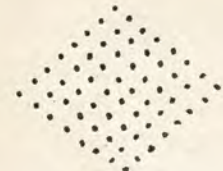


FRANCE :

The "Lozenge of Dots" Postmarks, 1852-1876

By WILFRED BENTLEY



IN France, as in many other countries, the nightmare of the postal authorities in the early days of stamps was the possibility that used stamps might be cleaned and used again. (I wonder whether this was ever actually done—or even attempted—on anything like a large scale?) It was generally believed, wrongly as was eventually found, that the date-stamp would be inadequate as a cancellation, and in France the "grille" of 1849-51 was the result. But for a long time the authorities were not satisfied, either with the "grille" or its successors, and hence a variety of experiments—postmarks which cut the stamp, stamps with a linen thread which the postal clerk could pull and thus tear the stamp, stamps gummed at top and bottom only so that the loose part in the middle could be similarly torn, and even (in 1859) a stamp, the product of some fertile mind, with a small explosive charge, like a "cap" for a toy pistol, fastened to the back: a tap with a small hammer, and the stamp was well and truly cancelled. Specimens of all these may be found in collections of French essays. Collectors of "fine used" may be thankful that none of these essays was adopted!

The postmark collector, however, benefits from this pre-occupation on the part of the French postal authorities, for to it he owes one of the most interesting of nineteenth-century postmarks. On January 1st, 1852, some years before the invention of the explosive stamp, a circular was issued by the Administration to all Postmasters, from which the following is an extract* :—

"Cancellation of postage stamps by means of lozenges of dots or of a star.

"The Administration has decided that the obliterating stamp at present in use for cancelling postage stamps† is to be replaced by a stamp of a new type whose surface, covered with conical points, will be able to penetrate the paper and leave traces which will prevent the cleaning and re-use of the stamps."

Having stated the primary purpose for which the postmark was being introduced, the circular goes on to say that in the centre of the dots there will be figures or letters denoting the post office of origin, according to a list of offices which has been made. Provincial offices are to use numbers, Paris District offices and *ambulants* (T.P.O.'s) letters. The Paris Central Post Office, in the Rue Jean-Jacques Rousseau, would not have a number or letter, but would use an obliteration in the form of a six-pointed star of dots.

The postmark thus introduced was to last, with many variations and additions, for nearly twenty-five years. It is the purpose of this article to trace its history and to describe the forms that it took and the purposes for which it was used.

Before proceeding to this examination we may remark that it is to be found, in one form or another, on all the stamps of France of the "Ceres" and "Napoleon III" types. On the 20c. and 1f. vermilion of 1849, which were already obsolete when it was introduced, it is scarce. The postal regulations laid down that the cancellation for newspapers was to be the

date-stamp, and consequently the lozenge postmark is less common than the date-stamp on the values from 1c. to 4c., whose normal use was for newspapers, but is not really scarce thus. Conversely the date-stamp cancellation is unusual on the values from 10c. upwards; the 5c. is found with the two types in more or less equal numbers. From about 1873 onwards, however, the use of the date-stamp became more and more prevalent and must be regarded as normal on all values.

The colour of the lozenge postmark is normally black; blue and red may be found, and the postmarks from the Palace and other official post offices of Napoleon III are always in red. Other colours have been recorded, but are rare. The dots vary somewhat in size, and, occasionally, in shape; variations in the letters and figures sometimes occur.

The following books have been used in the preparation of this article :—

M. Langlois and E. Veneziani, *Nomenclature Générale des Bureaux de Poste Français de Toutes Catégories*. (Amiens: Yvert & Tellier. Second Edition, 1939.) Contains complete lists of the French post offices of the period and the postmarks used there, and many other useful facts.

Emmanuel Blanc, *Les Anciens Timbres Français et leurs Oblitérations*. (Paris: Payot, 1946.) The wealth of general information in this book makes it an invaluable complement to the lists of Langlois and Veneziani. It is valuable also for its large number of illustrations of stamps, postmarks, and covers. These first two books have been the ones chiefly laid under contribution.

E. Meinertzhagen, *The Stamps of France. Part I. Period 1849-1875*. Translated from *Kohl's Handbook* by the Author. (New York: Reprinted from the *Collector's Club Philatelist*, 1928.) One of the very few accounts of these postmarks in English.

E. Barthélemy, *Catalogue des Oblitérations Françaises, 1849-1946*. (Vigneux: *Les Catalogues Mensuels*, n.d.) The wide scope of this work, in a single volume, makes it necessarily somewhat sketchy, but M. Barthélemy has a happy knack of being helpful on points ignored by other writers. The book reproduces, in less detail, most of the lists given by Langlois and Veneziani. An attempt is made to give a price to each postmark in these lists, so that it is possible to get an idea of their relative scarcity, but the Editor warns users of the catalogue that there are very great differences of opinion on this question among experts.

Yvert and Tellier, *Special Catalogue, France and Colonies*. No one who has used this catalogue will need to be reminded what a mine of information it is.

Reference has also been made to various notes and articles in the philatelic press.

The simplest way of dealing with the types of lozenge cancellation will be according to the class of post office using them. These may be roughly divided into: 1, Paris; 2, Provinces, Algeria, and French Post Offices Abroad (taken together because they formed a single series in the official lists); 3, *Ambulants* or Travelling Post Offices; 4, Army Campaigns and Camps; 5, Miscellaneous; 6, Colonial Postmarks of the Lozenge type.

(To be continued)

* Extracts from official documents in this article have been translated by the present writer from the appendices to Langlois & Veneziani.

† That is, the "grille".

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Fig. 3

All the cancellations of the lozenge type had their accompanying date-stamps, which were impressed on the letter itself. These date-stamps will not be described in this article, but will be referred to when necessary. Some "lozenges" were used with more than one date-stamp; sometimes (but not so often) we find the same date-stamp used in conjunction with more than one "lozenge". These will be mentioned as we come to them.

1. Paris

As we have seen, the Central Office in Paris did not use the lozenge of dots. But there were twelve District offices and a number of branch offices for which, in January 1852, such postmarks were provided. The handstamps sent to the District offices consisted of a single letter surrounded by dots. The letters ran from A to M (omitting I), and were at first in Roman capitals, with serifs. (These letters, and all other letters of postmarks mentioned, unless otherwise described, were about 4 mm. high.)

In 1852 each District office, except those lettered L and M, had either one or two *succursales*, or branch offices. These received handstamps, at first also in Roman capitals (Fig. 1), in which the letter of the parent office was followed by the letter S: where there were two branches of the same District office the second used in addition the figure 2. The offices having two *succursales* were A, C, D, E and F. This series of letters and numbers for Paris post offices had existed since pre-stamp days, as early date-stamps bear witness. Thus, the District office at 2 Rue Ste-Cécile had the postmark D; its first branch at 160 Rue du Faubourg St-Martin, DS; and its second at 28 Rue de Cléry, DS2. There was one exception: the second branch office of Bureau C (4 Rue des Vieilles-Haudriettes), which was at 4 Rue Neuve-Bourg-l'Abbé, for some reason used not CS2 but C2.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

This position continued until 1854, when a new series of obliterators was issued for both District offices and *succursales* with sans-serif capitals instead of Roman. (Fig. 2.) At the same time the figure 1 was added to the postmarks of the first branch offices: AS became AS1, and so on. At the same time or shortly after, new offices were opened: a new District office, N (3 Rue de l'Echelle), and seven new *succursales*: BS2, CS3, DS3, HS2, HS3, HS4, and KS2. In 1854 also the office at 15 Rue de la Ste-Chapelle (formerly GS) was placed under Bureau A (1 Rue Tirechappe), and became AS3. The C *succursales* remained exceptional, and the second and third are found, not only with CS2 and CS3, but also with C2 and C3 respectively.

This series of postmarks continued in use until July, 1863, when a notice appeared in the *Bulletin Mensuel des Postes* to the effect that:—

"The Paris offices will cease to be called principal and supplementary; they will form a single series in which each of them will be distinguished by a number. The date-stamp will indicate their location in the capital." (The date-stamp had previously carried only the letter indicating the office of origin.)

This meant a new series of postmarks, and the lozenge was no more used for these offices. Instead, they had their new numbers, from 1 to 39 (Nos. 1 to 35 being the post offices existing at the time of the change, and 36 to 39 four new offices opened in 1866), within a star of similar shape and size to that already in use at the Central Office.

But the lozenge had not disappeared from Paris. It remained in use in a number of *communes* which had become part of the capital when the city boundaries were extended in 1859, but had remained in the list of provincial post offices, and (though in or soon after 1863 they added "Paris" to their date-stamps) had continued to use the lozenge cancellation with their old provincial numbers, and received new numbers on the revision of the provincial list in 1863 (see next section). Besides these, 1863 saw the introduction of new lozenge postmarks for Paris railway station post offices, of which we shall speak in a moment. And two other altogether exceptional lozenge postmarks, the reason for whose existence is unknown, are found in Paris. These were at the offices at 56 Rue St-Dominique-St-Germain (No. 20, formerly F) and at 28 Rue de Cléry (No. 24, formerly DS2). At these two offices handstamps were used from time to time along with the usual stars, in which the numbers 20 and 24, in large figures, were within not the star, but a lozenge of the familiar type. Possibly these had been intended for Aiguebelle (Savoy) and Aiguillon (Lot-et-Garonne) which received the numbers 20 and 24 respectively in the provincial series of 1863 with large figures in lozenges, and had been sent to the Paris post offices by mistake. Whatever the cause, they were used in Paris. These postmarks can, of course, only be collected as Paris postmarks when on cover or piece showing the date-stamp.

The railway station post offices in Paris which received the new lozenge postmarks in 1863 were four in number. At these, the lozenge contained the letters PG (Paris Gare) followed by the initial or initials of the station. (Fig. 3.) We have PGE (Gare de l'Est), PGL (Gare de Lyon), PGNO (Gare du Nord-Ouest, or Gare St-Lazare), and PGO (Gare de l'Ouest, or Gare Montparnasse). The first three of these offices had previously used the obliterators of the nearest branch offices (DS1, BS2, and KS2 respectively), with a special date-stamp. There appears to be no record of a post office at the Gare Montparnasse before the PGO lozenge was used. There were also post offices at the Gare du Nord and the Gare d'Orléans (or Gare du Sud-Ouest, now Gare d'Austerlitz), but these were branch offices in their own right, using first the ordinary lozenge then the Paris star postmarks. (Gare du Nord, DS3 and Star 26; Gare d'Orléans, HS4 and Star 33. As one would expect, these postmarks are a good deal commoner than the PG series.) In 1868, however, the Star 33 postmark was moved from the Gare d'Orléans to a new office in the nearby Boulevard de l'Hôpital, and after that date we find a new lozenge at the Gare d'Orléans: PGSO (Gare du Sud-Ouest). The Gare du Nord kept its Star 26 until 1876.

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By WILFRED BENTLEY
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The first two instalments appeared on page 113 of April 15th and page 177 of April 29th. Copies still in stock.



Fig. 4

2. Provinces, Algeria, and French Post Offices Abroad

These are taken together as they formed a single series in the Postal Administration's lists, and the same general remarks apply to all.

The circular of January 1st, 1852, which announced the arrival of the lozenge postmark stated that the postmark would have a number in the centre (except for Paris offices and *ambulants*) corresponding to the number of the office on a list which accompanied the circular. From 1852 until 1863 the figures were about 4 mm. in height, and this postmark is known as the "small figures". Numbers such as 6, 9, 66, etc., were underlined to avoid ambiguity. This list, in 1852, ran from 1 to 3739; Nos. 1 to 3703 being provincial, 3704 to 3709 P.O.'s abroad (all in the Turkish Empire or Egypt, except 3705 (Bâle), which is not known as a cancellation on French stamps), and 3710 to 3739 Algeria. (Fig. 4.) Each of these three sections was arranged in alphabetical order. Three numbers of offices near Paris, 1564 (Ivry-sur-Seine), 2147 (Montrouge), and 3180 (St-Mandé) are found with the word "BIS" added in small letters, below the number in the first, and after it in the other two. (Fig. 5.) These varieties arose in this way. In 1859 the boundaries of the city of Paris, which had previously enclosed rather less than half the area within the city's fortifications, were extended to the fortifications themselves. These three places, Ivry, Montrouge, and St-Mandé were partly within and partly outside the fortifications: the post offices in those parts of the three *communes* which lay outside the new boundary retained the old postmarks, and the postmarks with "BIS" added were used in offices, either new or already existing, in those parts now within the city. The Montrouge and St-Mandé offices within Paris added "Paris" to their date-stamps: Ivry (within Paris) used a date-stamp reading "La Gare d'Ivry"—this being the name of the district. La Gare d'Ivry was not a railway station post office. All three offices were given separate numbers in 1863. Branch offices at Bayonne and Bordeaux (295 and 441 respectively) used the numbers of these towns with the addition of the letters A or B.

The alphabetical order soon began to be disturbed by the creation of new offices, which were allotted numbers from 3740 onwards as they were opened and needed postmarks. By 1862 the list had reached 4494, the additional numbers being for the most part in no sort of order at all. Of these additional numbers, those from 3766 to 3773 and 4008 to 4019 were allotted to P.O.'s abroad, all in the Turkish Empire; and the following to Algeria: 3751-3764, 3774-3777, 3793-3795, 3846, 3912, 4005, 4007, 4104, 4106, 4116-4120, 4122, 4187, 4189, 4190, 4361-4374, 4446-4448.

The remainder went to provincial post offices, one group being of particular interest. This is the group from 4194 to 4306, which were allotted to the various towns and villages in the Province of Savoy and the County of Savoy, which were ceded to France by the Kingdom of Piedmont, or Sardinia, in return for Napoleon III's help against Austria in 1859-60. Three new Departments were thus formed: Alpes-Maritimes, Savoie, and Haute-Savoie. The first included some territory with eleven post offices, which had formerly been part of the Department of the Var. Though not widely known in England, these postmarks are much sought after by French collectors, and none of them except 4206 (Chambéry) and 4226 (Nice) is at all common. (This applies only to stamps cancelled with



Fig. 5

the lozenge and *small* figures. Postmarks of these three departments in large figures, according to the list of 1863, are not, for the most part, scarce.) One place which thus changed hands was the Principality of Monaco, previously under Sardinian protection, and now annexed to France and included in the Alpes-Maritimes Department. French stamps continued to be used in Monaco until 1885. In the small figures series, the number allotted to Monaco was 4222, and this is a distinctly scarce cancellation. Rather outside the scope of this article, but of great interest, are the Sardinian postmarks to be found on French stamps used in Savoy and Nice after the annexation, but before the necessary French postmarks could be provided. None of these are common, some are very rare, and one or two which must have existed, have so far not been found.

An interesting variety found in this period is what is sometimes mistakenly called the "wooden postmark" of Lyons. In February, 1862, one of the handstamps in use at Lyons was mislaid. A replacement was ordered from Paris, and while it was awaited two temporary stamps were made—of metal, not of wood—with the Lyons number, 1818. One of these was in a type rather similar to the "large figure" postmarks which were to appear in the following year, but slightly smaller, and the stroke of the "8's" running downward from right to left is interrupted where it crosses the other. (The large figure postmark 1818, with which it might be confused, is that of Hydères.) The other temporary postmark is quite distinctive. It is noticeably smaller than the first, though larger than the "small figures", and the figures are of even thickness throughout. These postmarks were only in use for about a week, and both are scarce.

During the currency both of this and of the following series of postmarks, occasional changes occurred in the numbers, through the closing of offices and the re-allocation of their numbers to other, new, offices, and through the removal or re-naming of offices. Full details of these changes are given by Langlois and Veneziani.

The next stage in the history of the lozenge postmarks in the provinces was heralded in the *Bulletin Mensuel des Postes* for December, 1862:—

"Reprinting of the general list of post offices.—Distribution of this list and of a new obliterating stamp.

"The Administration has just had reprinted the list of all the post offices it possesses in France, in Algeria, and abroad. Advantage has been taken of this reprinting to give to each of these post offices its proper number in alphabetical order. The result is that each office will have an alteration in the number assigned to it, and must forward the obliterating stamp and the registration stamp (*) which bear its old number to the office to which that number has been given in the new list. This transfer will take place in accordance with the instructions which will be given to each postmaster by a printed form with which, in a few days, the stores department will send to each post office a new obliterating stamp bearing the new number assigned to it by the list.

"The old stamp whose transfer has been carried out as mentioned above, will be used in the event of the loss or damage of that which will now be supplied by the stores department."

* "Timbre descriptif des chargements."

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Fig. 6

The new postmarks now distributed, and used from January, 1863, onwards, were of the type now known as the "large figures". The figures in the centre, instead of being 4 mm. high, are now about 7 mm. (Fig. 6.) The numbers 6, 9, etc., are no longer underlined, except 99, which has a small cross below it. At the same time, as the *Bulletin* indicates, the list was entirely re-arranged, the new post offices put in their proper places in alphabetical order, and every office (except Nos. 1 to 3, Abbeville, Ablis, and Ablon) received a new number. According to Meinertzhagen, Abbeville continued to use its small figure 1 until 1876, and did not use the large figure postmark at all, though one was certainly supplied.

In this new list the provincial offices ran from 1 to 4361, and a gap was then left, to provide for new offices, until the Algerian numbers began at 5000. These went to 5078, and the P.O.'s abroad from 5079 to 5107. Besides Bâle (5081), unknown on French stamps in large figures as in small, and the Turkish and Egyptian offices, these now included offices at Shanghai (5104), Tangier (5106), and Tunis (5107). Monaco, a desirable item with the large figures as with the small, received the number 2387.

Although the additional post offices of 1863-1876 produced the same alphabetical chaos in the list as those of 1852-1862, there was no jumbling of the provincial post offices on the one hand, and the Algerian and foreign offices on the other. Between 1863 and 1869 the provincial offices went from 4362 to 4999, then, leaving the 5000's for Algeria and abroad, between 1869 and 1876 went from 6000 to 6449. Additional post offices abroad received the numbers 5118, 5119, 5121, 5129, 5139, and 5153-5156. All these were for the Turkish Empire or Egypt except 5118 (Yokohama) and 5121 (La Goulette, Tunisia). The post offices at Gallipoli (5086) and Sinope (5097), both in Turkey, were closed in 1872 and 1869 respectively, and their numbers given to Rodosto and Sidon, both also in Turkey. The remainder of the numbers from 5108 to 5169 went to new Algerian offices, as did 5081 (the former number of the Bâle office, closed in 1865) and 5093 (formerly Metelin, Turkey, closed in 1872). The numbers from 5170 to 5999 remained unused.

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Fig. 7

In accordance with the instructions quoted above, most post offices sent on their small figure handstamps to the offices which had now been given the numbers which were on them. For example, the number of Dieppe in the old list was 1096, and in the new, 1299. On receiving the new large figure 1299 postmark from headquarters, the postmaster had to send his old small figure 1096 to the postmaster at Concarneau, in Finistère, whose number in the new list was 1096. He would then receive a small figure 1299, for use in case of emergency, from the postmaster at Fonce-le-Haut, in the Jura, who had used it hitherto. About 180 post offices are known to have used the small figure postmarks thus sent on to them, mainly for registered letters; and any small figure postmark found on a "laureated" or perforated "Ceres" stamp must have been so used. The perforated "unlaureated" stamps which were current at the time of the change may, of course, be found with large or small figures, but without the date-stamp it is impossible to say whether one of these with the small figure postmark was used before or after the change, and consequently impossible to say where it was used. It may be that many more than the known 180 or so post offices used the small figure postmark in the later period. One of the post offices which used its "second-hand" small figure postmark after 1863 was that of Monaco, in 1870-72, and the small figure 2387 on stamps of that period is a valuable postmark.

As usual with an arrangement of this sort, things did not go quite according to plan. The postmasters at Sétif (3735, old list), Ain Béida (4116), and Nice (4226)—the first two being in Algeria—did not send their small figure postmarks on, as they should have done, and all three continued to use them after 1863. Consequently, these three numbers, in small figures on stamps later than 1863, represent their original owners, and not St-Malo-de-la-Lande (Manche), Vaugirard (Seine), and Villebois (Ain), which received these three numbers respectively in the 1863 list. Ain Béida is not known to have used its large figure postmark (5001) before December, 1875; the small figure 4116 seems to have been the only cancellation used there until that year!

Another Algerian curiosity attaches to Teniet-el-Haad (5073 in the new list). Here the small figure 5073 is recorded as having been used some time after 1863, although the small figure series did not reach 5073. Where did the postmaster at Teniet-el-Haad get the postmark from?

The use at Bayonne and Bordeaux, before 1863, of small figure postmarks with the number of the office followed by A or B, for branch offices, has already been mentioned. Between 1863 and 1873 this practice was extended, and such postmarks in large figures, with letters added running up to F, may be found for Bayonne (359), Bordeaux (532), Brest (611), le Havre (1769), Lille (2046), Lyons (2145), Marseilles (2240), Rouen (3219), and Versailles (4158). Some of these branch offices had had their own numbers in the 1852 list, and were now apparently brought under the control of larger offices. In 1873, however, this method of allotting postmarks to provincial branch offices was abandoned and the branch offices at Bayonne, etc., were given new numbers in the general list. Particular interest attaches to the Lyons postmarks 2145E and 2145F,

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which were used at special offices which we shall notice later on. The small town of Dives, in Calvados (1310, large figures) also had a branch office at Cabourg, which for a time used 1310A, but received an independent number about 1866.

Two places, la Charité and Nevers, had special postmarks for letters posted in the railway station letter boxes. These postmarks had the town numbers (la Charité, 897; Nevers, 2654; both large figures) with the letters B.G. below. (Fig. 7.) This stood for "*Boîte Gare*" (station box).

Before we leave this section, we have one more class of large figure postmarks to consider. These are the numbers originally allotted to post offices in Alsace and Lorraine which were lost when these provinces were annexed to Germany after the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71. In 1873 it was decided by the French postal authorities to fill up the gaps thus left in the list of post offices, and new offices opened from then onwards, instead of receiving new numbers, were given numbers which had formerly belonged to post offices in Alsace and Lorraine. By 1876 these had all been used. In 1863, for example, the number 3465 went to Strasbourg. From 1871 to 1875 the number 3465 was not in use, but in 1875 it was given to a new office at Soligny-la-Trappe (Orne). There were, altogether, 169 of these numbers, but there is some doubt whether all of them were actually used in their new offices (this was the period when the use of the lozenge cancellation was beginning to die out), and two numbers went to offices whose identity is as yet unknown. These numbers (used either in Alsace and Lorraine) or by the new offices, but particularly the latter) are much sought after by French collectors. In general the Alsace and Lorraine postmarks are commoner than those of the new offices (the postmarks of places like Strasbourg or Metz are, of course, very common), and many of the new office postmarks are exceedingly hard to find. This is not surprising when we consider that none of them was in use for more than three years, and many of them had a life of only a year or less; that these three years were the ones during which the date-stamp was rapidly, if unofficially, superseding the lozenge; and that nearly all these new offices were in very small towns or villages. Off cover, they can usually be distinguished from those of the corresponding Alsace or Lorraine offices by the fact that they are found cancelling stamps of the perforated "*Ceres*" issues, which were never current in Alsace or Lorraine. The same applies to the Bordeaux stamps, which, however, are not likely to have been much used in 1873-76. Stamps of Napoleon III (except the 5c. green on blue of 1871) with these numbers will almost certainly have been used in Alsace or Lorraine, but there is just a possibility that a given specimen may not have been, and the collector of Alsace-Lorraine postmarks will need to have them on cover or piece, with the date-stamp.

(To be continued)

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Fig. 8

3. Ambulants or Travelling Post Offices

These (as the French Post Office reminded us a very few years ago by a Centenary commemorative stamp) were introduced into France in 1844. They had, of course, their own date-stamps from the first, and in 1852 some of them were brought into the scheme of cancelling stamps by means of the lozenge of dots. The postmarks then used consisted of the initials of the places within which the T.P.O. ran, followed by a number. (Later on the number was not always there, but the first series of T.P.O. lozenges all had it.) From 1852 to 1855 the initials were in Roman capitals, similar to those used in Paris post offices at this period. Only six routes used this type of postmark: Paris-Calais, Paris-le Havre, Paris-Lyons, Paris-Quévrain, Paris-Tours and Strasbourg-Mulhouse. The postmarks were PC, PH, PL, etc., in each case followed by the number 1 or 2. (Fig. 8.) These were not the only T.P.O.'s in existence at the period, but they were the only ones to which special obliterators were allotted.

In 1855 the T.P.O.'s followed the Paris post offices and changed to sans-serif capitals, and from then on the number of cancellations increased rapidly, especially as the system of T.P.O.'s was then being considerably extended. (Fig. 9.) The same system of initials was followed; sometimes there were numbers after the initials (in the form 1°, 2°, etc.); sometimes one finds such abbreviations as P Belf (Paris-Belfort), PSE (Paris-St-Etienne), LIM T (Limoges-Toulouse), la R. à P. (la Rochelle-Poitiers), etc. It is not always safe to guess at the places denoted by the initials: for instance, P AV 1° is not Paris-Avignon, as one might imagine, but Paris-Avrincourt 1. Occasionally there is a certain overlapping: PL may be Paris-Lyons, Paris-Langres, or Paris-Limoges, and TC may be Tarascon-Carcassonne or Toulouse-Cette. In these and other similar cases the date-stamp is essential. Fortunately the T.P.O. marks need never be confused with any other class of postmark: the only ones which need a close examination are BS and ES, without figures. If they are in sans-serif capitals they are *ambulants* (Bâle-Strasbourg and Epernay-Sedan). If they are in Roman capitals they are Paris *succursales*, which in the sans-serif series became BS1 and ES1. (The Nancy-Strasbourg *ambulants*, NS 1°, NS 2°, and NST need cause no confusion, as the Paris Bureau N had no *succursales*.)

It may be noticed that the T.P.O. marks of the original series (1852-1855) are found in one direction only, i.e., there is a Paris-Calais mark, but no corresponding mark for Calais-Paris, and so on. It is hardly to be imagined that the T.P.O.'s functioned in one direction only, and one must assume that the same cancellation was used for the outward and return journeys. This was changed with the new series, and each *ambulant* had two obliterators, one for the outward journey, and one, with the initials reversed, for the return.



Fig. 9



Fig. 10

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4. Army Campaigns and Camps

The second Empire was for France a period of military adventures, and this is reflected in many of the postmarks to be found (though none of this class are common) on the stamps of Napoleon III. Wherever the French Army went, it had its Field Post Offices, and these were normally provided with cancellations of the lozenge type, with initials denoting the campaign and office. It will be best, perhaps, to take them in their chronological order.

(a) *The Occupation of Rome, 1849–1870*

One of the many revolutionary movements of 1858 was in Rome, where for a time a republic was set up, which was eventually put down through French intervention. The French occupation of Rome continued after the end of the short-lived republic, and the Pope, Pius IX, depended on the French troops for the maintenance of his sovereignty in the Roman States against the revolutionary elements, and, later, against the infant Kingdom of Italy, which desired Rome for its capital. Though the French Army Post Offices in Rome did not receive lozenge postmarks till 1867, they thus come first in historical order. They received postage stamps in 1849, and from then until 1867 the cancellation used was usually the "grille" which was used in France from 1849–1852. Occasionally the rather different "grille" of the Papal post office may be found cancelling French stamps. In 1867 three lozenge postmarks came into use in Rome. These bore the initials CER ("*Corps Expeditionnaire Rome*"), either by themselves or followed by the figures 1 or 2. (Fig. 10.) They may be found in red or black. The defeat of France in 1870–71 caused the withdrawal of French troops from Rome, and the city was shortly afterwards annexed by the Kingdom of Italy.

(b) *The Crimean War, 1854–1856*

With one exception, the postmarks used in the French Army Post Offices in the Crimea may be recognised by the combinations of letters beginning with AO ("*Armée d'Orient*") in the usual lozenge of dots. The office at H.Q. used AOQG, the Imperial Guard AOGI, three Corps offices AO1C, AO2C, and AO3C, and so forth: the ordinary field post offices had AO followed by a single letter from A to R (omitting I). In September 1854 the French occupied the port of Kamiesch, near Sebastopol, which became their principal base for supplies, etc., and in the following February the Army Post Office there was opened to civilian use: this at first combined the lozenge AOM with a date-stamp reading "Kamiesch-Crimée", but later received a special obliterator, K^bAO. It should be said about this last postmark, however, that it is queried by the Special Catalogue, and not mentioned by Blanc; an element of doubt therefore attaches to it.

(c) *Algeria, 1856*

In 1856 the last of a series of Algerian expeditions was launched against Kabylia, a mountainous district of Algeria, the stronghold of the Kabyles or Berbers, the last tribes still holding out against the French. The success of this expedition completed the conquest of Algeria, though many rebellions still lay ahead. A postmark reported to have been used by an Army Post Office during this expedition, but whose existence seems doubtful, is described as a lozenge of dots surrounding the letters KCE ("*Kabylie-Colonne Expeditionnaire*").

(To be continued)

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Fig. 11

(d) *Italy*, 1859-60

This was the campaign which resulted in the setting-up of the Kingdom of Italy, after Victor Emmanuel II of Piedmont, with considerable French help (paid for by the cession of Savoy and Nice), had driven the Austrians out of many parts of northern Italy. It might be more accurate to describe it as a war between France and Austria, fought on Italian soil. It was during this campaign that the victories of Magenta and Solferino were won, which were commemorated by the coronation with a laurel wreath of the portrait of the Emperor on French stamps and coins. The French Army Post Offices in Italy used lozenge cancellations with combinations of letters usually beginning with AA (date-stamp: "*Armée des Alpes*"). Later the date-stamps were changed to read "*Armée d'Italie*", but the same obliterators were used. We find AAQG and other combinations, and the ordinary offices' letters ran from AAA to AAZ (omitting AAJ). Up to AAT these cancellations are found with both the date-stamps mentioned above: from AAU to AAZ, with "*Armée d'Italie*" only. The Imperial Guard this time had a series of lozenges of its own, beginning with GI-GIQC, G.I.I^E DON (First Division) (Fig. 11). GI IC (First Cavalry), etc. Special postmarks were also used in certain towns occupied by the French. These incorporated the letter A and an abbreviation of the town's name: ALEX, Alexandria; ABR, Brescia; ACRE, Cremona; ALIV, Leghorn (French, *Livourne*); and AMIL, Milan.

The Emperor was with the army in this campaign, and had his own post office, which used a lozenge containing the letters BSE (*Bureau Spécial de l'Empereur*). This, like all postmarks of offices used by Napoleon III, was struck in red.

(e) *Syria*, 1860-61

The occupation of part of Syria by French troops, following on a massacre of Lebanese Christians, engaged only about 6,000 men, and lasted but a few months. A single Army Post Office was set up, which used a lozenge with the initials CESA ("*Corps Expeditionnaire de Syrie—Bureau A*"). By some accident both the Special Catalogue and Langlois and Veneziani have reversed the dates of this expedition and that to Kabilia, placing the latter in 1860 and the Syrian expedition in 1856.

(f) *China*, 1860

This was a joint Anglo-French expedition, due to a Chinese failure to keep some treaty obligation or other. (We were tougher in those days about such matters than we are now!) The initials by which French Army Post Office cancellations may be recognised are CEC ("*Corps Expeditionnaire Chine*"). These are followed by BC (*Bureau Central*) or by single letters A to D. This was another very brief occupation.

(g) *Cochin China*, 1861-2

The Army Post Offices in Cochin China at first used the same material as had been used by the army in China—date-stamps as well—so these can only be told apart by the dates themselves. Though the actual campaign ended in 1862, the use of French stamps and of army postmarks continued for some time. It was not until 1863 that a special postmark for Cochin China (CCH) appeared and was used at Saigon. In the following year other postmarks appeared in a series from CCN2 to CCN8, for use in other towns; but French Colonial stamps had been issued in Cochin China when it was made a Colony in 1863, and only



Fig. 12

CCH and CCN2 are known as cancellations on French stamps. The date-stamps used with all these postmarks were, however, of a military nature.

(h) *Mexico*, 1862-1867

The French troops who accompanied Maximilian of Hapsburg on his ill-fated adventure in Mexico, which was to cost him his life and Napoleon III much of his reputation, took their post offices with them as usual. This time the lozenge of dots contained combinations of letters beginning with CEM ("*Corps Expeditionnaire Mexique*"). These were simply a series running from CEMA to CEMM, omitting CEMI. A variety may be found, resulting from a damaged handstamp, reading CEG.

(i) *The Franco-Prussian War*, 1870-71.

The postmarks used in this campaign were, as might be imagined, more numerous than in any of the previous ones, but as the correspondence of the troops was usually carried free, the cancellations are not as common as one might otherwise expect. There were two main series of postmarks, in one of which the letters on the lozenge began with AR ("*Armée du Rhin*") (Fig. 12), in the other with AF ("*Armée Française*") in much larger letters (Fig. 13). The AR series included ARGQG ("*Grand Quartier Général*" or GHQ), ARG I (the Imperial Guard), corps postmarks (AR1^{EC} to AR8^{EC}, and AR13^{EC}), ARBC (*Bureau Central*), then the ordinary offices from ARA to ARZ (omitting J), and, as these were not enough, from ARAA to ARAO (again omitting J). The AF series are simpler, running from AFA to AFH, AFJ and AFM. The Imperial Guard, First and Second Divisions, used the same postmarks they had used in Italy ten years before, beginning with GI. (The two can of course be distinguished with fair certainty by the stamps on which they are found.) The Artillery also had special cancellations, A1^{EG}GP ("*Artillerie Grand Parc*") and A1^{ERG} ("*Artillerie Réserve Générale*"). Finally, there was the Emperor's post office with its BSE in red. This may have been the original cancellation used in Italy in 1859-60, or it may have been a new one with larger letters. Authorities seem to differ on the point, and the present writer has never seen a specimen or even a photograph of the 1870 mark.



Fig. 13



Fig. 14

The camp postmarks are fairly straightforward. The earliest of the lozenge type is that used at the Camp du Midi, near Aix, which was opened in 1855-56. This postmark has the letters ACM. Between this and 1862 another camp, near Toulon, received its own postmark: this was the Camp de Porquerolles, and its postmark consisted of the Toulon number (3382, small figures), above the initials CP. The date, within the limits indicated, is unknown, but cannot have been later than 1862,

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Fig. 15

after which Toulon was re-numbered as 3981. The postmark remained in use at the camp, however, after the re-numbering, in spite of the fact that 3382 was no longer the Toulon number. Another camp, opened in 1857, was the Camp de Satonay (later Sathonay), near Lyons, which used the postmark CdS (Fig. 14). After a few years, this post office became a civilian office under Lyons: its postmark then became 2145E (large figures). The date-stamp is necessary to identify 2145E as the Camp de Sathonay postmark, as later still this number was transferred to another Lyons branch office.

The Camp de Chalons, opened in 1857, used altogether four different obliterators. The first of these consisted simply of the letters C.Ch. (not to be confused with the CCH of Cochin China); from 1859 onwards covers may be found with the Camp de Châlons date-stamp and the cancellation 4114 (small figures) of nearby Mourmelon-le-Grand. The third postmark to be found was used only by the Emperor's post office when he was at the camp, and reads in two lines within the lozenge C.Ch.—Q.I. ("Camp de Châlons—Quartier Impérial") (Fig. 15). This postmark is found only in red, as is the fourth postmark, also from the Emperor's post office, which consists of a six-pointed star of dots, without letters or figures, similar in size and shape to that used at the Central Office in Paris. As this postmark was also used elsewhere, the date-stamp is again necessary for identification.

Two other camps had lettered postmarks—those of Lanneznan, in the Pyrenees, opened about 1868 (CLZ) and Montpellier (Hérault), opened in 1872 and using the letters CM. From 1872 onwards the camps were served by civilian post offices, and the two to which lozenge cancellations are known to have been allotted received numbers in the provincial series: Camp d'Avord (Cher), opened 1872, 6329; and Camp du Ruchard (Indre-et-Loire), opened 1875, 1824—this being the former number of Ingwiller, in Alsace-Lorraine.

5. Miscellaneous

(a) Palaces and Imperial Postmarks

The postmarks used by Napoleon III's own post offices in army camps and in the field have already been described. The normal cancellation used by the post offices which served the Court and the Emperor's household was the red star already mentioned as having been used at the Camp de Châlons. This was in use from 1857 until the end in 1870, and is found in combination with the date-stamps of Plombières and of the Palaces of Biarritz, Fontainebleau and Compiègne. The Palace of St-Cloud had its own cancellation—PSC in a lozenge, also in red; and the post office at Vichy, a favourite resort of Napoleon III, used for Imperial correspondence a date-stamp "Service de l'Empereur—Vichy" with the small figure lozenge 4189, both in red, from 1863 to 1870. (4189 was the Vichy number in the large figure series, and this small figure 4189 was presumably the one received in 1863 from its previous owner, an Algerian post office with the curious name of Lalla-Maghrnia.)

The only other Palace cancellation is in a rather different class from the rest. This is the cancellation of the Palais du Grand Trianon (PDUGT), in black, which was only used in 1873, at a post office set up in the Grand Trianon during the trial there of Marshal Bazaine on charges arising out of his surrender of Metz during the war of 1870–71. It is decidedly rare.

(To be continued)

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Fig. 16

(b) Assemblies and Exhibitions

The National Assembly elected in 1871 for the primary purpose of arranging peace terms with the Germans, met originally at Bordeaux, but soon transferred its activities to Versailles. In each place a post office was attached to the assembly. At Bordeaux the cancellation used was the ordinary Bordeaux lozenge (532, large and small figures). At Versailles the Assembly post office used two marks, each reading AS.NA ("Assemblée Nationale") but of different sizes, the letters of one being about 4 mm., and of the other about 7 mm. high (Figs. 16 and 17). Special date-stamps were used at both places, that of Bordeaux being of course necessary for identification.

There are three Exhibition postmarks in the lozenge type. The first, used at the Paris Exhibition of 1867, consisted of the



Fig. 18



Fig. 19

letters EU ("Exposition Universelle"), about 4 mm. high. The second and third both belong to the Exhibition of 1872, which was held in two parts, at Paris and Lyons. Paris used the cancellation P.EX (large letters) in the lozenge (Fig. 18), while Lyons treated its Exhibition post office as a branch office, with the cancellation 2145F (large figures) (Fig. 19).

(c) Others

There remains one letter postmark in the lozenge type which we have not yet mentioned. This was used by the Returned Letter Office in Paris, and consists of the letter R in the lozenge.

A postmark frequently found on all issues from 1853 to 1876 is that of an anchor within the lozenge, first introduced in 1857 (Fig. 20). This was at one time thought to have been a colonial cancellation, but is now known to have been used in French ships, for letters posted on board. In theory it ought to be possible to find this postmark on the stamps of many other countries, but I do not think it is common so used. The postmark is most often found in black: blue is not uncommon, and red and violet, though rare, can sometimes be found.

After 1876, the Anchor postmark, along with a great variety of other obsolete postmarks, was used in Paris, when necessary, to cope with the vast number of New Year cards which passed annually through the post office and strained its resources of men and materials to the utmost; so that any of the above postmarks, if found on stamps of the "Peace and Commerce" type, are probably not what they seem—though they are interesting curiosities.

A postmark consisting of a "blind" lozenge of dots—that is, one consisting entirely of dots, without figures or letters—was used for cancelling remainders of some stamps. Meinertzhagen says that it was used for the 15c. of 1850; the Yvert Special Catalogue that it was used for remainders of several values of the first issue, quoting a price for it on remainders of the 20c., which Meinertzhagen says were cancelled with the Paris star.



Fig. 17

A series of postmarks of this type were used in the colonies (see below) and are a useful help in distinguishing French Colonial stamps of the "Ceres" and "Napoleon III" types from the corresponding imperforate stamps of France (Fig. 21).

It has been said that a similar lozenge, but with a blank space in the centre, was used at the Central Post Office in Paris, but this is very doubtful. Such a postmark was, however, used on French colonial stamps at Mayotte (Fig. 22).

6. Colonial Postmarks of the Lozenge Type

We may end, for the sake of completeness, with a brief account of the lozenge of dots postmark in the Colonies. When Colonial stamps were first issued, in 1859, they were cancelled with the blind lozenge mentioned above. This normally consisted of 64 dots (8×8), and was so used in French Guiana, French India, Guadeloupe, Martinique, New Caledonia, Reunion and Senegal. The size of the postmark varies somewhat, and there are variations in the size and shape of the dots; sometimes the lozenges of individual post offices can thus be identified. In addition to this lozenge of 64 dots, a lozenge of 49 dots was used in Guadeloupe, and lozenges of 81 and 100 dots in French India. Mayotte used the postmark referred to above, with a blank space in the centre.

A little later the Colonies began to be provided with individual lozenge postmarks. Some of those used in Cochin China have already been described; a further series used in Cochin China consisted of the letter C followed by a number. So far, C1, C3, C16 and C20 have been found, but the post offices at which they were used have not been identified. These postmarks are only known on the "Ceres" type of the general French Colonial issues: there need be no confusion with the Paris postmarks C2 and C3, which cannot exist on any stamps later than the perforated "unlaureated" issue.

Figs. 20
and 21
were illustrated
on page 113.

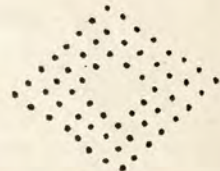


Fig. 22

A postmark with T1 in a lozenge of dots was used at Tahiti. All the other colonial postmarks of the lozenge type were of three or four letters, as an abbreviation of the name of the Colony. The list is as follows:—

- ASI Assinie (later known as Benin).
- GAB Gaboon.
- GOR Goree (a small island near Dakar).
- GPE Guadeloupe.
- INDE French India.
- MQE Martinique.
- NSB Nossi Bé.
- OCN Oceania.
- SNG Senegal.
- SPM St. Pierre & Miquelon.

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Lozenges

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All these postmarks are normally to be found only on stamps of the French Colonies (General issues), and on some of the early provisionals issued in individual colonies. An exception is the "INDE" postmark, which continued in use at Karikal as late as 1895, and may thus be found on the Commerce and Navigation type of French India. French stamps were occasionally used in the Colonies, and Colonial stamps very occasionally paid postage in France, but this was unauthorised and very rarely happened. The great majority of so-called French Colonial stamps with postmarks of metropolitan France are French stamps with their perforations carefully removed.

THE LAST OF THE LOZENCES

By WILFRED BENTLEY

(Preston and District P.S.)



Fig. 20

The *Bulletin Mensuel des Postes* for March 1876 contained an announcement to the effect that it had been suggested that the date-stamp alone might with advantage be used as a cancellation on all articles passing through the post. The question had been examined and various high officials consulted. The majority of them had declared that this would be a change for the better, as it would save time in the handling of mail, and would also offer more satisfactory guarantees against "attempts at the fraudulent re-use of stamps which had already been used". After a quarter of a century, the same old bugbear!

Accordingly, in future, the date-stamp would be used for the cancellation of stamps, not only on newspapers as formerly, but on all articles of any kind passing through the post. The special "obliterating stamp" ("*timbre oblitérant*") would be suppressed forthwith, and the handstamps used were to be collected and returned to the Administration. That meant the end, not only of the lozenge of dots in its numerous forms (in the Colonies as well as in metropolitan France), but also of the Paris stars.

In the following month the first values appeared of the "Peace and Commerce" issue, and with the almost simultaneous disappearance of the "Ceres" stamps and the lozenge postmarks the "classical" period of French philately may be said to have come to an end. (It was two years, however, before the last of the "Ceres" stamps was superseded.) The Berck catalogue quotes prices for some of the earlier stamps of the "Peace and Commerce" type with the lozenge postmark, but these must be very scarce. I have never seen one. The use after 1876 of various lozenge postmarks on New Year cards has already been mentioned.

CHECK-LIST OF "LOZENGE OF DOTS" POSTMARKS

(This list is designed to assist only in the identification of the class of postmark to which any particular specimen belongs. For a detailed identification, lists such as those of Langlois and Veneziani are, of course, essential. The word "plus" in this list indicates that one or more letters or figures follow the letters given.)

1. Figures

(a) 1852-1862. (Small figures.)

3382CP.—Camp de Porquerolles, near Toulon. (Also used here after 1863.)

4114.—May be Camp de Châlons. (Normally Mourmelon-le-Grand.)

Any other number.—Provinces, Algeria, or French Post Offices abroad. Numbers followed by A or B are those of branch offices; for numbers followed by "BIS" see section 2, above.

(b) 1863-1876. (Large figures, except where otherwise stated.)

532.—(Large or small figures.) May be Bordeaux, National Assembly.

897BG.—La Charité, Boîte Gare. (Station Box.)

1824.—(On perforated "Ceres" type only.) Camp du Ruchard.

2145E.—May be Lyons, Camp de Sathonay. (Later, Lyons, La Guillotière.)

2145F.—Lyons, Exhibition. (1872.)

2654BG.—Nevers, Boîte Gare.

4189.—(Small figures, in red.) Vichy: Imperial service.

6329.—Camp d'Avord.

Any other number.—Provinces, Algeria, or French Post Offices abroad. Numbers followed by letters from A to F (unless mentioned above) are those of branch offices.



Fig. 21

2. Letters

Single letters, A to N. Paris District Offices.

Ditto, followed by S, with or without figure. Paris Branch offices (*succursales*). Exceptions are the following in *sans-serif* capitals, which are T.P.O. marks: BS, ES, NS1° NS2°, NST.

AA plus.—Italian campaign, 1859-60.

ABR.—Brescia, 1860.

ACM.—Aix, Camp du Midi.

ACR.—Cremona, 1860.

AF plus.—Franco-Prussian War, 1860-71.

AIEGP.

AIERG.—Artillery. (Franco-Prussian War.)

ALEX.—Alexandria (Italy), 1860.

ALIV.—Leghorn, 1860.

AMIL.—Milan, 1860.

AO plus.—Crimean War, 1854-1856.

AR plus.—Franco-Prussian War.

AS.NA.—(Large or small letters.) Versailles, National Assembly.

ASI.—Assinie. (On Colonial stamps.)

BSE.—(Small and possibly large letters, in red.)—Bureau Spécial de l'Empereur. (Italy, 1859-60, and Franco-Prussian War.)

C1, C3, C16, C20.—(On Colonial stamps, c. 1872 onwards.) Cochin China.

C2, C3.—(1852-1863.) Paris *Succursales*.

C.Ch.—Camp de Châlons.

C.Ch.—Q.I.—(In two lines.) Camp de Châlons—Quartier Impérial.

CCH.—Cochin China (Saigon).

CCN2 to CCN8.—(On Colonial stamps. Only CCN2 is known on French stamps.) Cochin China (other towns.)

CdS.—Lyons, Camp de Sathonay.

CEC plus.—China, 1860, or Cochin China, 1861-62.

CE G.—Mexico, 1862-67 (variety).

CEM plus.—Mexico, 1862-67.

CER.

CER plus. } Rome, 1867-1870.

CESA.—Syria, 1860.

CLZ.—Camp de Lannemezan.

CM.—Camp de Montpellier.

EU.—Exposition Universelle (Paris, 1867).

GAB.—Gaboon. (On Colonial stamps.)

GI plus.—Imperial Guard. (Italy, Franco-Prussian War.)

GOR.—Goree. (On Colonial stamps.)

GPE.—Guadeloupe. (On Colonial stamps.)

INDE.—French India. (On Colonial stamps.)

KCE.—Kabylia, Algeria, 1846. (?).

KhAO.—Kamiesch, Crimea, 1855-56. (?).

MQE.—Martinique. (On Colonial stamps.)

NSB.—Nossi Bé. (On Colonial stamps.)

OCN.—Oceania. (On Colonial stamps.)

PDUGT.—Palais du Grand Trianon, 1873.

P.EX.—Paris, Exhibition. (1872.)

PG plus.—Paris Railway Stations. (P, GR, however, is a T.P.O. mark.)

PSC.—(In red.) Palais de St-Cloud.

R.—Returned Letter Office.

SNG.—Senegal. (On Colonial stamps.)

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June 17th, 1950

STAMP CC

Lozenges *(Continued from page 439)*

SPM.—St. Pierre and Miquelon. (On Colonial stamps.)

Tl.—Tahiti. (On Colonial stamps.)

Any other combination of letters, or of letters and figures.—

Travelling Post Offices (*ambulants*).

Anchor.—Paquebots or ship letters. (Used on board the ships.)

“Blind” lozenge.—Colonies. Also used for cancelling some remainders of first issue.

Lozenge with blank space in centre.—Mayotte. Also said to have been used at Paris Central Office. (Doubtful.)

Corrections to "Lozenges of France"

By W. BENTLEY

3rd instalment, p. 271, col. 1, line 15 from bottom : for " 4116-4120 " read " 4116, 4120 ".

3rd instalment, p. 271, col. 1, line 10 from bottom : for " the Province of Savoy and the County of Savoy " read " the Province of Savoy and the County of Nice ".

3rd instalment, p. 271, col. 2, line 26 : for " Hydères " read " Hyères ".

4th instalment, p. 309, line 9 : for " *Boitre* " read " *Boite* ".

5th instalment, p. 339, line 1 : omit " very ".

5th instalment, p. 341, line 11 : for " 1858 " read " 1848 ".

Last instalment, p. 439, col. 2, line 49, for " 1846 " read " 1856 "