

"Josephine," remarked Thérèse earnestly, "you must not despair, and give way to gloomy thoughts. Keep up for the sake of your children."

"Keep up for my children?" echoed she. "Have I not been for a whole long year a prisoner, and my children without a mother? And why am I languishing here?" exclaimed she indignantly. "Because I tried to save for them their father who had been taken to prison! He is dead now—this day he was beheaded. Oh, my dear friends, I will be wedded again to him. I feel that I have soon to follow him."

"You are despairing, Josephine. Are we not all waiting resolutely for this hour, if it cannot be averted? It is true," added Adelaide sympathisingly, "you are a mother. Alas, we are not so strong as we imagine ourselves before trial comes upon us."

Thérèse had meanwhile produced her letters. They were both neatly folded, but of different paper and shape. She opened curiously the smallest, which had been firmly rolled up. "Be of good cheer," it ran. "I am sure to save you. Everything is prepared—confide in me, and betray to no one what I intend. I can save but you. Benoit."

Thérèse read over these lines once more, and was overjoyed at the prospect of soon obtaining her liberty. She had not heard of Benoit since her imprisonment. But the faithful had not forgotten her, had certainly tried all means of saving her, believing now to see himself rewarded for all his trouble, zeal, and devotion. "What plan could he have?" said she to herself. "What arrangements would he make to liberate her? It was evident she should escape—but how?" She smiled and slightly shrugged her shoulders, as if she did not think it possible what Benoit wrote her. However, with a feeling of renewed and augmented gratitude, the picture of the quiet, faithful young man, of whose unhappy love she received this new proof, came vividly before her mind. In haste she opened the other letter, which, the writing convinced her, was from Tallien; the contents were as follows:

"You have inspired me to action. Now, death or life, my darling! Farewell, if I should not meet you again in less than forty-eight hours. Love for you gives me strength and courage to fight for you a second time."

She was enraptured. His words could have no other meaning than that he intended to venture a decisive blow against Robespierre. He likewise would attempt to save her, to liberate her from prison. What soul would not exult when a bright ray of the sun suddenly penetrated the darkness, from which there was apparently no escape? What man would not feel his blood boil when liberty approached to take off his fetters? Convulsively beat the heart of the beautiful Spaniard. And if everything should prove a dream—ah, is not happiness itself but a dream? Does dreamt happiness not give as much enjoyment as real?

"Josephine!" exclaimed she, incapable to restrain her feelings any longer, while her eyes beamed with joy. "Adelaide! Hope and exult—the hour of our deliverance is approaching. One day more, perhaps two or three days more, and we will be free, or death will deliver us."

Josephine woefully shook her head. "Death will deliver us," said she sadly. "It shall be welcome!"

"Not so, my poor friend, I am certain that deliverance is near," replied Thérèse.

"Deliverance," said Adelaide Recamier, hopefully. "Ah, if we should become free again—what happiness it would be! But how do you come to this belief, Thérèse? What do your letters tell you?"

"The writer of the one tells me that he is working for my deliverance, and that he hopes to effect my escape."

"By heaven!" cried Adelaide with an expression of alarm. "You will leave us? Oh, I am not at all pleased with it."

"You little selfish creature!" scolded Thérèse. "How glad I should be if I could flee from this misery here!"

"Because you do not love me so dearly as I love you," said she, while with a graceful spring she seated herself on Thérèse's lap and closed her mouth with kisses. "Good, darling, I will attentively listen to you. You say some one will liberate you very mysteriously, very romantically—ah, if such an adventure would fall only to my lot. Truly, not for the sake of being free, but of enjoying the romance of such an incident."

"Listen further," resumed Thérèse. "I think I have told you the history of my imprisonment in Bordeaux. You will recollect the brave turnkey, Benoit, who would have effected my escape if I had wished it, though I would not have hesitated if at that time I had been summoned before the court. I have told you that I met him again as servant of the count Montreuil in the castle, and how he attempted to rescue me, but was frustrated. Well, this same faithful and attached young man gives me hope again to save me—perhaps," added she with a sigh, "to sacrifice himself uselessly for me. But what can I do against it?"

"Ah, this seems to be a very serious love which makes such exertions," remarked Adelaide in graceful childish mockery.

"You are not wrong, Adelaide," replied Thérèse meditatively, "and I earnestly wish that this unhappy and noble young man would not oblige me so much by these renewed proofs of his sympathy for me. It is very painful to know that he is inspired by sentiments which I cannot and dare not reciprocate."

"But how can it be helped if some one falls in love with you?"

"Poor Benoit has never spoken to me of his love; I do not want to know it. But I fear that I must be ungrateful, and grieve a heart that is filled with such pure sentiments for me."

"Well, how does he think to save you?"

"I do not know. It is his secret, and shall, he requests me, also be mine. However, I cannot keep secrets from you, especially such as involve a separation from you, and hope you will be silent! Should the promises Benoit make be realized and I become free, you may believe that I will not rest till I have opened the doors of your prison, till I—while a stream of fire darted from her black eyes—have found men who will stop the madness of this revolution. I trust, however," continued she more composedly, "that these men are already prepared to work for all our safety! Tallien writes me that a decisive blow will be struck; he has recovered his courage, he will act and conquer if his energy does not forsake him. Let us hope, dear friends, that this prison will soon be deserted by us. Josephine," said she turning to her who was giving way to her grief, "be of good cheer, you will soon meet again your children!"

Madame de Beauharnais had now become more composed,

though sadness yet gnawed her heart too much to allow her to participate in the hopes and communications of Thérèse."

"How often," said she, "within the twelve months of my imprisonment have I not heard and believed similar words! My dear, I have no more hope now. May what Providence disposes befall me!"

"Parbleu," put in Adelaide waggishly; "I do not see any harm to share in the good faith of Thérèse. Why shall we always think and fear the worst? Dearest Josephine, you once told us that an old mulatto woman on your native island of Martinique has made you such a beautiful prophecy. And you will despair? Show us the amulet on which these words of the good old woman are engraved."

Josephine smiled woefully, while Thérèse lovingly drew forth the amulet which the general's widow carried suspended by a cord next her heart, and presented it to Madame Recamier.

"Yes," exclaimed the latter, her eyes fixed on the writing, "here it is." And she read: "You will suffer, you will sigh. Hope and wait, you will become queen of a vast realm!"

"Has then," explained the elf, "the first part of this wonderfully consolatory prophecy not been fulfilled? Do you not suffer, poor friend? Do you not sigh? Now comes 'hope and wait!' Oh, Josephine, every thing agrees admirably!"

"You dear, dear child!" said Madame de Beauharnais with an expression of almost motherly affection, "how you understand to console me; it is a vain prophecy, a childish play of my servant, and yet how dear she is to me, how much I have esteemed her, and trusted to the pleasant superstition of this amulet!"

She concealed again the jewel, and timidly continued, her eyes glittering with a ray of hope:

"The prophecy so far has not lied!"

"And when you once become a queen, a powerful queen," exclaimed Adelaide, "I hope you will not be too proud, and will faithfully remember your companions in affliction in this dungeon here. Is it not so, Josephine, you will still love me when you are a queen?"

Josephine smiled and drew Adelaide to her bosom. "What, is not all possible to-day?" remarked Thérèse. "The whole world in its old order is breaking down, and a new one will arise. Why not also new kings and queens?"

In this moment the door opened, and the old jailer stood outside, reproachfully shaking his head and saying:

"Come out of your cell, citizens!—no one is allowed to remain within—for the sake of your health!"

The three young ladies were at once ready to answer the demand of the jailer.

"By heaven!" said Adelaide tragi-comically, in passing along the corridor, "so much solicitude for our health! They ought to let us run away!"

Tallien had been a prey to the most trying emotions during the time that his beloved was kept a prisoner in the Luxembourg. Grief for the loss of the beautiful woman, to whom his passionate nature became more and more attached, was not the greatest of his torments: it was rather the dependence upon Robespierre, which he had accepted, and from which he dared not withdraw, for fear of endangering the life of Thérèse. His ambition, his pride, and his whole strength of will was crushed, and he felt no longer the energy of bursting the fetters which he had laid on himself through his love for Thérèse. At first he had kept retired, and had rarely appeared in the convention, scarcely at all in the Jacobin club, to avoid the meeting of Robespierre and St. Just; but he was accused in the club, and Robespierre had uttered invectives against him. He was obliged to show himself again, not to be taken as a moderate and dissatisfied, which might have been sufficient reason to condemn him to die on the scaffold. The fall and death of Danton had frightened him to such a degree that he outdid Jacobin fanaticism, to atone, as Robespierre had advised him, for his old sins. He belied himself, denied his convictions and feelings, to be secure from the formidable man of virtue, whose continual pleasure it was to exact from the young deputy renewed proofs of his patriotism and ever new testimonies of his devotion to him. Tallien had to vote as Robespierre desired; he had to defend him, though he might curse the hated man. Spies surrounded him everywhere—even towards his friends he dared not venture to relieve his mind. The least contradiction against this powerful man, who desired by all means his friendship, was sufficient to threaten him with the impeachment and death of Thérèse Cabarrus, and he would rather have shown still more submission than have exposed his beloved to such a danger. Often his pride revolted, often his boiling blood mounted to his forehead; but he felt he was powerless to free himself with success from this slavery. He found a reward for this humbling self-denial in conducting a correspondence with Thérèse. Through the mediation of the physician of the prison he forwarded his letters to his beloved; the physician handed them to the jailer's daughter, who, on her part, sent the answers back in the same way. If these letters were a consolation for his longing heart, a relief to his sorrow, they caused him at the same time new torments. His beloved, whose mental superiority he felt also in her absence, appealed more impressively to his courage, to his energy, and to a boldness which in his eyes could only bring upon him certain destruction.

To be continued.

HISTORY OF POSTAGE STAMPS.

As with most other modern inventions, certain writers have discovered that postage stamps, or something similar to them, had been thought of long ago. According to M. Fournier, the author of *Le Vieux Neuf*, they were actually in use in Paris in the reign of Louis XIV. Another French writer tells us that they originated in 1653. Monsieur de Velay established under royal authority a private penny post in Paris, on the 16th of August in that year, and issued a notice that all persons desiring to send letters from one part of Paris to another, should have them carried, and a prompt reply returned, if they attached to their letters a ticket signifying that the postage rate had been paid. These tickets appear to have had much in common with the modern postage stamp, for they were stamped with a portrait of the King, and were to be purchased beforehand at certain shops and other places. They were to be charged a sou each, and the public were recommended to buy a number, and have them always at hand. Boxes were moreover placed at the corners of streets for the reception of letters, and letter-carriers were appointed to open these boxes three times a day, and carry the letters to their addresses, where they waited for answers. The plan perhaps resembled

more an organized plan of light portorage than the modern systems of posts, but its resemblance to the latter system is curious.

There can be little doubt that the originators of the modern postage stamp had never heard of Monsieur de Velay or his scheme, which indeed had long fallen into oblivion even among Frenchmen. Between 1830 and 1834, Mr. Charles Whiting, Mr. Charles Knight, and Dr. Gray, had all suggested a stamped wrapper for newspapers. Dr. Gray, of the British museum, lays claim to have been the first to suggest the prepayment, by means of stamps, of letters. "In the year 1834," he says, "the idea occurred to me that as the postage of newspapers was prepaid by means of stamps, the readiest mode of applying these stamps would be by means of stamped covers. On further consideration of the subject, I became satisfied that the great cost of the post-office was not the reception, carriage, and delivery of the letters, but the complicated system of accounts that the old system required; and having learned from the best writers on political economy that the collection of money by stamps was the most certain and economical, I came to the conclusion that the new system of newspaper postage should be extended to letters also. It was, in fact, the mere application of the system used with regard to newspapers, to letters in general." This idea I communicated to many of my political and other friends, Mr. Hume, Mr. Warburton, and others, but I found that I could get no attention to the subject."

Even Mr. Rowland Hill, in his famous pamphlet published in 1837, contemplated no system of prepayment, except by money payment at the counters of receiving offices. Meanwhile the subject of prepayment by stamped envelopes having been discussed before a parliamentary committee. Mr. Hill, in a second edition of his pamphlet, with characteristic decision, adopted the idea, and warmly advocated its merits. A clause in the penny postage Act accordingly foreshadowed the new system, but the idea was at first merely to have a stamped envelope of so elaborate a character that it would almost defy the ingenuity of forgers to imitate it. On the 23rd of August, 1839, the government issued a public invitation to "artists, men of science," and others, to send in designs for this purpose, offering two prizes of £200 and £100 to stimulate invention. As is well known, Mr. Mulready, the famous artist, was the successful competitor—his envelope, representing a highly elaborate allegorical picture of considerable artistic merit, though absurdly fantastic as a vehicle for ordinary letters, while the picture, spreading over the surface, left scarcely room for writing the address. So much ridicule was showered upon the new envelope, that in a short time it fell into disuse, and copies of it are now, as all collectors know, comparatively rare.

The government then offered another reward of £500 for the best design for a new label, the invention of which may be supposed to have been not so simple a thing as it appears, when we learn that, of the designs—numbering nearly one thousand—sent in, not one was chosen. The now familiar queen's head which was finally chosen, was said to be the production of officers in the post and stamp offices; but as originally printed in black ink, its appearance was far from pleasing. The black stamp was soon afterward changed to brown, and finally to the red now so well known. The great varieties in color since introduced to indicate to the eye the different values of the stamps, are too well known to require mention. "For eight long years," says Mr. Lewins, "the English people may be said to have enjoyed a complete monopoly in postage stamps. Toward the close of 1848 they were introduced into France, and subsequently into every civilized nation in the world. Last year they even penetrated into the Ottoman empire, and, strange as it appears when viewed in the light of mohammedan usage, the sultan has been prevailed on to allow his portrait to appear on the new issues of Turkish stamps."

Simple and obvious, as it now appears, one of the most important inventions in connection with postage stamps is the perforating machine. Most persons can remember when every post receiving-house kept a pair of scissors, clumsily fastened to a counter with a heavy chain, at which a little file of persons could generally be seen waiting for their turn to cut off a stamp with four careful strokes of that necessary implement; but the number of persons who, not having a pair of scissors at hand were striving to tear or cut off with a penknife one queen's head from a strip or sheet, could not so easily be ascertained. The machine, which was the invention of Mr. Henry Archer, at once put an end to all these petty troubles. By the simple process of stamping every sheet with neat lines of perforation, not only could every one keep his postage stamps together, and tear them off when wanted, but he could also fold them together with the utmost neatness to put them away in a purse or pocket-book. On the recommendation of a select committee of the house of commons this machine was purchased from Mr. Archer in 1852 for four thousand pounds.

A letter has been addressed by Messrs. Hamy and Lenormant to the Académie des Sciences to prove that Egypt had its age of stone as well as Europe. Their letter is dated from Luxor, and they say to the secretary of the Academy:—"We beg you to communicate to the members a discovery we have just made in the course of a journey to Upper Egypt, undertaken under the auspices of the Khedive, which will not be devoid of interest to that learned body. The existence of an age of stone in Egypt has often been the subject of controversy. The facts we are about to relate will, we think, give some information that will exercise an influence on the opinions entertained hitherto on the question. On the elevated plateau which divides the celebrated valley of Biban-el-Molouk from the escarpments which overlook the Paraonic edifices of Deir-el-Bahari, we have ascertained the presence of an enormous quantity of wrought flints, lying on the surface of the ground, to the extent of upwards of a hundred square yards. These wrought flints, which are of the well-known type designated arrow-heads, lance-heads, lanceolated axes, knives, scrapers, &c., evidently constitute the remains of an ancient manufactory, according to all probability pre-historic and exactly resembling those known in France under the denomination of 'Factory of the Neolithic Period.' Messrs. Ballard, Quatrefages, Wurtz, Jamin, Broca, and Berthelot, with whom we had the good fortune to be travelling, were witnesses of the discovery, and authorize us to declare that they verify the origin of the specimens collected by us and their similitude to those found in Europe. The best of them we propose to deposit in the Museum of St. Germain, where they can be inspected by connoisseurs in antiquarian subjects."