Postpaid envelopes were in use in France as early as the reign of Louis XIV. Pelison states that they originated in 1653, with a M. de Velayer, who established, under royal authority, a private penny post in Paris, placing boxes at the corners of the streets for the reception of letters which should be wrapped in a certain envelope. The subject of postage stamps was first agitated in England in 1830, but it was not until 1839 that it took a practical form, in the adoption of what was called the Mulready envelope. In six months this envelope was withdrawn, and in May, 1840, the postage stamp was adopted instead. The United States Government first issued postage stamps in the year 1847; and the rate of postage was reduced to three cents per half ounce for all distances by act of Congress of March 3, 1863. So it appears that envelopes were in use long before the invention of the postage label or stamp, and that the letter-envelope and the stamp are both foreign inventions. – Home Journal