GEORGE AUGUSTTUS SALA has been writing in the *Belgravia Magazine* a series of articles called “Letters from Lilliput,” among which he devotes an epistle each to “Little Haters,” “Little Villians,” &c. Now, had we the “pen of a ready writer,” we would like to sketch out at full length our reminiscences as venders of stamps, including our experiences, with what we would not inaptly style “Little Dealers.” Our business having been considerably in the wholesale line, we could tell some curious tales. Now, by the term “little,” we have no particular reference to the size of the subject, as we have, in the most of cases, no opportunity of judging, our trade being principally by mail. We have no doubt in many instances youthful stamp dealers are better posted, and carry on their commerce on more strictly commercial principles, than do numerous full-grown parties in the same line of trade. In general, our conception of a “Little Dealer” is more applied to his paucity of knowledge of his pursuit, and to his extremely flexible ideas touching profit and loss. The regular “Little Dealer” is a person who, having succeeded in gathering together some fifty or sixty extra dirty and torn specimens of postage stamps, and whose sources of supply have been exhausted, suddenly becomes illuminated by the brilliant notion that he can be a “Dealer,” and increase his own collection by his profits – so down he sits and writes to some large establishment a letter something like the following:

“DEAR SIR: If you please, I am a dealer in stamps, if you please. And if you please, I want you to send me by return mail, if you please, some stamps of all countries, cheap. I can sell a great lot if they are cheap. If you please to send some of Siberia, West Australia, South America, Newfoundland, Canada East, Bergedorf, Mauritius, Modena, etc., and you will get your money. I want them, if you please, to sell for two or three cents apiece, for the boys won’t give more, and I want to make a profit, if you please, and you will get your money,” etc., etc., etc..

Or something like this:

“SAN FRANCISCO, NOV. 8, 1866.

“DEAR SIRS: We having heard of your catalogue, we inclose a stamped envelope and ten cents, for which you will please send us one. We are going to start up the stamp business, and as we must have some rare stamps, so we were recommended to you by a friend of ours, who said you would sell them to us cheap. If you let us have them cheap, we would buy a great many of them. Would you also be so kind as to tell us which would be the best way to send money to you? Send us,” etc.”

The reader may imagine that these letters are fictitious if he likes, but we who are in the business see queer correspondence, and the above are nearly literal copies, excepting only the usual eccentricities in spelling. The “Little Dealer,” when he receives his stamps, in the first place selects all he wants for his own book, and should the remainder happen to sell for sufficient to pay his suppliers, he will probably liquidate; if not, he considers they have the right to loose (sic), not he. He is constant in his demands for Liberian, Beunos Aryan, and such postals, and expects to get them at such rates as will allow him a moderate profit of say 500 per centum when sold to “the boys” at two or three cents each. He calls for
New Brunswick and Nova Scotia shilling stamps with as much coolness as if they grew profusely in orchards, and is peculiarly pertinacious in his vociferations for “real Connells,” and assures us that he can dispose of “lots if they are cheap.” The utmost range of his vision of the worth of the rarest used stamps is about five cents, and he expects to procure unused specimens, no matter how scarce, at the original face value. He grows clamorous when his moderate requests are not complied with, and only waits till he gets a few dollars in debt to us to disavow all ideas of future commerce, informing us with the utmost sang-froid that “your prices are so dear I won’t deal with you any more, and I have lost so much I can’t pay you what I owe you; besides, you never sent me the stamps I wanted, and there is a man in --------- who will give me Liberia, etc. Stamps, so like that nobody can tell the difference, for 20c a dozen, and they are just as good. You needn’t write no more letters as I didn’t write to you under my real name, etc., etc.,” or “I am going away next week and no letters will reach me.” It is only fair to add in conclusion that the dealer who penned our first quoted letter we believe was of German descent, which accounts in a great measure for his curious language. We might also say that in his case all demands were fully liquidated, and that he quitted the business only because, as he informed us, he was “in a bookstore now learning to be a bookstore.” – Postman’s Knock.