THE RAPID GROWTH OF PHILATELY IN AMERICA.
(The American Journal of Philately, Vol. 1, No. 5, July 1, 1868)

It is now eight years since obliterated postage stamps first became an article of merchandise in the United States, and from the first introduction of this fascinating science to the present day, we have noticed a continued increase in the number and ability of its followers.

We recollect seeing for the first time, in the Fall of 1860, a poor man standing at the end of the City Hall park with a hundred or so of foreign postage stamps nailed (!) to a board for sale; (how many Philatelist would be horrified at such a sight now,) these were all sold at the uniform rate of five cents each, the proprietor not having the slightest idea of the comparative scarcity of the different varieties. The rapid sale of the specimens exposed to view soon induced other parties to engage in the same money-making business, till a reaction was thus brought about; but this was caused equally by the excitement attending the breaking out of the rebellion. This slight cessation of the demand for our little protégés was of but short duration, and those amongst the speculators who had not sold out their stock, soon received the reward of their faith in the power of those “little bits of dirty paper” (as they have been spitefully called by some who have not the ability to understand them) by large sales at any prices they chose to ask; but at that time fifty cents was thought a large price for the scarcest specimens.

The next era in stamp collecting was the arrival in this country of a gentleman thoroughly conversant with the business he professed, and by buying all of the scarce stamps that any of the dealers had, and selling the common stamps at a low price, he at once placed himself at the head of the list of American dealers.

During the time of which we write, there appeared on the stage many papers, professedly, to give information concerning the new science, but principally to advertise some dealers business, but they all proved short lived affairs; there were also several albums gotten up with more or less ability, of which Appleton’s was the best, but it is now far behind the times. Notwithstanding the large amount of publications purporting to enlighten the community, there remains a great lack of information in regard to many points highly interesting to Philatelists, which the formation of the New York Philatelic Society did much to obviate, but still, by their seclusion, and having but small facilities of conveying the information they had acquired to their brother Collectors, their sphere of usefulness was very limited; but now that the Society has merged from its slumber, and in the publication of this Journal, convey to all the results of their labors, we predict a glorious future for our beloved science in America, more especially as we notice the increasing interest taken in the progress of our work; even the various periodicals are beginning to enquire into the new science, and one of the ablest conducted of them, The Industrial American, having presented its readers with a long article on Philately. A new feature also appears for the first time in an American directory, we refer to the placing Dealers in Foreign Postage Stamps amongst the list of trades, as will be seen by turning to page 226 of Wilson’s Business Directory for this year.

We will conclude our rather long article by informing our friends that our Journal has met with unprecedented success in the annals of this class of literature; and in answer to the golden opinions expressed by the oldest established magazines, our collecting friends, and the press of the country, can assure them that it will continue to be as instructive as it is permanent. As another evidence of its
increasing popularity, we need not call the attention of our readers to the fact that we have had to double our advertising pages.