

### THE POST OFFICE A CIVILIZER.

It is curious to observe how the development of one item or branch of civilization tends to develop others. This is a suggestive and might be made a very fruitful topic, but as our object in these pages is simply to trace the progress of postal matters we desire to point out one instance wherein the Post Office has brought about a step in the path of civilization in one of the oldest countries in the world. It is well-known that the numbering of houses in the streets of cities and towns is a comparatively modern innovation and that even the naming of thoroughfares is of but little less recent date. In hundreds, aye thousands, of even large cities, throughout Asia, especially, it has never occurred to their inhabitants to name their streets. To say that one does business in such or such a quarter of the city or in such a direction at such a distance from some prominent building or well-known landmark is considered a sufficiently accurate direction for all practical purposes. So it doubtless is where all engaged in a certain trade occupy certain streets together, and all, or nearly all, sons follow their fathers' professions, and where foreign business is transacted directly with traders who travel with their goods from one place to another and buy from producers and sell to consumers. When man meets man and trades "by word of mouth" letters are not needed and business, though slow, is equable and not subject to any speculative or other influences than those simply of supply and demand. Modern trade can no longer keep within the old channels. It is brighter, more active and is no longer willing to wait on caravans or for personal interviews. The Post Office was created for the convenience and has ever proved the willing hand-maid of Commerce.

Siam is one of the oldest and most conservative nations of the world and has opposed a truly oriental *vis inertia* to progress and change from the well-beaten and "safe" paths of the fathers. But the impulse of modern life and civilization has reached it—and through the Post Office. The royal family of Siam consists of three brothers. The youngest—whose name sounds so unique that we yield to the temptation to publish it in full—Prince Tschau fu Banurenghi Surang Wong Chrom-Luang Banughang-twonghi Wordate—has received a liberal education in India and Europe. Since his return home some years since he has issued private postage stamps and used them in his own correspondence and has urged upon his brother to establish a regular postal system for the kingdom. We learn from a recent exchange that His Majesty has been pleased to commission the Prince to devise and establish a system comprising a house to house delivery of letters, etc., in all the cities and towns in Siam. As a preliminary step all streets are to be named and all houses numbered just as they are in European and American cities. We predict that under her present enlightened rulers Siam will soon enter the International Postal Union and we hasten to welcome her to the sisterhood.

It is not out of place to observe that His Royal Highness has recently imported from Leipsic a Philatic album equipped with specimens of all postage stamps known to collectors. So we may fairly claim him to be "one of us"—a Philatelist.

All collectors will look eagerly for the appearance of the new Siamese stamps.

### PHILATELIC EXHIBITION.

An event of very great interest and indeed importance to the philatelic world occurred in November last in Vienna, Austria. It was the first Philatelic International Exhibition ever held, and was conducted under the auspices of the Philatelic Club of Vienna. The *Welt Post*, the organ of that Club, issued, under date of Nov. 24th., a special, or exhibition, number from which we with much pleasure extract a brief account of the proceedings.

The Committee of management consisted of Messrs. Gustave Reitz, Edler von Bollheim, (Chairman), Dr. Alfred Moschkau, Sigmund Friedl, Rudolf R. von Haidinger, Robert Kulka and Carlo D. Mayer.

It was under the distinguished patronage of Herr Ritter von Kamler, the Imperial Postmaster General of Austria and was held in the noble hall of the Imperial Horticultural Society.

The hall was profusely and beautifully decorated with the national colors and the Imperial Arms. At the head of the dias or platform were statues of the Emperor and Empress representing their Imperial Majesties.

The exhibition was arranged in sections and the exhibits were placed in glass show-cases on tables. This added greatly to the artistic effect produced.

The Imperial Government took much interest in the success of the exhibition and loaned a number of machines used by it in the various processes of manufacturing stamps, as preparing the paper, printing, cutting, and gumming the stamps, cards, wrappers, etc. This was done in order that the public visiting the exhibition might fully understand the subject and thus derive more pleasure and benefit from it.

The various sections were as follows:—

1. Philatelic literature—periodicals, books, pamphlets etc., on the subject.
2. Collections of postage stamps of all nations in albums. Some of these were very fine and large, and were the result of the labor of years. The largest and best was that of Dr. Carl D. Mayer, of Vienna, and comprised over 4,200 stamps—every one different.
3. Revenue, Telegraph and Fiscal stamps of all nations.
4. Stamp manufacturing machines. These attracted much attention and were doubtless, to many, the most interesting portion of the exhibition. On the printing machine the original plate of 1850 was used and at the foot of the stamps, instead of the value was printed the date 1881. Thousands of these stamps were printed and gratuitously distributed to the visitors as mementos of the exhibition.
5. Telegraph and Telephone apparatus.
6. Telegraph literature—periodicals, books, pamphlets, etc., on the subject.
7. Curiosities of philatelic literature, as extremely minute writing on postal cards, etc.

The Exhibition was opened on the 13th, of November. At 10.30 a.m., of that day the Postmaster General, Patron