day, three, or four, that in the mean time one extraordinary might be despatched by the strangers to prevent the market." Other abuses were alleged, and the petition concluded by a desire that an Englishman might be placed in the office. The English merchants suggested that, "for quietness sake," an agreement should be made between the postmasters of London and Antwerp, that one-half of the "runners" employed should be foreigners, though it was stated that under the former arrangement not one Englishman was engaged. How the dispute was settled we do not know; but in letters patent of Charles I. in 1632, it is stated that king James had constituted an office called the postmaster of England for foreign parts. He had "the sole taking up, sending, and conveying of all packets and letters, concerning his service or business, to be despatched to foreign parts, with power to grant moderate salaries; and no person besides was to take upon himself these duties."

In 1635 a proclamation was issued "for settling of the letter office in England and Scotland," which is the first attempt to place the post office system on its modern footing. It stated that hitherto "there had been no certain or constant intercourse between the kingdoms of England and Scotland," and commands "Thomas Witherings, his majesty's postmaster of England for foreign parts, to settle a running post or two, to run night and day between Edinburgh and Scotland and the city of London, to go thither and come back in six days; and all postmasters are "to have ready in their stables one or two horses." Bye-posts were to be established with places lying at a distance from the great roads; with Hull, Lincoln, &c., on the road to the north. Similar arrangements were to be carried out on the road to Dublin, through Holyhead, and to Plymouth, through Exeter; and Oxford, Bristol, Colchester, and Norwich, were to enjoy corresponding advantages with as little delay as possible. The pre-established system set on foot by private parties for the transmission of letters was not summarily put down, the government contenting itself for the present by enunciating its exclusive title to the business of conveying letters. In 1640, Witherings, the postmaster, was superseded by the Long Parliament for having interfered with the private adventurers who undertook the transmission of letters, his interference being declared contrary to the liberty and freedom of the subject; and the duties of his successors were to be exercised under the superintendence of the secretary of state. But when, in 1649, the common council of the city of London proceeded to set up an office of their own for the despatch of letters, the commons passed a resolution asserting their exclusive right to the control of such establishments. A struggle now took place between the government posts and those carried on by companies of private individuals. The latter not only established more frequent posts than the government, but carried letters at a cheaper rate. Prideaux, a member of the commons, who had been appointed postmaster, threatened to seize the letters which passed through their hands; but the "new undertakers," so far from being deterred, stated that they were resolved, "by the help of God, to continue their management," and announced that many new places would be included in their arrangements. Besides Tuesday and Saturday, they established an additional post-day on the Thursday, so that they had three posts a-week, while the government had only one; and they charged three-pence where the charge of the government was six-pence. Prideaux was empowered to reduce the government rates, and the private carriers were subsequently put down by an order for the seizure of their letters. The revenue derived from the postage on letters soon became of some importance, and during the Protectorate various improvements were introduced calculated to render it more productive.

The authority of the government posts was fully established by an act passed in 1656 "to settle the postage of England, Scotland, and Ireland." The Preamble showed that "the erecting of one general post office for the speedy conveying and re-carriage of letters by post to and from all places within England, Scotland, and Ireland, and into several parts beyond the seas, hath been and is the best means not only to maintain a certain and constant intercourse of trade and commerce between all the said places, to the great benefit of the people of these nations, but also to convey the public despatches, and to discover and prevent many dangerous and wicked designs which have been and are daily contrived against the peace and welfare of this commonwealth, the intelligence whereof cannot well be communicated but by letter of script." The act provides "that there shall be one general post office, and one officer styled the postmaster-general of England and controller of the post office." The bearing of all "through" posts; and persons "riding in post," was to be placed under his

control. Rates were fixed for English, Scotch, Irish, and foreign letters, and for post-horses. The post office had now assumed the character, and exercised the functions which it does at present. When Prideaux was made postmaster, the revenue of the post office is supposed scarcely to have exceeded 5000*l.* a-year. It was furnished at 10,000*l.* in 1653; and at 14,000*l.* in 1659; at 21,500*l.* in 1663, at which period it was settled on the duke of York; in 1674 at 43,000*l.*, and in 1685 at 65,000*l.* The duke was now James II., and an act was passed granting to him and to his heirs the revenue of the post office independent of the control of parliament. This profligate grant was resumed at the revolution, though it was settled on the king, but it could not be alienated beyond his life. In the following reigns a certain proportion of this revenue was applied to the purposes of the state; but it was not until the settlement of the civil list, at the accession of George III., that the claims of the sovereign were finally relinquished. In 1724, the net revenue of the post office amounted to 96,309*l.*; in 1761 to 116,182*l.*; in 1781 to 196,513*l.*; in 1794 to 463,000*l.*; in 1804 to 952,893*l.*; in 1814 to 1,532,153*l.*, after which time it remained nearly stationary. The gross revenue from 1815 to 1820 averaged 2,190,517*l.*, and from 1832 to 1837, 2,251,421*l.*—*Knight's London.*

A MECHANICS' INSTITUTE IN TURKEY.

At a village called Mackriquiry, about two miles distant from Stamboul, on the coast of the sea of Marmora, there has existed for several years a little colony of English engineers, who, under the direction of a Mr. Hague, have been working iron mines, discovered by that gentleman, and carrying on an iron factory, also established by the same person. It may be thought a difficult thing in this country, where foreign operatives have very high wages, and a great deal of leisure and liberty, to keep their conduct within the bounds of decorum. Such, however, is the virtue of the scientific education in their own calling which these men have all received, and of the easy circumstances they enjoy, that their lives are remarkably regular and temperate, and they feel that by their example they may exert an influence for good on the natives who surround them, which may be felt very widely. Chiefly then with this view, but also for their own advantage, they have formed a Committee, Mr. Hague being their President, for the purpose of founding a Mechanics' Institute at Mackriquiry. Already the members of this Society amount to more than three hundred; and its success, from another circumstance, very remarkable and most hopeful, may be said to be fully assured. The Sultan has taken the project under his protection. He has engaged to build a large stone edifice for the Institute, and to furnish at his own expense all the books, maps, globes, and instruments for lecturing experiments that may be required. You will rightly conjecture from this fact that not Europeans alone will constitute this Association. It will be made up of many people—English, Americans, Armenians, Greeks, and Turks. The books to most of these, to be sure, will be sealed, though many Armenians and Greeks speak English and French. Gratuitous volunteer lecturers, however, may be found, especially among the Americans, who understand the Armenian and the Turkish languages, and it is much less difficult still to find persons able to lecture in Greek.

THE LOVE OF GOD.

Lord what a transcendent, what an infinite love is this! what an object was this for thee to love! a world of sinners! impotent, wretched creatures, that had despised thee; that had no motive for thy favour but deformity, misery, professed enmity. It had been mercy enough in thee, that thou didst not damn the world; but that thou shouldst love it, is more than mercy. It was thy great goodness to forbear the acts of just vengeance to the sinful world of man: but to give unto it tokens of thy love, is a favour beyond all expression. The least gift from thee had been more than the world could hope for; but that thou shouldst give thine only begotten Son, the Son of thy love, the Son of thine essence, thy co-equal, co-eternal Son, who was more than ten thousand worlds, to redeem this one forlorn world of sinners, is love above all comprehension of men and angels. What diminution would it have been to thee and thine essential glory, O thou great God of heaven, that the souls that sinned should have died eternally? yet so infinite was thy loving mercy, that thou wouldst rather give thine only Son out of thy bosom, than that there should not be a redemption for believers.—*Bishop Hall.*

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