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# BRIC-À-BRAC.

A

COLLECTION OF CURIOSITIES,  
OLD AND NEW,  
AND VARIOUS ARTICLES,  
*FROM THE NEWSPAPERS.*

EDITED BY

J. W. PALMER.

"I will buy with you, sell with you."—SHAKESPEARE.

LONDON:

J. W. PALMER, PHILATELICAL PUBLISHER,  
281, STRAND, W.C.

1885



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# BRIC-À-BRAC.

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## CHAPTER I.

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### SOME CURIOSITIES OF STAMP COLLECTING.

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#### POSTAGE STAMP COLLECTING.

IT is easy to underrate the importance of the pursuit—or, if you prefer it, the “craze”—of stamp collecting. As a matter of fact, the ranks of collectors are now recruited not only by idle schoolboys and people who feel constrained to gather together some tangible objects, if they be merely old buttons, but also by many grave and busy men who deem the postal labels and franks of the world worth some of the care and attention which is bestowed upon coins and medals. If the latter are gathered into museums, classified and described, why should the former be treated with neglect, and allowed to pass into that limbo which more or less threatens everything made of paper? Postage stamps are in their nature perishable objects, and unless collectors devise some better plan for the preservation of their treasures than the conventional album, with its constant attrition, it will be safe to predict that a century hence not

one-twentieth part of the many valuable collections which have been brought together at the cost of so much time and money will be in existence. Postage stamps to be kept in good condition for any length of time should be fixed in some kind of air-tight case faced with glass. Unfortunately few private collectors can afford the great outlay that would be demanded in the case of a great collection; and those who hope to see these interesting records of the past rescued from oblivion can only place their trust in such institutions as the British or South Kensington Museum. If the guardians of our national collections decline the responsibility of collecting the postage stamps of all nations, they might at least preserve a complete set of English postal franks, seeing that they throw light on our political, social, and art history. The Berlin Post Office has set us a good example in this respect, having formed a magnificent collection of everything that can be called a postage stamp. Only, if we would acquire a national collection at a reasonable outlay, there is no time to be lost. During the last ten years the value of postal labels and cards which are at all scarce has increased at a prodigious rate; to give only two instances, Sir Daniel Cooper's collection fetched £3,000 some years ago, and the collection of a well-known London amateur realised last year the magnificent figure of £10,000. And I shall not be surprised if ten or fifteen years hence a first-rate collection is quoted at five times the last sum.

## THE LATE MR. FAWCETT, POSTMASTER-GENERAL.

The death of the late Mr. Henry Fawcett, the Postmaster-General, was lamented everywhere and by all. The right hon. gentleman, who died at Cambridge on November 6, 1884, of an acute attack of pleuro-pneumonia, was a head and shoulders above most of the members of the Government in administrative ability. During the time he had the management of the Post Office he effected the system of the Parcel Post, greatly extended the operation of the Post Office Savings Banks, was in the midst of the task of enabling the public to send Sixpenny Telegrams, and only just before his fatal illness had arranged for a committee of experts to decide upon some system whereby the chaotic state of the colours, and the indication of the value, of postage stamps might be reduced to order and made easy of identification. As is well known, Mr. Fawcett many years ago lost his eyesight while shooting, and his political successes were a marvellous testimony to the mental vigour he possessed in such a high degree as to enable him to triumph over a drawback which would have been, in most men, fatal to a successful career in literature, politics, or statesmanship. The little volume on the Postage Stamp published by Mr. Palmer, of 281, Strand, was gratefully dedicated to the late Postmaster-General.



## A FORTUNE IN FOREIGN STAMPS.

In Paris there are a hundred and fifty tradesmen who deal in nothing else but old postage stamps. Some of them dispose annually of as many as two million stamps, besides thirty thousand albums in which to keep them duly arranged. The enterprising dealer who bought up all the postage stamps of the defunct Italian States has made quite a large fortune by the venture.

## WANTED—AN IDEAL POSTAGE STAMP.

The late Mr. Fawcett, Postmaster-General, interested himself in the production of an ideal postage stamp, and had referred the matter to a committee of five experts from the Post Office and the Inland Revenue Department. There is certainly room for great improvement in this direction. The English postage stamp, although a great improvement on the original Mulready envelope, or the old black Queen's head now much prized by our stamp-collecting sons and daughters, is not an artistic production. At the same time it is to be hoped that the committee of five, while attempting to improve the standard of postal-stamp excellence and elegance in this respect, will not omit a practical improvement which is much wanted. Our stamps as they now exist are too much of a colour. Distinctive shades should be adapted for different values. In large businesses the want of this distinction causes the clerks endless trouble

## THE ORIGIN OF THE RECEIPT STAMP.

The origin of receipt stamps took place under peculiar circumstances. The Dutch Exchequer having fallen very low, and the people being already overloaded with taxes, a reward was offered to any one who should suggest a new source of revenue which would replenish the exchequer without pressing the people. This ordinance was dated 13th August, 1624, and the receipt stamp was the outcome. The name of the suggester has not come down to us, but the law *De Impost van Bezegelde Brieven* still holds its place in the statute book of Holland. This source of revenue was introduced into this country in 1693 (5 William and Mary, ch. 21), and the adhesive postage has now taken the place of the original impressed one.

## AN APPEAL TO PARLIAMENT.

A firm of stamp merchants in London writes calling attention to the "lamentable increase of the fabrication of forged English, colonial, and foreign current postal stamps." This fraud, they say, is now flourishing beyond any former extent, owing to the neglect of the Post Office officials to enforce the Act of Parliament of 1840, and is doing considerable injury to the many thousands of stamp collectors who exist in the kingdom. Above six hundred millions of stamps are bought and sold annually, the number representing an annual value of two millions sterling, and my informants state

that they have themselves rescued from further circulation twenty-eight thousand forged stamps, representing over two thousand pounds of which some stamp collectors had been defrauded. Parliamentary inquiry and legislation is asked for, and largely-signed petitions have been prepared praying that the future enforcement of the law on the subject shall be made incumbent upon the police in the manner lately provided for in the United States by "an Act to prevent the fabricating and counterfeiting of the securities of foreign countries." The petitions were duly presented, at the instance of Mr. J. W. Palmer, of 281, Strand, in the House of Commons by Mr. Tomlinson, M.P., and in the House of Peers by Lord Bramwell. Since September, 1884, a law for which the petitioners prayed has been in operation. The history of this measure is given in another chapter of this book.

#### HOW POSTAGE STAMPS ARE MADE.

In printing, steel plates are used, on which two hundred stamps are engraved. Two men are kept hard at work covering them with coloured ink, and passing them to a man and a girl who are equally busy printing them with large rolling hand-presses. Three of these little squads are employed all the time. After the small sheets of paper upon which the two hundred stamps are engraved have been dried enough, they are sent into another room and gummed. The gum used for this purpose is a peculiar composition, made of

the powder of dried potatoes and other vegetables, mixed with water. After having been again dried, this time on the little racks which are fanned by steam power, for about an hour, they are put in between sheets of pasteboard and pressed in hydraulic presses capable of applying a weight of 2,000 tons. The next thing is to cut the sheet in half; each sheet, of course, when cut contains a hundred stamps. This is done by a girl, with a large pair of shears, cutting by hand being preferred to that of machinery, which method would destroy too many stamps. They are then passed to two other squads, who perforate the paper between the stamps. Next, they are pressed once more, and then packed and labelled, and stowed away for despatching to fulfil orders. If a single stamp is torn or in any way mutilated, the whole sheet of a hundred stamps is burned. Five hundred thousand are burned every week from this cause. For the past twenty years not a single sheet has been lost, such care has been taken in counting them. During the process of manufacturing, the sheets are counted eleven times.

N.B.

(From the "Brighton Herald," September 13, 1884.)

The issue for September of *Bric-à-Brac*, the trade circular of Mr. J. W. Palmer, stamp merchant, of 281, Strand, contains the text of the clause in the new Post Office Protection Act, which imposes a liability to a penalty of £20 on

any person making or having in their possession, without lawful excuse, any fictitious stamp or materials for producing such stamps. This clause, which Mr. Palmer claims the credit of getting inserted, will deal a heavy blow to the large trade (larger than most people think) which has been carried on in forged foreign stamps. Collectors who are swindled will now have a remedy, if they choose to apply it.

#### OUR POSTAGE STAMPS.

The postal authorities are in earnest in their desire to produce an ideal postage stamp. We have left far behind the old days of the penny red and twopenny blue labels of twenty years ago. What is wanted is to combine within the same square half-inch of surface the insertion of nationality and the indication of specific value. We must have the Queen's head, and we must have the price. Other countries have had to deal with the same difficulties. Germany puts her sprawling eagle with the figures in the corners. The result is singularly unsatisfactory. Italian stamps are very much like our own. The French are the best. The Republic, having no Royal head to provide for, has two emblematic figures, carrying a shield, on which is printed in bold type the value of the stamp. Shape seems to be really the only indication of variety which other nations have overlooked. Our department started this novelty with the original issue of halfpenny stamps. But

even shape seems to be limited to rectangles. Stamps are sold in sheets, and it would not be easy to detach octagons and very difficult to separate circles. With regard to the new designs for English postage stamps, a "scheme," comprehending twenty varieties, has been submitted to the authorities at St. Martin's-le-Grand by Mr. J. W. Palmer, of 281, Strand, W.C.

#### GREAT EXPECTATIONS.

The *Guardian* has the following paragraph: "A New York rag-picker, while plying his trade, found an old letter on which was a Brattleborough postage stamp. It is said to be the only cancelled stamp of the kind in existence. He sold it to a dealer for 300 dols., and the purchaser expects to make a thousand per cent. profit."—"Great Expectations," indeed—Dickens!

#### SOMETHING ABOUT STAMPS.

"What is the meaning of all this chopping and changing of our postage stamps? In the course of the five years ending with the 1st of April next we shall have had four different varieties of penny postage stamps. First, there was the familiar old brick-dust label which discoloured the user's hands and reminded him of licking a blister; then came a flabby, nondescript thing which looked as though it were recovering from the small-pox. This philatelic Mokanna reigned only a few months,

and was succeeded by the present inartistic and badly engraved stamp. On the first of April this, in its turn, is to be deposed, and an entirely new and original label, extending in value to half-a-crown, is to be put into circulation. Why these constant changes? To the old penny stamp, with which most of us were familiar from childhood, there were, no doubt, valid objections. The post-mark was easily obliterated and the gum was vile. The gum on the new stamps is proof enough that the gum on the old ones could have been improved, and if there really was a loss of a few hundreds a year by the re-use of old labels from which the post-marks had been removed, most of us would have endured that for the sake of retaining an old friend. We presume that neither of the two stamps which have replaced the vermilion effigies of old has answered the expectations of the Post Office with regard to obliteration. And if not, why not? It is surely within the resources of science to invent a dye which when impressed upon a postage stamp shall retain the obliteration mark. Has the present stamp failed in this respect? Or is the new issue intended to reduce postal, telegraphic, and inland revenue stamps to uniformity? If this be so, the thing is intelligible; but it would, at least, have been considerate of Mr. Fawcett to tell us. What we want at present is 'more light.' The Postmaster-General's philatelic eccentricities must be a mine of wealth to dealers in stamps. Somebody wrote a biography the other day of a gentleman 'of this

persuasion' who has made twenty thousand pounds in the business. The trade in foreign stamps must be a good thing, for English stamps are foreign when they get to America or Germany—both great stamp-collecting countries. The twenty thousand pound man will probably make a few more thousands shortly. We are afraid the truth of the whole matter is that we are not successful designers of postage stamps. The new issue in Belgium was designed and printed in England; and the result was so atrocious that the series has, we believe, been withdrawn in favour of the old one. Would that something similar might be done by our own Post Office!" Mr. Palmer, of 281, Strand, the stamp merchant of whom the *Yorkshire Post* speaks so kindly, is doing his best to fulfil the newspaper prophecy. He hopes "to make a few more thousands" before he has done.

#### THE HOUSE THAT J. W. PALMER BUILT.

The establishment of which Mr. J. W. Palmer is the responsible head is situate in the very heart of the city of London—281, Strand, W.C. The House that "our Jack" built, an imposing structure, with bold inscriptions decorating the frontage—like the tattooed face of a Maori chief—stands out boldly among the neighbouring houses. The stamps stored at 281, Strand exceed by millions the stock of any other dealer, English or foreign. On the ground floor is the long warehouse, and the clerks' offices. Tons of stamps are packed



away in the stock-rooms above. At the top of the house is a huge painted sign bearing the portrait of Mr. J. W. Palmer, "The Exterminator of Forged Stamps," surrounded by an appropriate device, which by day and by night (when it is lit up) advertises the oldest established firm of stamp merchants in the world to passers-by. The cry of "No Forgery," first raised by Mr. J. W. Palmer, is perpetuated "on the outward walls." It may be mentioned, in passing, that the war against forgery has been carried on at a cost of no less than £3,000, all of which has been defrayed by this firm alone. "The largest stock in the world;" "A million stamps at one farthing each," and other inscriptions tell their own tales, and in the plainest of letters and cleanest of paint defy contradiction. The house has recently been newly decorated and furnished by Mr. J. W. Palmer, who is "monarch of all he surveys," from the basement to the roof. The premises are far and away the largest occupied by any firm of stamp dealers at home or abroad.

#### MR. PROCTOR ON STAMPS.

Mr. Proctor has something, always interesting, to say about everything. He discourses in *Knowledge* upon the subject of Philately in this wise: The devotees of the science or art, or whatever it is, of "Philately" may be interested to learn that up to the end of the year 1883 two hundred and three countries, states, &c., and twelve private companies had issued adhesive postage stamps. Of these, sixty-nine have also

issued envelopes, and one hundred and seven, post cards. Between 1840 and December 31, 1860, 2,400 stamps of all sorts were issued. From 1861 to December, 1870, sixty-six new countries were added, and the stamps rose in number to about 6,400, an increase of 4,000 in ten years. In the next decade forty-nine new countries were added to the list, and another 4,000 was added to the number of adhesive stamps. Finally, the number of stamps which, up to December 31, 1880, was about 10,400, had advanced to about 12,000 in the succeeding three years, or at the rate of more than 500 a year; so that if the same rate of progression should continue, by December, 1890, 16,000 varieties of postage stamp will be in existence. I tremble to think of the sorts and sizes of Stamp Albums that it will be incumbent on the collector of five or six years hence to keep. A moderately complete collection will require a perambulator, at the least, for its transport from place to place; while a really full one will scarcely be movable in anything short of a donkey-cart.

#### NEWS FROM LILLIPUT.

An agreement was a few months ago entered into by M. Cochery, the French Minister of Posts and Telegraphs, by which special postage stamps were to be issued for the ridiculous little principality of Monaco. Upon them the reigning Prince, styled Charles III., has the pleasure of seeing his august portrait.

## THE STRAIGHT TIP.

A paragraph lately went the rounds of the Press to the effect that the Duke of Edinburgh was "an enthusiastic stamp collector." Nothing of the kind. The story, however, is "founded on fact," as the saying is, as Mr. J. W. Palmer is happily in a position to prove. For the Duke of Edinburgh read the Duke of Edinburgh's son, and then you have the whole truth. The young Prince had, as far as Mr. Palmer's knowledge goes, been collecting for a few months only, and the further news that his collection was "one of the finest in the world" is nothing more than an imaginative effort on the part of the paragraphist. Certainly, the young Prince has some very rare stamps in his collection. Nobody knows that better than Mr. Palmer.

## A STORY—WITH A MORAL.

A good story is related by a friend of ours from the country. Taking a cab at Brompton, our friend, who designed making a call upon Mr. J. W. Palmer, directed the driver to the Strand. Arrived at the Strand, cabby lifted the trap and asked his fare the number of the house he wanted. "Upon my word, cabby," returned the fare, "I forget. It's somewhere in the heart of the Strand. Do you perhaps know Palmer's?" "What!" answered cabby, "Palmer, the exterminator of forged stamps? I should think I do. Gee-up." The moral of the story is obvious.

## "A LA RUSSE."

(From the "Graphic," September 11, 1884.)

Who is responsible for the recent issue of postage stamps all of one colour? The worry caused among Post Office servants by this innovation has been immense. In the hurry of business—and since the establishment of the Parcel Post the Post Office clerks of both sexes have had no little work on their hands—stamps worth twopence-halfpenny or three-halfpence are being continually mistaken for penny ones, and the clerks have to bear the cost of these errors. The inconvenience is quite as great in City houses which have much correspondence with the Continent; in fact, it is so obvious that stamps of different values ought to be easily distinguishable at a glance, even to near-sighted persons, that one can only attribute the issue of "mauves" to the influence of that fact-contemning spirit which operates so queerly in politics. A theory is demonstrated by long experience to be irrefutable, but some man suddenly springs up to say, "Never mind the experience; let us start afresh, as if Time had taught us no lesson," and behold a uni-coloured lot of stamps which Rowland Hill, with his shrewd insight into popular wants, would have condemned forty years ago. Of course the new stamps are economical in principle; it is only in practice that they will prove troublesome and costly. Meanwhile, as the authorities at St. Martin's will

certainly have to consult the public convenience again before long, we may call attention to the Russian stamps as offering the best models. They are pretty, difficult to forge, and impossible to misread, being formed by combinations of two colours—that in the “field” of one tint, and the escutcheon in an oval of another. Thus: light blue upon grey, green upon red, and yellow upon blue. The merit of this system is shown by the fact that the Russian Government has never had to alter its stamps since the first original issue. How often, and at how much cost, have we altered ours?

#### TOMMY'S OPINION.

Our lively friend Tommy (of *Moonshine*) thus gives vent to his opinion: I see people are making a fuss about the colour of the stamps, and quite right too. I am only 14 years old, but I can tell you a very good reason why they shouldn't be so alike. Now I'm going to do so. I am office boy in Messrs.—well, on the whole I think I had better not give the name of the firm. I enjoy a good horrible play, but my wages is low, so I has now and then to borrow from the office stamp drawer. Only the other night I wanted to see *The Midnight Marauder*; or, *The Martyred Messmate*. I hadn't any money, so I had to borrow. The gas was low, previous to closing the office, when I took the stamps. I intended to take four 3d. ones. Wasn't I sold when I got outside to find they were only half-pennies! I went back to get four of the

right ones, when I found the office door shut. Of course, I couldn't go to the theatre. Now, if the stamps had been properly coloured I shouldn't have made a mistake, and should have seen the play. Mr. Heditor, do your best to get them altered for the sake of—well, I'll say,

TOMMY.

Before the present postage stamps were introduced I drew the attention of the Postmaster-General to the exceeding inconvenience of issuing stamps of different denominations identical in colour. My representations were unheeded, and attempts to obtain explanations from the department as to the cause for this strange decision were unavailing, but less than twelve months has convinced the Post Office authorities that they have made a stupid blunder, which they are about to retrieve. It is strange that it should take permanent officials twelve months to find out what any man in the street could see at a glance.

#### THE TRUE STORY OF THE MILLION STAMP FEVER.

*(From the "Brighton Herald," January 12, 1884.)*

An entertaining little sixpenny book has just been published by Mr. J. W. Palmer, of 281, Strand, giving an account of Mr. Palmer's life, and how he amassed a fortune of £20,000 by dealings in foreign stamps. The book is sure to both please and amuse stamp collectors. Among other anecdotes is the following: "A great additional

impetus was now given to the stamp collecting by the nuns connected with a Roman Catholic charity in Ireland. These ladies had been promised a large sum of money on the curious condition that they collected one million postage stamps within a specified time. The more readily to collect this seemingly impossible number of stamps, these self-denying ladies advertised for gifts of stamps to enable them to obtain the promised donation. The result of the advertising caused vast quantities of the used stamps to be sent to these nuns, who were successful in their efforts, and they duly received the donation for the benefit of the useful charity. The million stamps were afterwards sold to a speculator, ultimately exported to China, and were finally used to decorate the walls of the drawing-room of one of the 'tea factories' in Canton. This account is authentic, and may be relied upon, although many different and misleading versions of this huge 'stamp collection' have been seriously narrated and published as fact."

#### INTERESTING TO PHILATELISTS.

When Marshal MacMahon was President of France his wife was very anxious to see his image set in stamps, and some such designs were prepared, but the Postal Commission rejected them and adopted the present design. There are collectors who believe that some of these MacMahon stamps got into circulation; hence they are

supposed to be without price, as valuable in fact as one or two "Victoria and Albert" pennystamps, which some people also confidently believe were not destroyed, although never officially issued.

#### BEWARE!

There is bad news for the Philatelists from Switzerland. A wholesale manufactory of Swiss stamps of old "issues" has just been discovered at Zurich. The forgers have gone about their work very thoroughly; they have collected scraps of old letters bearing post-marks with various dates from 1843 to 1860; and the better to deceive the unwary, they have stuck the stamps on to these pieces of envelope. Postage stamp collecting has been raised in these days to a science, and the most clever "forgeries" in the world would not take in some practised Philatelists, but schoolboys are not so particular; and the older Swiss "issues" being somewhat rare, the reproductions of them have had a great vogue. Indeed, the authors of the Zurich "forgeries" are said to have cleared some £80 during the last two months of the year 1884.

#### THE SPIRIT OF THE "TIMES."

We (the *Times*) understand on good authority that one of the Middlesex magistrates the other day was offered, but refused to accept, £900 for his collection of foreign postage stamps; and also that an extensive collection, of 17,000 varieties,



including many unique specimens, changed hands through Mr. J. W. Palmer, of 281, Strand, for £800; it is believed that this is the highest price which such a collection has ever fetched in England. In France, however, the mania has reached a higher pitch, for we are told that one of the most complete collections ever brought together was sold privately for no less than £3,000. Since this paragraph appeared in the *Times*, an English Philatelist has disposed of a collection for £10,000.

THE FINEST COLLECTION OF POSTAGE STAMPS IN  
THE WORLD.

“The Old Boy” (writing in *Our Boys* and *Grip*) says: “The finest collection of postage stamps in the world, it now turns out, does not belong to the eminent lawyer who is said to have refused ten thousand pounds for his collection; nor to the Australian cabinet minister, who has spent over seven thousand pounds upon specimens; nor to the French millionaire, who has paid bigger prices for rare stamps than any other collector. The largest and most valuable collection in the world is owned by an American lady, who has invested fourteen thousand pounds in this kind of stock, and whose collection, it is estimated, would to-day be worth nearly double that sum of money in the market.” The American lady’s title to “the largest collection of postage stamps in the world” is disputed. Herr Von Ferrary, a distinguished Philatelist, possesses a collection which is superior to any other,

and is so very valuable that it is generally reckoned priceless.

#### ENTERPRISE.

*Apropos* of the introduction of the penny post, a story is told by a commercial traveller who was, at that time, doing business in the Channel Islands. An English shilling bought thirteen penny stamps in exchange, so when the penny stamps came into the Island, they were sold for a Jersey penny. Thirteen were sold for an English shilling, and our friend was not long in finding this out. So he bought up all the local stock—some £400 worth—and sold them when he crossed the water, realising about 8 per cent. on his bargain. Other commercials followed suit, and the officials of the General Post Office were astonished at the number of stamps required for insignificant little Jersey. Settling day came, and with it the explanation. The enterprise was speedily stopped.

#### THE USE OF HALFPENNY STAMPS ON RECEIPTS.

Mr. W. B. Macwhinnie, of the British Empire Mutual Life Assurance Company, Glasgow, writes: Some time ago a statement appeared stating that the use of halfpenny stamps on receipts was illegal; and as it is a point of some importance to the community, you will be pleased to hear that the Secretary to the Board of Inland Revenue writes deciding that the placing of two halfpenny stamps on a receipt, instead of the usual penny stamp, is legal.

## A NATIONAL MEMORIAL.

A suggestion was started soon after the death of the much-lamented Mr. Fawcett, for raising a memorial to the late Postmaster-General. It should be remembered, however, that the Rowland Hill Memorial Fund has not succeeded to such an extent as its promoters hoped and desired. The postal reform with which the name of Sir Rowland Hill will always be associated was one which has had an immense effect upon the commercial relations of this country; yet the funds for the memorial have come in so slowly that a fresh appeal has to be made to the public and to the merchant-princes of the city. Money is no doubt tighter than it used to be. Still the author of the uniform penny postage has left behind him a name which ought not to have required perpetuation in a way which conveys the idea that the public grudge the sum necessary to keep green the memory of such a distinguished public servant.



## CHAPTER II.

### FLASHES OF FUN.

#### CHANGING COLOUR.

FURTHER changes of colour in our postage stamps are announced. The authorities invite suggestions. What a mess they have got tint to!

#### A VERY RARE STAMP.

An advertisement appeared lately as follows: "For sale, a very rare postage stamp, time of Henry VIII." A correspondent, on calling the advertiser's attention to the fact that there were no postage stamps of that time, received for an answer, "That is the reason the stamp is so rare."

#### A GENERAL COMPARISON.

General Wolseley can conquer a host,  
General Gordon is England's boast,  
Of Roberts we're proud, but I like most  
Our well-known and useful General—Post.

#### TOUCHING—VERY.

We have heard tell of an enamoured swain who, on receipt of a letter from the idol of his affections, invariably detaches the postage stamp from the letter, and pastes it inside his waistcoat, "so that the object touched by her dear lips may be near my heart!"

A JOKE IN EARNEST.

*Judy*, the comic journal, has been "making fun" of Mr. J. W. Palmer. In a recent issue of that journal, Mr. Palmer is wittily described as "a rare stamp of a man." Very pretty compliment—very good joke.

OUR MOST OBLIGING POSTMASTER-GENERAL.

Little Girl: "If you please I want two 'apenny stamps and one 'apenny wrapper and a post-card."

Postmaster: "Thank you, miss; where shall we send them to?"

'CUTE.

An ingenious individual has hit upon a scheme whereby he expects to make a fortune. He will advertise largely. "For half-a-crown I will disclose a plan whereby halfpenny postage stamps can be made to do the work of penny ones." His plan is perfectly simple and cannot fail—Use two of them.

CAUTIOUS.

The other day a little girl presented a letter at the post office. There being no stamp on it, the postmaster inquired whether she had not brought a penny. "No, sir," she said, "father has put the stamp inside."

SENSE.

An American paper says that if letter postage be reduced to one cent, there will be two sent where there is one sent now.

## CHAPTER III.

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### A CHAT ABOUT STAMP-COLLECTING.

*(Reprinted by permission.)*

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I WAS recently reading a biographical sketch of a man who has made a handsome fortune out of stamps. Now, a man who could turn these things to such excellent account should surely have something to say upon the subject of stamp-collecting, and with this idea in my mind the other day, I dropped into the old shop in the Strand where this merchant-prince of Philately carries on his business.

I have heard of papering rooms with used stamps, although I fancy this is one of those things often spoken of, but very seldom if ever seen. Upon entering Mr. Palmer's warehouse I beheld such a sight—walls covered with stamps, hanging in sheets like curtains before shelves containing layers on layers of stamps; all along the counter more stamps; stamps in sheets, in boxes, in books; stamps everywhere; and there before me, with a great stamp album before him, a little Island of Man, surrounded on every side by stamps, sat the presiding genius of the establishment, with an assistant on either hand.

When I asked for Mr. Palmer, the gentleman bending over the album rose quickly from his seat,

and with a look asked me, as plain as words could put it, what I wanted with him. Mr. Palmer is sharp, business-like, and polite; his manners are as engaging as his personal appearance, which is elegant and refined. He has remarkably quick and bright eyes, which fairly sparkle with good humour and intelligence, and so, reading his character at a glance, I made bold to say that I had not come to buy stamps, but to ask for information.

“But I see you’re hard at work just now,” I observed, apologetically, “so if you will allow me I will call some other time when you are not busy.”

“I am always busy,” Mr. Palmer replied, cheerily.

There was nothing for it then but to make the best of my opportunity, and Mr. Palmer amiably gave himself up awhile to conversation. I gathered that some millions of stamps, varying in value from the fraction of a penny to £30 or £40, were stored around me. Mr. Palmer values his stock at £25,000.

“This little album alone,” he said, touching the book in front of him, “is worth £300.”

“The best collection I know,” says Mr. Palmer, in reply to a question from me, “is that of my friend, P. von Ferrary. It is, I should say, the finest collection in the world. I value it at a quarter of a million of money. It is beyond price.”

“How many stamps go to the making of a good collection, something above the average?” I ask.

“Five thousand, more or less. There are, however, about seven thousand varieties, not including shades. With shades one might reckon a hundred thousand specimens.”

“With how many stamps may you start a collection?”

“With one—ten—a hundred—anything you please. You can set up as a collector with one of our penny packets of varieties. There must be a beginning, you know; but there is no end. There is the fascination of stamp-collecting.”

“Stamp-collecting! a frivolous occupation!” exclaims Mr. Palmer, indignantly echoing words of mine. “I can imagine no more profitable source of amusement. It is excellent training for the eye, to begin with. It quickens the perceptions, and it familiarises one with the geography of the world, and not only its geography, but its history. Turn up France in this album, for instance, and you have the history of the country before you. You can read its fortunes and misfortunes in its postage stamps. Frivolous occupation, indeed! I could give you the names of I don’t know how many men, eminent in the Church and the Law at the present moment, who are among my oldest and best customers. I have served two generations of collectors. I remember Dickens, Jerrold, Cruikshank among my visitors, and the late Duke of Albany, who was undoubtedly a serious young man, was, within a short time of his death, in communication with me. There is——” (whispering the name of a learned



judge) "who often runs in here to ask if I have anything new to show him."

"Does stamp-collecting pay?"

"Well," says Mr. Palmer, smiling, "it pays me, and I do not see why it should not prove as profitable to other people. But it depends upon circumstances. It will not pay those who buy to-day and sell to-morrow; but those who keep their collections a few years, always provided that they have not been swindled in the first place, will find them increase in value, as certain specimens become rarer."

"But the chances are that the collector has been taken in," I suggest.

"Twenty to one on it, sir. There is no trade in which fraudulent imitation is carried to such an extent. There are up and down the country an enormous number of unscrupulous dealers trading in forgeries, swindling the inexperienced right and left. Some of these forgeries are so cleverly effected that they would defy anybody but an expert.

"I have done my best to put an end to this iniquitous traffic," Mr. Palmer says, pursuing the subject of forgeries; "I am even now petitioning Parliament upon the subject,\* and as the Post Office authorities are working with me, I hope to

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\* Since this was written the petitions have been presented, and the prayer of the petitions has been granted, by the insertion of a clause in the Post Office Protection Act (1884).

carry the day. We have scored a triumph in America, as you are probably aware.

“I cannot lay down any hard-and-fast rule for detecting forgeries. The ways and means of forging are various. I suppose it requires special training and experience to discover them. For my part, I seem to recognise them by instinct. I think I could smell a forgery.

“See here,” says Mr. Palmer, producing a little album, which looks like a schoolboy’s cherished possession; “here is a collection which I am asked to purchase. It is worth absolutely nothing, although I dare say it cost enough. But the rare stamps are all spurious, and those that are genuine are worth nothing. If this poor fellow had been honestly dealt with; if he had received the stamps he has no doubt paid for, this little book would realise five pounds, whereas it is not worth as many pence.

“If you would like to see some examples of forgery, here is my Black Book,” says Mr. Palmer, placing a good stout volume on the counter. “These are all forgeries, good, bad, and indifferent. I do not sell them. This is my own private collection, made up from the numerous albums I have purchased from time to time. It is not for sale. It is worth nothing—except to me.

“How do I propose to put an end to the commerce in forgeries? By an Act of Parliament, of course. That is the only way it is to be done. For this I have been agitating for a long time, and I think the campaign is going to close with a

victory. Honesty is the best policy, after all, in stamp-dealing as in everything else. You know the old joke about the three degrees of comparison—get on, get honour, get honest. That's the way to rise in the world.

“I have set my face against the tricks of the rascals who bring discredit on the business of the stamp merchant, and I shall not be happy till I have run them to earth. I will tell you what I have undertaken to do, and you, as a newspaper writer, may let the public know it. In order to protect stamp collectors from the impostors who prey upon them, I have undertaken to verify stamps for any collector who will send them to me for that purpose.

“It is a precautionary measure against men of that stamp. Let collectors send their stamps to me, to 281, Strand—five, fifty, or five hundred, and I will verify them always free of charge. You may let your readers know that; it may spare them vexation, and save them money.”

Stamp collectors, I expect, will not be slow to avail themselves of Mr. Palmer's generous offer of advice.



## CHAPTER IV.

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### FORGERY AND FRAUD.

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#### THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF HAFEZ HAMED AND THE AFGHAN POSTMASTER.

STAMP collectors in all parts of Europe are just now considerably excited over the very recent discovery that a couple of rogues have been swindling them most outrageously. It appears that Afghanistan stamps are dear to the hearts of all collectors. The first stamp ever used in that country appeared in 1870-71 (Mohammedan date 1288), during the reign of Shere Ali. It is a large circular stamp with the head of a tiger in the centre, and the value written in characters above this head. Other issues appeared in subsequent years, but all such stamps are extremely scarce, and therefore valuable.

The brilliant idea of personally profiting from these facts occurred to one Hafez Hamed, who arrived in Paris some short time ago, and proceeded to the old Stamp Exchange in the Avenue Gabriel, Champs Elysées, where he informed buyers that the ex-Postmaster-General of Cabul had arrived in Marseilles, but that in one of his trunks, still retained at a port in the Persian Gulf, were stamps of the early issues, particularly those issued in 1293, and valued at from 125 to 1,000

francs. Hafez said he had written to the ex-Postmaster-General to telegraph to the port and have his trunks forwarded without delay, and that immediately on their arrival he would be in a position to furnish collectors with some rare stamps. Just nine days later a letter reached Hafez, stating that the luggage had arrived, and very soon afterwards the Afghan stamps were in the market.

Of course they were bogus, which fact was soon discovered, thanks to the shrewdness of an English gentleman living in Paris, who, knowing that it was impossible for a vessel to come from the Persian Gulf to Marseilles in nine days, made a close study of one of the stamps. He got Hafez to write for him the address of the Postmaster-General of Cabul, and this address was made in characters that neither Dgemel ed Din, "the learned Afghan," nor any Arab, Egyptian, or other Oriental in this city could read. They all said that not a single postmaster in Afghanistan would be able to do so either. Moreover, some of the stamps were obliterated in red ink, and the postmark was almost as visible on the back as it was on the front of the envelope. Now, as a matter of fact, postage stamps in Afghanistan are not sold to the public as in Europe; it is the invariable rule for the natives to take their letters to the office, and money with them to pay the postage; the stamp-seller takes both letter and money, and having first torn off a piece of the stamp, sticks it on the envelope, and the operation is ended.

This method, known to the Paris collectors, was overlooked by Hafez Hamed and his accomplices; hence the forgery was very soon discovered, and Hafez had to seek refuge in flight.

#### FORGED FOREIGN STAMPS.

(From the "Brighton Herald," August 8, 1883.)

It would probably surprise many people who look upon stamp-collecting as a schoolboy's amusement to know that the trade in stamps is so considerable that unscrupulous persons find it worthwhile to manufacture forgeries wholesale. According to the August number of *Bric-à-Brac*, circulated by Mr. J. W. Palmer, stamp merchant, of 281, Strand, these persons annually rob their victims of thousands of pounds; and it is exceedingly probable that that statement is not an exaggeration. The forgeries, according to this authority, may be sub-divided into five classes. First come the "fascos," or stamps emanating from the brain of the producer; then there are facsimiles of the genuine current or obsolete labels; then genuine stamps with their colours chemically changed; next genuine stamps with false surcharges (these last two kinds furnishing collectors with "varieties"), and, lastly, transfers. Frequently these forged stamps are so indifferent in workmanship that they are soon rejected, but sometimes they require a trained eye to detect the imposition. Occasionally, the forgers make awkward blunders; for one set of false Turkish

stamps were sent out gummed on the face and postmarked on the back! That and numerous other frauds were exposed a dozen years ago; but, seeing that *Bric-à-Brac* finds it necessary to again warn buyers, and to give hints for the detection of impositions, it would seem that the traffic in forged stamps has certainly not abated. It is tolerably clear that to sell such impositions as genuine specimens is to obtain money under false pretences; and there is some reason in *Bric-à-Brac* asking why the laws which would punish those who attempted to sell imitation English stamps should let the plunderers of stamp collectors go unpunished? Probably, if stamp collectors sought the aid of the law, they would receive it; but as the forgeries only deceive the inexperienced, generally the young, the law is never appealed to. The best plan is to buy only of respectable professional dealers, who not only know what they are selling, but have honesty enough not to make themselves parties to a fraud. It is, perhaps, of interest, as showing the extent of postage stamp dealings, to add that Mr. J. W. Palmer, who buys as well as sells stamps, announces that he has this year bought over 950 collections, and that for four collections alone he paid over £700!

#### FOREIGN POSTAGE STAMP FORGERIES.

(From the "European Mail," November 25, 1883.)

Attention has been called in the London daily press to the enormous trade which is now carried

on by the unscrupulous forgers of scarce foreign postage stamps. At the present moment Mr. J. W. Palmer, 281, Strand, London, has countless thousands of these forgeries in his possession, consisting of almost every known choice and scarce issue—the invaluable “Mulready” envelope, the “V.R.” black penny stamp, the penny and two-penny stamps of the “Mauritius,” and the “Sydney” views not being excepted. Little wonder, however, need be expressed at the indomitable perseverance displayed by the unscrupulous fabricators of forged stamps when the extraordinary interest and great monetary value which attaches to most issues are taken into consideration. Possibly few readers will scarcely credit the fact of a collection of stamps being sold for the sum of £10,000, or that the Sir Daniel Cooper’s collection realised the sum of £3,000; and there are many collections which are valued at upwards of £10,000, this not including the “Berlin Post Office” collection, and there are some collections which, if sold, would realise above £20,000. To the general reader the details of a few facts in relation to stamp matters will prove interesting, especially when—thanks to the result of Mr. Palmer’s great experience—we are enabled to place before them some indications by means of which the commoner stamp forgeries may be detected. As one ready means to detect a common variety of forged stamp it is necessary for the tyro Philatelist to be most suspicious as to the genuineness of unobliterated stamps which are particularly



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blurred, as this appearance is usually the result of the forgery being printed by simple hand pressure from a wooden block, and not from the usual metal plate, printed by a machine. Many forged stamps are now printed by means of the common india-rubber stamp simply pressed on ordinary printing paper. Another peculiarity about forged stamps is the quality, colour, and substance of the paper upon which the stamp is printed, for in most forgeries the paper test is almost infallible, the genuine paper having a peculiar roughness which, when once particularly noticed, is always afterwards easily recognised. This is particularly observable with the issues of foreign stamps. When obliterated stamps are offered for sale the exact form of the obliterating marks should be most carefully regarded, those which are of black curved or straight lines of great unevenness or at unequal distances from each other may be considered at once as common forgeries, because in most of the forgeries the obliterating marks are made after the most primitive style, under the idea of giving an appearance of genuineness. The colour of the pigment used for obliteration should also carefully be considered, because in many forgeries common writing ink is used to make the marks, and in this connection the tyro should always remember that nearly all genuine postal obliterating marks are produced by an ink composed of oil, varnish, and the pigment colour. Stamps of every known issue have a certain market value which is well known to

most collectors, and stamps which are offered for sale below this known market price must have something wrong about them. If any person were to announce that he or she was ready to sell a genuine lawful sovereign for, say ten shillings, the seller at such an absurd price would be deemed by most people as either insane, intoxicated, or a cheat. And so it is with the sellers of forged stamps, for when respectable known collectors are ready to give £5 and £10 for a particular issue of a scarce stamp, and when persons announce their willingness to sell these choice stamps for less pence than the pounds which collectors are only too eager to pay for specimens to complete valuable collections, the tyro must be convinced of the utter worthlessness of the stamps offered for sale. As instances of this price test of genuine and forged stamps, we may mention the "Mulready" envelope on India paper, which finds a ready market at £5 each; the "V.R." black penny stamp, easily saleable at £4 each; the penny and twopenny stamps of "Mauritius," an impression from a wood block, finding eager purchasers at £40. Then, again, we quote the following from a lithographic circular which has just reached us: "Cape of Good Hope" (triangle), 1863 issue, in sets of six, which are offered for sale at 10d. the set, while the market value for a genuine set is 3s. 6d. Then are offered the set of six stamps of "St. Lucia," of 1859 and 1863, at 7d.; yet collectors are glad to pay 2s. for the genuine set. "The Ionian Isles,"  $\frac{1}{2}$ d., 1d., and

2d.—a set of three—are also offered for 7d., the regular value of which is also 2s.; the “Straits Settlements” stamps of 1868, a set of nine stamps, are offered for 10d., while the genuine stamps cannot be procured for less than £10. As other instances of this “cheap and forged” test, we may mention the 1857, 1860, and 1863 issues of five “New Brunswick” stamps offered for 7d. the set; yet experienced buyers cannot readily purchase the genuine set for less than 1s. 9d. Then there are the “Mauritius” five stamps of 1856 and 1876 offered at the same favourite price of 7d., while the genuine sets cannot be procured for less than 2s. These so-called “genuine” (forgeries) stamps are liberally offered for half the above-quoted prices if taken in quantities; and they are mostly of United States fabrication, like the famed “wooden nutmegs,” neatly got up for English sale; indeed, it appears that they may be procured “in quantities” for almost any ready-money price which may be offered by the unwary young collector. We hope that these few safeguards and instances which we have here placed before the tyro in the science of Philately may prove profitable helps, and prevent students and young collectors from being victimised, besides guarding them from the disagreeable discovery, some day, of finding that their long-cherished stamp albums are merely a valueless collection of American useless forgeries.

## THE "MULREADY" ENVELOPES.

(From the "Postal Telegraph Gazette," Nov. 9, 1883.)

The "Mulready" letter cover is a great postal curiosity. It was designed by the famous artist W. Mulready, R.A., for the Post Office authorities, in 1840, when the penny postage was established. The allegorical device covers about a half of an ordinary sized letter envelope. In the centre at the top sits Britannia with the British lion at her feet and the usual shield at her side. Her arms are outspread, and she is supposed to be sending off winged messengers right and left to the four quarters of the globe, which are typified by Chinamen, camels, and elephants. On the opposite side are negroes and American Indians. Lower down on one side an invalid is listening to a letter which is being read, and on the opposite side a mother and children are eagerly scanning a letter. In the background are some ships and a reindeer in a sledge. "Postage One Penny" is printed in the centre at the bottom of the design. Altogether, the design is pleasing and the allegory neatly worked out; but it was very roughly handled by the newspapers, and especially by the *Times*, who thought that the "Government picture" should have contained "those Mercuries in red jackets who traverse London and its environs on lame ponies." *Punch* caricatured it, and it was speedily withdrawn. Latterly there has been a great demand for copies of the envelope or cover, and it has been very skilfully forged. The specimen

you send for our inspection is a forgery. It is an extremely clever imitation and very easily calculated to deceive. We cannot give any ready way for detecting the forged copies, but they can be instantly known when compared with a genuine cover. We may remark that the covers as issued by the Post Office were the size of a sheet of Bath Post letter paper. On one flap was the word "Postage" in engine-turned letters, and on the other two flaps were printed the "Rates of Postage" and the "Prices of Stamps." Through the word Postage there was woven in the paper a silken thread, and on the opposite side were three threads woven in the paper. The forgers have not attempted to do more than make an ordinary envelope, and print on the front a facsimile of Mulready's design. The covers in blue ink were for the twopenny post. We are indebted to Mr. J. W. Palmer, 281, Strand, for an opportunity of inspecting a genuine cover, and he very courteously offers to verify any postal covers or stamps which may be sent to him in registered letters.

*(From the "Printing Times," November 15, 1883.)*

One of the latest developments of the modern manufacture of "antiques" relates to postage stamps and "Mulready" envelopes. We need, perhaps, hardly remind our readers that a "Mulready" is an envelope resembling a half-sheet of letter-paper when folded. The space left for the address formed the centre of an ornamental

design by Mulready. A correspondent points out that numerous forgeries of such envelopes are being introduced. The method adopted by the forgers of the "Mulready" envelope to acquire a fictitious authenticity is to affix one of the ordinary postage stamps on the forged envelope, and address it to some sure address. The forged envelope is then posted, passing through the Post Office in the usual manner, and duly reaches its destination. Having the official stamps of "date" and "place of postage" thereon, the obliterated ordinary postage stamp is ingeniously removed from the "Mulready" envelope, and some earnest collector is victimised out of several pounds for a valueless envelope, but which is properly authenticated by the Post Office stamp marks thereon. To give some idea of the great monetary inducement for these barefaced forgeries, the same correspondent mentions that the twopenny postage stamp of Mauritius is now eagerly sought after at the almost inconceivable price of from £40 to £60 each, the "Mulready" envelope finding ready purchasers at from £5 to £6 each, and the "V.R." black penny stamp is priced at from £3 to £5 amongst dealers. With a view to stop these forgeries—in default of any Governmental action—Mr. J. W. Palmer, of 281, Strand, has consented to gratuitously verify the genuineness of any such specimens of Philately that may be submitted to him. One is inclined to think that the prices given by the correspondent are somewhat exaggerated.



## FORGERY AS A FINE ART.

(From the "Scottish Border Record," January 12, 1884.

Every one has heard of the practice of collecting postage stamps, and very likely many consider it only a boyish mania. From a pamphlet sent us by J. W. Palmer, 281, Strand, London, it appears that the collection and sale of curious stamps has now become a large trade—both home and foreign—conducted by men whose business designation is Philatelists. The brochure is a biography of J. W. Palmer, who began his business with one stamp, and has since amassed £20,000 by stamp-dealing, though sometimes losing large sums, as all business men have to do. The story is not without interest, but it is exceeded in this respect by other parts of the pamphlet.

There are extensive establishments solely for forging stamps, having correspondents in almost every country. The wonder to many is, how the thing is done to pay. The explanation is very simple, thus: There are two chief establishments of this character, one in Europe, the other in America, whose *spécialité* is the "reproduction," *vulgo*, forgery, of every stamp as soon as issued. Casts in type-metal are made, and sold, at about 150 per cent. profit, to *firms* of stamp-sellers. These respectable people advertise "packets of stamps" for sale, "warranted all genuine," and containing varieties which, if sold separately, would realise more than double the price charged for the packet. But there is one curious condi-

tion pertaining to the purchase, which is this: "purchasers are not allowed to open the packets until they are paid for"! Of course, this very transparent bait is swallowed, the precious packets are all forgeries, and the proprietors of the forgery manufactories figure before the world as *scientific benefactors*. . . . . Anent these stamp forgeries, we can state, on official authority, that the United States are now suffering a loss of upwards of 10,000 dols. per month by stamp forgeries.

The writer of the pamphlet alleges that some governments do stamp forgery on their own account by selling "re-issues" to wholesale stamp collectors; and he also describes the process by which ordinary stamp forgers can at very little expense make copper plates to print any stamp they may select for imitation. This forgery has reached such proportions that "despite the almost desperate exertions of the postal authorities, and the Act of 1840, efforts are in progress for a deputation of collectors of postage stamps to memorialise and wait upon the Home Secretary, the Postmaster-General, and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the Colonies, with the object of stopping any further importation of forged stamps, and to introduce a law by which the sale of any forged stamps shall be subject to police jurisdiction. Mr. J. W. Palmer, of 281, Strand, London, has consented to receive the names and addresses of those stamp collectors who approve and will second these endeavours on

behalf of a most instructive science, which, unfortunately, has become 'the happy hunting-ground' for every 'out-at-elbow' *chevalier d'industrie*."

#### HOW IT'S DONE.

(*From the "Pall Mall Gazette," August 4, 1884.*)

Most people who regard postage-stamp collecting as little more than an eccentric craze will be surprised to learn from the following letter the importance it has assumed. A correspondent [who is not quite so precise as could be desired] writes: "Will you permit me to caution those of your readers who are collecting scarce stamps against the present numerous forgeries of those choice specimens of Philately, the 'Mulready' envelope and the 'V.R.' black penny stamp, specimens of which are treasured in many collections as being unique and valuable, whereas these forgeries are a fraud upon the Government, and valueless. The mode adopted by forgers of the 'Mulready' envelope to give authenticity to these curiosities is to affix one of the ordinary postage stamps upon the forged envelope, address it to some confederate, and post it at a post office. The forgery passes in due course through the Post Office, and is duly delivered at its destination, now having the official stamps of 'date' and 'place of postage' thereon; the obliterated ordinary postage stamp is very ingeniously removed from the forged envelope, and some enthusiastic collector is duly victimised out of several pounds

for a valueless envelope, but which is properly authenticated as being genuine by the official Post Office 'date' and 'place' stamps. To show some few instances of the great monetary inducements for these barefaced forgeries, I can authentically state that the twopenny stamp of Mauritius [bearing the words Post Office] is now eagerly sought for at the incredible price of £40 to £60 each, the 'Mulready' envelope [on India paper, it should have been stated] finding ready purchasers at £6 each, and the 'V.R.' black penny stamp is gladly bought by postage stamp dealers at £4 to £5 each."

*(From the "Daily News," August 22, 1884.)*

A correspondent, writes as follows: "Will you kindly allow me to express my thanks to yourself and your correspondent for his letter on this subject, and add my testimony as to the enormous trade which is now carried on by the unscrupulous forgers of scarce valuable stamps, particularly of the 'Mulready' envelope and the black 'V.R.' stamp? A genuine 'Mulready' envelope on India paper is worth from £6 to £9 and upwards, while the ordinary genuine 'Mulready,' not on India paper, is worth from 2s. 6d. to 10s. each. It will scarcely be believed that forgeries of these envelopes can be procured for less than one shilling per dozen to sell again; and by a little ingenious manipulation the black penny stamp, of about the same value, is converted into

the valuable 'V.R.' stamp, which, when genuine, is worth from £4 to £5. Stamp collectors are greatly indebted to you, sir, for ventilating this subject, and to Mr. J. W. Palmer, of 281, Strand, for his generous offer to verify any doubtful stamps free of charge. It seems to me that if the respectable stamp-dealers were to combine with Mr. Palmer and the Philatelic Society, this nefarious system of fraud upon the public would quickly become 'a thing of the past,' and much unnecessary disappointment be avoided to the thousands of collectors who are your readers."

*(From the "Bazaar," May 21, 1884.)*

A correspondent writes: "Through your valuable paper for the first week in April, I sent for a quantity of foreign stamps advertised very cheap. The answer, after some delay, I received was, 'Have sold those advertised, but have the enclosed list of sets for sale.' I sent another postal order for three different kinds of sets, the reply to this being: 'I have only one set you ordered in stock, but have sent others in lieu of them.' I thought after the curious replies they could not be genuine, having all the same postmarks on them. No doubt a great many collectors have had similar experience, and I would therefore urge upon collectors the necessity of exercising the greatest care in making purchases."

*(From the "Bazaar," June 11, 1884.)*

A correspondent writes: "I sent for some

stamps which I saw advertised in your valuable paper a few weeks ago. They were surprisingly cheap. In a few days I received a letter from the advertiser, who dated from Liversedge, Yorks, stating that he had already sold those advertised, but before returning me my money he asked me to look over his list, which he enclosed, and the stamps named on which were also very cheap. I did so, and ordered a set. On receipt of these, which I may remark all bore the same postmark, I sent for more. I again heard from him, stating that he could not do me sets as ordered, but sent others in lieu thereof. I thought these looked suspicious, and sent them to a well-known stamp collector, who pronounced them all to be forged. If this is correct, and I have no reason to doubt it, it is of the utmost importance that collectors should guard against filling their albums with this rubbish. Your own comments on such disgraceful proceedings would not be amiss."

\* \* \* The fact of there being a large trade in forged stamps is well known to every collector. We know of no remedy for the evil except a criminal prosecution of the vendors, and general care on the part of buyers. To publish the names and addresses of the swindlers would be to assist them, as it would enable the dishonestly disposed to go to them for the means of defrauding the public, and then we should be spreading the mischief, which we are desirous of limiting.—ED.  
*Bazaar.*

## THE FIRST MOVE.

(*From "Our Boys," January 26, 1884.*)

In consequence of the innumerable forgeries of postage stamps which are now being sold, despite the almost desperate exertions of the postal authorities, efforts are in progress for a deputation of collectors of postage stamps, to memorialise and wait upon the Home Secretary, the Postmaster-General, and the Secretaries of State for Foreign Affairs and the Colonies, with the object of stopping any further importation of forged stamps, and to introduce a law by which the sale of any forged stamps shall be subject to police jurisdiction. Mr. J. W. Palmer, of 281, Strand, London, has consented to receive the names and addresses of those stamp collectors who will approve and second these endeavours. Mr. Palmer wages fierce war against the dealers in forged stamps.

## POSTAGE STAMPS ON REGISTERED LETTERS.

(*From the "Richmond Daily Whig," October 24, 1884.*)

A noteworthy regulation has been made by the French postal authorities in regard to the method of affixing postage stamps to registered letters. The stamps are not to be placed close together, but are to have a space between them. It is explained that when several stamps are placed together they cover a space sufficiently large to allow of an opening being made for the withdrawal of a bank-note. The stamps being re-

placed over the opening, the fraud would not be discovered until after the recipient had signed for his letter and opened it, when he would have no redress.

#### POST OFFICE PROSECUTION.

Walter Henry Stillman, a porter in the service of the Postmaster-General, was charged, on Feb. 21, 1884, before Sir Andrew Lusk, with stealing a quantity of old telegram forms and stamps. Mr. Breton Osborn prosecuted, and said that it was of the utmost importance that all the employés of the Post Office should know that they had no right to remove old telegram forms or to sell any stamps although they were obliterated, as the whole of these old forms were treated as confidential communications; in fact, after a time, they were reduced to pulp. On the previous day the prisoner's brother offered a quantity of old stamps to a firm of dealers in foreign and colonial stamps. He was found to have in his possession used stamps representing an original value of £2,300. Mr. Osborn, in answer to a question from the alderman, said he had known cases in which such stamps, when the obliteration was not effective, had been used again. The prisoner pleaded guilty, and the alderman sentenced him to six months, with hard labour.

Mr. J. W. Palmer asks us (*Daily Telegraph*, Feb. 25, 1884) to state, with reference to the case of stamp stealing tried some days ago at this court, that the stamps which formed the subject of the



charge were sold to him in a regular, open manner by an apparently respectable person, who, he believes, had frequently purchased stamps from him. Not satisfied, however, by his assurances, he communicated with the Post Office authorities, on whose advice he took such action as led to the arrest of the seller, when his connection with the matter ceased.

#### AN URGENT APPEAL.

(From the "Civilian," August 16, 1884.)

Complaint is made in the columns of a contemporary that the collectors of postage stamps and the dealers in these little articles *de vertu* have their grievance, and they can only look to Parliament for redress in the shape of a Bill to protect them by rendering the trade in forged stamps illegal. It is said that at the present moment, in England at least, the Post Office is defied under its very nose by clever rascals who are issuing spurious imitations of our postage stamps, besides the stamps of every nation in and out of the Postal Union. Collectors and dealers have suffered severely by the sale of these forged stamps, and will continue to do so till the law steps in with a stringent measure against the swindlers who thrive upon the practice of forgery. A few months ago Mr. Tomlinson, M.P., presented petitions to the House of Commons, and at the end of the Session a petition, numerously signed by collectors and dealers, was presented by Lord Bram-

well to the House of Lords. The signatures to the several petitions included the names of persons moving in all classes of society—Member, of Parliament, clergymen, barristers, solicitors doctors, officers in the army and navy; and seeing the urgent necessity for legislation in the matter, it is to be hoped that in the interest of common justice Parliament will not long delay its interference.

#### UNDER THE NEW ACT.

The *Paper Trades Journal* says: "By the new Post Office Protection Act, which came into operation on September 1, 1884, it is made punishable, on summary conviction, to sell forged stamps, or to have possession of forged stamps, or even to have blocks or engravings of stamps, whether English, colonial, or foreign. The Act will do much towards putting an end to the disgraceful trade of manufacturing and selling fictitious stamps."



## CHAPTER V.

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### A BUNDLE OF LETTERS FROM VARIOUS SOURCES.

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*(From the "Morning Post," September 8, 1883.)*

A CORRESPONDENT writes: "While thanking you for your courtesy in kindly publishing my note on 'Forged Postage Stamps' in your impression of the 4th inst., will you be so good as to allow me to inform your readers that in consequence of the large number of personal applications which are hourly being made to Mr. J. W. Palmer, of 281, Strand, W.C., to verify doubtful stamps, those persons having doubtful stamps will greatly oblige Mr. Palmer by sending their stamps or albums by registered post, when they will receive the earliest attention in due course of arrival free of any charge? I am very desirous, on public grounds, to draw attention to the great fact of the vast number of 'Forged British Colonial Stamps' which are now being manufactured and openly offered for sale. Surely, sir, this fraudulent traffic must be an infringement of some law and illegal, even if the present Post Office authorities refuse to prevent what must be a wholesale fraud upon the Colonial authorities. It is with the view to stop this unlawful traffic that I respectfully invite your powerful aid in vindicating the law and exposing

one of the most extraordinary wholesale frauds of the present time."

*(From the "Pall Mall Gazette," September 22, 1883.)*

A correspondent says: "As instance of the audacity of postage stamp forgers of English colonial postage stamps, will you courteously allow me to inform your readers that Mr. J. W. Palmer, 281, Strand, London, has now in his 'Forgeries Collection' about ten thousand forged stamps, chiefly of the English colonial issues, among which are some of the rarest stamps known, especially part of the set of choice 'British Guiana' stamps of the first issue, and including the very rare 'round' stamps? A genuine set of these '4 cent' oblong stamps, coloured blue, crimson, and yellow, is valued at £40 the three stamps. It will interest many to learn that Baron Rothschild recently bought in Paris one choice and rare stamp, for which he paid £200. The late rumour that this celebrated stamp connoisseur had sold his unique collection for £3,000 is a mistake only in name, the collection really sold for this sum was that of Sir Daniel Cooper. Mr. Palmer has now one collection of above seven thousand postage stamps, valued at over £500, which he is distributing amongst his albums, and, from the extreme rarity of some of the specimens, he will be pleased to show this unique collection to any person interested in postage stamp collecting, a visit well worth any connoisseur's trouble."

(From the "Echo," September 24, 1883.)

A correspondent writes: "As instance of the audacity of forgers of English colonial postage stamps, will you courteously allow me to inform your readers that Mr. J. W. Palmer, 281, Strand, London, has now in his 'forgeries collection' above ten thousand forged stamps, representing a large sum paid for these worthless fabrications, and being chiefly of the English Colonial issues; among which are some of the rarest stamps known, especially part of the set of the scarce 'British Guiana' stamps of the first issue, including the very choice 'round' stamps? A genuine set of three '4 cent' oblong stamps, coloured blue, crimson, and yellow, are valued at £40 the three stamps. It will interest many to learn that Baron Rothschild recently bought in Paris one rare and choice stamp, for which he paid £200! The late rumour that this celebrated postage stamp connoisseur had sold his unique stamp collection for £3,000 is a mistake only in name. The collection really sold for this sum was that of Sir Daniel Cooper."

(From the "Morning Post," October 13, 1883.)

A correspondent writes: "Thanks to the energy of Mr. J. W. Palmer, of 281, Strand, London, I am enabled to submit to you a most unique and genuine specimen of the new Siamese postage stamp, just issued. This choice specimen of native art represents the value of about 2½d.

English money, and is specially curious as giving a very good portrait of the young King of Siam. I have reason to believe that there are not twenty of these stamps yet in Europe, and from there not being any water-mark in the paper they are printed on, together with their great present value, there is no doubt but numerous forged specimens will presently flood the stamp market, and much disappointment ultimately result therefrom. The only protection—in failure of any Government procedure—afforded to the public is the excellent printing of this stamp, the particular shade of blue ink used in the printing, and the regularity of the old-fashioned perforating—‘punch holes,’ as this mode of perforating was styled when it was first adopted by the English Post Office—before the perfecting of the present elaborate machinery by Mr. Hill, of Somerset House. To give some idea of the great public curiosity and demand for new issues of stamps, I am enabled to state, on authority, that the new issue of United States 2c. stamps caused a sale of 1,785,051 of these stamps on the first day of issue in New York alone.”

(From “Exchange and Mart,” October 24, 1883.)

A correspondent writes: “Owing to the recent publication of numerous letters on this subject, the stamp fabricators appear to have taken alarm, and are now issuing the forged stamps to the trade at wholesale prices as ‘facsimiles.’ This does not alter the ground of my complaint, for it

is now, as before, possible and very easy to purchase 'facsimiles' of the 'Mulready' envelope at the low price of sixteen for a shilling, thus offering an enormous premium to unprincipled persons to foist these forgeries upon inexperienced young collectors for eight shillings and upwards each. Many other rare stamps can be as easily obtained and sold after the same profitable rate; the detection of these forgeries is almost impossible, except to experienced Philatelists.

"As only one instance of the mischief and cruelty caused by the forgeries trade, I am enabled to detail the following facts: One day last week a respectable youth—an Eton boy, probably—took to a dealer his collection of stamps, the result of several years' industry, and apparently of the value of about £26. When the collection had been carefully examined, the number of forgeries reduced the worth of this much-prized and costly collection of nearly 1,400 stamps to less than £2! The distress exhibited by this unfortunate youth when the worthless forgeries were pointed out to him was pitiable in the extreme. Similar events are of almost daily occurrence.

"It appears very extraordinary that our criminal law should allow such a glaring wrong to pass unpunished. The French Code would punish such an offence with a long period of penal servitude."

(From "Exchange and Mart," November 3, 1883.)

A dealer writes: "I have read the letter in your issue of 24th ult., and am glad to see that publicity is being given to this great fraud. There are several kinds of forgeries that will deceive the most wary, but with careful perusal the fraud can be detected by experienced dealers.

"Only this morning—one of many instances—I was offered a yellow 8 cents Straits Settlements, surcharged 'Two Cents.' The usual price is about 4s. for a used copy: it was offered to me for 1s. Having my suspicions of the youth that offered it, I examined it, and I could not find anything wrong with it, till on turning the stamp face downwards, and examining the paper on the back of the stamp, I observed that the words 'Two Cents' had dented the paper, plainly showing that the surcharge had been printed on, after the stamp had done duty as postage. I did not return the stamp, but challenged him to summon me for detaining the stamp, which he says he will do. I have his full name and address, but for obvious reasons I do not think it should be made public. He is the forger of the 1 peso Colombia, 30 paras on 1 piastre Cyprus, 2 cents on  $\frac{1}{2}$  Rl Costa Rica, and many rare and obsolete stamps. The *modus operandi* of this young swindlér is to obtain the used copies of the stamp unsurcharged, that is, just being surcharged, and print the surcharge on the stamp by means of a little printing press. This little machine is secreted in the City.



“I consider that such a heartless fraud (especially amongst the juvenile stamp-collecting community) should be brought to justice, to further and keep together our little hobby, ‘stamp collecting.’

“I am willing to give an equal share with, say eleven other dealers, to have an investigation set on foot to crush this wholesale swindling.

“I trust to see some of the supposed respectable large dealers give their aid in this important philatelic right.”

*(From the “Salisbury Times,” November 28, 1883.)*

J. E. Podger writes: “Forgers have of late carried on this business to a very great extent, to the discomfort of collectors, and it is greatly augmented by surcharging stamps, for frequently the necessity is only transient, and the make-shifts become so scarce, and the price of these ugly individuals so high, as to offer a very great temptation to forgers, especially where the surcharge differs from each other in the type of the figures impressed.

“In conclusion, I would warn your readers who are collectors in this valuable and interesting study against the forged surcharged stamps of Costa Rica, which an enterprising individual has purchased of that Government to the amount of nearly three million, and afterwards surcharged them, without the sanction of the Government, in a variety of surcharges—which, if it was not for

taking up so much of your valuable space, I would name, for the benefit of collectors of this city and neighbourhood—so as to suit those Philatelists who collect the topsy-turvy varieties.”

Philatelist says: “A word or two about the Cabul stamps will perhaps be acceptable to collectors. The first series of these stamps were issued in the Mahommedan year of 1289 (A.D. 1871-1872). The design is in a circle, with a tiger's head (emblematic of the late Shere Ali) in the middle, an inscription around it in Persian (meaning ‘Due to the Post Office of Cabul’). The stamps are lithographed in sheets, and all the five values on a sheet. The way the stamps are used is this: A native or servant takes the letter to the Post Office; the postmaster receives it, together with the money for the postage: he then takes a stamp off the sheet, tears a piece out of the stamp, affixes it to the letter, and the operation is then complete. At the same time would you kindly allow me to caution collectors and others connected with Philately against a gang of their worst enemies (namely, forgermongers), who are at present carrying on business at Liverpool, and who are selling, or trying to sell, worthless imitations of rare stamps of all countries?”

*(From the “North Sussex Gazette,” January 5, 1884.)*

A correspondent says: “Will you courteously allow me to inform your many readers that in consequence of the countless forgeries of postage

stamps which are now being sold, despite the almost desperate exertions of the postal authorities under the Act of 1840, efforts are in progress for a deputation of collectors of stamps to memorialise and wait upon the Home Secretary, the Postmaster-General, and the Secretaries of State for Foreign Affairs and the Colonies, with the object of stopping any further importation of forged stamps and to introduce a law by which the sale of any forged stamps shall be subject to police jurisdiction? Mr. J. W. Palmer, of 281, Strand, London, has generously consented to receive the names and addresses of all stamp collectors who will second these endeavours on behalf of a most instructive science, which, unfortunately, has become a sort of 'happy hunting-ground' for every 'out at elbows' *chevalier d'industrie*."

(From the "Daily Chronicle," February 19, 1884.)

J. W. Palmer writes: "The report of the Post Office prosecution at the Mansion House, published in your impression of the 16th inst., may convey to many readers that I am accustomed recklessly to purchase stolen stamps, there being no other stamp merchant in the Strand. This idea is likely to cause me great injury, unless you kindly allow me to explain the matter. I purchased 1,900 of the postage stamps in question at several times, paying for them about £30, which is considered fair value for cancelled postage stamps of this character, considering the small quantity, and

the large and small parcels as they were sold to me, the indicated value of these *used* postage stamps being £980 17s. 6d., representing £5, £1, and 10s. postage stamps. These postage stamps were sold to me in a regular open manner, by, apparently, a respectable person, who, I believe, has frequently purchased stamps from me. Mr. J. W. Palmer being most particular regarding forgeries of stamps, and forged surcharges on stamps, the seller assured me that these postage stamps had not been taken from telegraph forms. But as I was not quite satisfied in the matter, I communicated with the Secretary of the Post Office (Mr. Stevenson A. Blackwood, C.B.) on January 13, asking ‘whether these stamps were genuine or forged surcharged?’ and ‘should I be justified in purchasing others?’ At the same occasion I enclosed specimens of each value. After several days Mr. C. J. Stevens, the energetic Post Office representative, waited upon me to instruct me not to sell any of these postage stamps which I had purchased, and immediately to advise the Post Office officials when the seller again offered more of these stamps for sale to me. This I considered I was bound in honour to do, and when I did so the seller was arrested, and my connection with the matter ceased.”

(From the “Echo,” July 15, 1884.)

Philatelist says: “A vast number of people are interested in stamp collecting, and it is no ex-

aggeration to say that immense sums of money are expended by collectors, who are as enthusiastic in this pursuit as in any other. The collection of Baron Ferrary, which is accounted the finest in the world, is said to be above price; and M. de Rothschild, of Paris, is known to have invested no less than £8,000 in making his collection. The commerce in stamps flourishes to such an extent that a new industry has sprung out of it—the manufacture of spurious specimens, to wit. There is just now a rage for reprinting rare old English postage stamps, which are being brought into the ‘market’ in large quantities as genuine specimens. This matter concerns the Post Office, surely; for the rogues do not confine themselves to reproducing old stamps, but are cleverly imitating the more ‘expensive and modern English bill stamps. In the interest of the collector a petition was recently got up by Mr. J. W. Palmer, of 281, Strand, and duly presented to Parliament by Mr. Tomlinson, M.P., with what result yet remains to be seen. In America the trade in forged stamps has been rendered, if not impossible, at any rate a penal offence; and seeing that there is nothing sacred to the dealer in forged specimens, we cannot do better, it appears, than take a leaf out of the American Statute-book.”

(From the “Echo,” July 21, 1884.)

J. W. Palmer says: “Your correspondent who writes on the subject of forged stamps is in error

in stating that imitations of English stamps are limited to the three specimens he mentions. Spurious copies of the second sixpenny issue, and imitations of the five pounds' bill stamp, present issue, are common enough. Collectors who do not wish to be practised upon would do well to avoid unused stamps, and to confine their purchases almost exclusively to stamps which have passed through the post."

(From the "Times," August 14, 1884.)

J. W. Palmer writes: "Among the small matters pressing for legislation which have been swamped by the Franchise Bill there is a question which may afford an opportunity to the politician of any party who is ambitious to distinguish himself in the public service. The collectors of postage stamps and the dealers in these little articles *de vertu* have their grievance, and they can only look to Parliament for redress in the shape of a Bill to protect them by rendering the trade in forged stamps illegal. At the present moment, in England at least, the Post Office is defied under its very nose by clever rascals who are issuing spurious imitations of our postage stamps, besides the stamps of every nation in and out of the postal union. Collectors and dealers have suffered severely by the sale of these forged stamps, and will continue to do so till the law steps in with a stringent measure against the swindlers who thrive upon the practice of forgery. For myself I have spent

time and money unsparingly in bringing this matter before the public, having expended about £3,000 in hard cash in my war against forgers and forgeries. A few months ago Mr. Tomlinson, M.P., presented petitions to the House of Commons, and at the end of the session a petition in my behalf, numerously signed by collectors and dealers, was presented by Lord Bramwell to the House of Lords. The signatures to the several petitions included the names of persons moving in all classes of society—Members of Parliament, clergymen, barristers, solicitors, doctors, officers in the Army and Navy; and seeing the urgent necessity for legislation in the matter, it is to be hoped that in the interest of common justice Parliament will not long delay its interference. As the prime mover in this affair, I do not ask for pecuniary support, but merely for that help which it is in the power of all to give, and with this intention I beg leave to place the question before the public through the medium of the *Times*.”



## CHAPTER VI.

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### PALMER'S CLAUSE.

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#### THE NEW POST OFFICE ACT.

*(From the "Glasgow Herald," August 16, 1884.)*

THE following observations occur in a leading article from the leading journal in the North: "Amongst the several minor Bills hurried through Parliament in the struggle for getting rid of St. Stephen's enervating atmosphere for the more invigorating exercises of a country life on the Scottish moors one has passed noiselessly through both Houses of Legislature without attracting any attention—probably because few people understood its title, and fewer still felt interest in its details. At first sight the Bill would seem to be merely departmental; yet it is a penal Act that applies with less or more force to all classes of the community. It is called 'An Act to amend the Law with respect to the Protection of the Post Office and to Offences Committed in relation to the Post Office.' The Bill originated in the Lords, was ordered by the House of Commons to be printed on the 18th July, has just received the Royal Assent, and is to come into operation on the first day of September. The Post Office Protection Act ought to be carefully studied by the general public, as by it many will



find themselves incurring serious penalties without being aware that they are doing much that is wrong or unusual. That there was a necessity for some such an Act there can be no doubt. The greatest privileges are frequently the worst abused, but out of evil acts grow good laws. . . .

Any person making, knowingly uttering, dealing in, or selling any fictitious stamp, or knowingly using for any postal purpose any fictitious stamp, or having in his possession, unless he shows a lawful excuse, any fictitious stamp, or make or have in his possession, unless he shows a lawful excuse, any fictitious die, plate, instrument, or materials for making any fictitious stamp, shall be liable on summary conviction on a prosecution by order of the Commissioners of Inland Revenue to a fine not exceeding £20 sterling, subject to the like right of appeal as in the case of a penalty under the Acts relating to the Excise. Any stamp, die, plate, instrument, or materials found in the possession of any person in contravention of this section may be seized and shall be forfeited; and for the purposes of this Act 'fictitious stamp' means any *fac-simile* or imitation, whether on paper or otherwise, of any stamp for denoting any rate of postage, including any stamp for denoting a rate of postage of any of Her Majesty's colonies or of any foreign country. . . . If the Post Office is well protected by this recent Act, the public are also equally well protected in the matter of the transmission and delivery of telegrams. It would be well for all concerned to make themselves

thoroughly acquainted with the provisions of an Act that is so full of penalties.”

#### THE TRADE IN FORGERIES.

We have condemned the trade in stamp forgeries from the house-tops, through the press, and by means of public advertisement, and in this matter one would think every dealer and every collector would be in perfect accord with us. But, although we have every reason to believe that collectors have not failed to profit by our voice of warning and advice, several dealers, strange to say, have actually opposed us in our efforts to put down the practice of fraud. It is pretty evident that those who disagree with us upon this point can have only one reason for doing so, and that reason is that they profit by the trade in forgeries. As they cannot afford to pay long prices for rare stamps, as they cannot deal in genuine specimens, they trade in forgeries, which they palm off as originals, cheap, upon unwary collectors.

Doubtless the pleasure is as great  
Of being cheated as to cheat ;

but the poor fellow who has been cheated only finds out how dearly he has paid for his pleasure when he comes to dispose of his collection, and all his rare stamps turn out to be worthless forgeries. Collectors should not be so keen of a bargain, especially when they have to deal with the circularising gentry. A genuine rare stamp

has a marketable value which it will always realise, and no dealer certainly could be expected to part with a set of stamps for ten shillings, which are honestly worth as many pounds. Yet this is what your fraudulent stamp dealer is prepared to do; and he is as sure of his customer as is his poorer brother in cunning, who walks the streets with a painted sparrow for sale, which looks like a ten-shilling canary, and which he will part for to the first fool he meets for a shilling. One might as well expect to get a good stamp as a good song-bird for a few pence. Canaries are canaries, and stamps are stamps, and the fellow who sells a worthless scrap of paper as a rare stamp is every bit as big a thief as the rogue who goes to prison for calling a sparrow a canary.

#### THE "ECHO" ANSWERS.

The question of forged stamps occasionally crops up in the newspapers, and seeing that we have taken the initiative in this affair, it is not a matter for surprise that our firm is always specially named in the Press when the subject which we have made our own is under discussion. We owe a very great deal to the Press. Editors have written kindly of us and of the cause which we have so much at heart, and they have given their columns generously to correspondence upon all the grievances affecting the commerce by which we live. Stamp collecting is not, perhaps, a matter of general interest, but it concerns an immense

number of people, and if the newspapers cannot afford to give much of their space to it, they do not pretend to ignore its importance. The interest in stamp collecting was emphasised the other day by the *Times* giving prominence to the account of the petition presented to the House of Lords by Lord Bramwell at the instance of Mr. J. W. Palmer and numerous collectors and dealers. The stamp trade has done a great deal for us, and we can afford to do something for the stamp trade ; and therefore, sparing no expense, we have carried the grievance of the stamp dealer and collector to the Houses of Parliament. We have reason to believe that the legislation we ask for will not long be denied. For the present, Franchise stops the way, but later on the question of forged stamps will in all probability come under the consideration of Her Majesty's faithful Commons with many other small matters pressing for attention which have been put upon the shelf for the moment. In the meantime, the discussion in the Press of the subject of forged stamps serves the cause by calling public attention to the matter. In the present political crisis, newspapers cannot give much attention to matters outside the one subject which has driven all others—even including Egypt—out of their columns. In these times we must be thankful even for small mercies, and we take it as a sign of grace that the *Echo* has lately vouchsafed a few precious inches on two or three occasions to the consideration of the question of stamp forgeries. The recent corre-

spondence upon the subject in the *Echo* will do so much good, that it will call the attention of some millions of readers to the grievance of which we complain. The correspondence itself will no doubt have passed under the eyes of many of our readers. It was opened by a correspondent writing under the name of "Philatelist." Now, 'Philatelist' appears to have got hold of some of the newest things in forgery, and becoming extremely angry, he availed himself of the privilege of the free Briton—he wrote to the papers. His letter denounced certain specimens of forged stamps now in circulation, and drew the attention of the public to the necessity for legislating against rascally dealers. "Philatelist" did us the honour to recognise the work we have done, and to mention it in terms of praise. In reply to "Philatelist's" letter, or rather challenging it, for there was nothing in it to reply to, a person of the name of Marshall stepped bravely into the lists, proclaiming to the world at large that "Philatelist" was all wrong, for Mr. Marshall begged "to state that no English stamps have ever been reprinted, and that there are no known forgeries except V.R. 1d. Black, 1d. Black, and Mulready Envelopes, which are seldom met with." Mr. Marshall is incoherent, certainly; and not only incoherent, but incorrect as well. Mr. Marshall, in correcting "Philatelist," himself falls into error, and it turns out after all that it is not "Philatelist," but Mr. Marshall, who is in the wrong.

Having fallen foul of "Philatelist," whom we must leave to reckon with his opponent, Mr. Marshall remarks that the newspapers have been "making a great fuss over the doings of a certain firm." Now, we believe Mr. J. W. Palmer to be the firm to which Mr. Marshall so cuttingly alludes. "I wonder," he adds, "if this is regarded by any persons as a cheap advertisement." Mr. Marshall may well wonder. If any such stupid persons exist, we can assure them that the "cheap advertisement" has cost us several thousand pounds, for the name of our firm has become so well known everywhere only by dint of large sums of money spent in advertising. We have obtained our clients by means of advertisement as much as anything else, and our reputation we have made by dealing fairly with them. If Mr. Marshall deals in stamps, the same course is open to him, always providing that he drinks more deeply of the spring of knowledge. In a short letter to the *Echo*, Mr. J. W. Palmer reprov'd the foolish statements of Mr. Marshall, who will do well to refrain from writing any more letters—to use the words in which he describes the letter under discussion—on his own account. At least, Mr. Marshall's silly letter has served a good purpose in drawing the attention of the public to the grievance of the stamp collector and the dealer.

THE SPIRIT OF THE "TIMES."

We have on many occasions acknowledged the

kindness of newspaper editors in opening their columns to the ventilation of our grievances. The little Reform Bill which we have persistently demanded in the interests of Philatelists, collectors, connoisseurs, and dealers; the legislation against stamp forgery for which we have appealed to Parliament in the several petitions presented to both Houses at our instance, in the Commons by Mr. Tomlinson, M.P., and in the Upper House by Lord Bramwell; the question between us and the rogues who profit by the trade in counterfeits, has been settled once and for all. We have obtained the legislation for which we appealed. We have spent time and money ungrudgingly; we have fought the fight, we have triumphed at last. *Væ victis*. The question, indeed, is a public question, and of all the small matters which came before Parliament during the session just closed, there was none more urgent than this small measure, for which we have worked well and waited patiently. By the insertion of what we take the liberty of calling Palmer's Clause in the new Post Office Protection Act, the dealer in forgeries has received his quietus. The uniform courtesy with which our communications to the Press have always been received is a matter for congratulation among all true Philatelists. The good feeling which is extended to us by the Press throughout the country is, we believe, owing to nothing but the righteousness of our cause. The sinister motives which malicious and envious persons have invented to account for our success in this respect are not

worthy of serious discussion. "Every man," said the cynic Walpole, "has his price;" but we think it would have puzzled Horace Walpole himself to have named the price of an editor of a responsible journal. The letter which we recently addressed to the editor of the greatest newspaper in the world, and which was duly published in the *Times*, was printed on the score of public interest, and nothing else.

Our letter to the *Times*, we have reason to believe, has awakened a great deal of interest in certain quarters, and inspired an amount of jealous feeling in others. We have been told that the insertion of our communication is due to private influence. To this we can only reply that the influence we possess is no selfish interest, but the sympathy of a powerful ally in a just and holy fight. Our communications to the newspapers are treated with respect, because our cause is worthy of respect. That the Thunderer of the Press has permitted us the use of its columns is a token, not of our influence in Printing House Square, but a sign of the spirit of the *Times* — a courageous spirit, ever at the service of a cause as honest, as virtuous, as urgent as the reform for which we have agitated in Parliament and through the Press, and in the furtherance of which we have spared neither time nor trouble nor expense. The text of Palmer's Clause of the new Post Office Protection Bill will be found in another part of the paper. The "slings and arrows" with which the petty dealers and worse have assailed us



during the course of the agitation which has ended just as we desired—the attempt of these Liliputians to injure us we have received in the spirit of Gulliver. We played a bold game, perhaps, but the winning cards were in our hands. The game is played out, and the honours are all on our side.

#### A FULL-STOP TO FORGERY.

Palmer's Clause of the new Post Office Protection Bill has put a full-stop to stamp forgery; at least, has brought the offenders within reach of the law, and we shall make it our business to see that they do not evade its clutches. We have undertaken to rid the trade of these dangerous parasites, and we do not intend to rest till our labours are complete. We cannot repeat this too often. For the rest, we shall continue to advise our readers, with a view to rooting out the evil wherever it exists, and we invite collectors, connoisseurs, and others, when in doubt, to consult Mr. Palmer, who will not only take proceedings at their instigation against defrauders, but will at all times be prepared to give his assistance in verifying collections for amateurs or dealers. We offer our advice gratis; and we shall be happy to take up any case at our expense.

#### “LAWFUL EXCUSE.”

A flutter of excitement has been created in the dove-cotes of Philately, and in the nests of the “birds of prey”—forgers, swindlers, and the like.

There has been intense excitement owing to the insertion of Palmer's Clause in the new Post Office Protection Act, which came into operation on the 1st of September last. By the terms of the seventh (Palmer's) clause it is enacted that

“ A person shall not—

“(a) Make, knowingly utter, deal in or sell any fictitious stamp, or knowingly use for any postal purpose any fictitious stamp; or

“(b) Have in his possession, unless he shows a lawful excuse, any fictitious stamp; or

“(c) Make, or, unless he shows a lawful excuse, have in his possession any die, plate, instrument, or materials for making any fictitious stamp.

“Any person who acts in contravention of this section shall be liable on summary conviction on a prosecution by order of the Commissioners of Inland Revenue to a fine not exceeding twenty pounds, subject to the like right of appeal as in the case of a penalty under the Acts relating to the excise.

“Any stamp, die, plate, instrument, or materials found in the possession of any person in contravention of this section, may be seized, and shall be forfeited.

“For the purposes of this section ‘fictitious stamp’ means any facsimile or imitation or repre-

sentation, whether on paper or otherwise, or any stamp for denoting any rate of postage, including any stamp for denoting a rate of postage of any of Her Majesty's colonies, or of any foreign country."

We make no apology for reproducing the words of the Act. They cannot be repeated too often. They cannot be too well known. They cannot be too well understood. The language, indeed, is perfectly plain, but clear as it is, it has not been so well understood as it should be, for it has come to our ears that the terms of the clause have been misinterpreted wilfully or wofully in several quarters. The third section (c) of the clause we have quoted above makes mention of a "lawful excuse," without which even the Government printers would not be able to accomplish their work; but the application of the term has been stretched with wonderful elasticity by one or two dealers, who take unto themselves a "lawful excuse." As the whole of the seventh clause of the Act was drafted by us, we think we may be permitted to speak of its meaning and intention. In a word, it was devised with the aim of putting down all frauds, and all means for perpetrating fraud, and for putting an end to the trade in and use of dies, illustrated circulars, and catalogues.

Only the other day a collection of 3,000 postage stamps was submitted to our inspection, and going through the album we found the rarest stamps represented by forgeries, and what would have

been worth £450, if all the stamps had been genuine, was worth little more than a tenth of that sum. Palmer's Clause of the Post Office Protection Act will render all this impossible in the future. There is no "lawful excuse" for it any longer.

PALMER'S CLAUSE.

(From the "Bazaar," September 12, 1884.)

By the new Post Office Protection Act, which came into operation on the 1st September, it is happily made punishable, on summary conviction, to sell forged stamps, or to have possession of forged stamps, or even to have blocks or engravings of stamps, whether English, colonial, or foreign. We sincerely trust that the Act may do much towards putting an end to the disgraceful trade of manufacturing and selling fictitious stamps.

(From the "Philatetical Gazette," November, 1884.)

We have great pleasure in announcing to our readers that Mr. J. W. Palmer has succeeded in putting a full-stop to forgery. The petitions sent into Parliament have accomplished the end in view.



## CHAPTER VII.

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### OUR LITTLE BOOK.

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COPIES of the little book on the History of the Stamp, published by Mr. J. W. Palmer, 281, Strand, have been received by H.M. the Queen, H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh, H.R.H. the late Duke of Albany, and many others. The book is dedicated to the late Henry Fawcett, Postmaster-General.

Of the little work, "a biographical, historical, philatelic sketch for stamp collectors, connoisseurs, and others," the Press throughout the country has spoken kindly. We make the following selection of newspaper opinions:—

"ROMANCE IN REALITY; or, The Story of an Eventful Life. By Francis Neale. London: J. W. Palmer, 281, Strand, W.C. Price 6d. This pamphlet includes an account of the origin of Philately or stamp collecting, and then narrates the leading incidents in the eventful career of Mr. J. W. Palmer, who is designated "the father of Philately," and of whom a photograph is given. It is little more than twenty years ago that a small boy, with a wallet in his hand containing his whole stock-in-trade, commenced operations as a stamp dealer; now, in the summer-time of life, Mr. Palmer directs a flourishing business, and is

the largest dealer in postage stamps in the world.”  
—*Echo*.

“Tells how a fortune was made by one penny postage stamp, which was found by J. W. Palmer in a London street in his childhood, and led ultimately to his becoming a great stamp merchant, with a large stock of stamps of every kind, and a considerable income. A portrait of Mr. Palmer is given, and an interesting story is told of the way in which tact, skill, energy, and perseverance laid the foundations of a fortune.”—*Christian World*.

“Should prove of immense use to Philatelists, and also the general public, as in its pages the ways of the stamp forgers are exposed; and we may also mention here that under the new Post Office Protection Act, which was passed at the end of last session, and which came into operation on the 1st of September last, the sale of forged stamps is rendered illegal, and a system of wholesale robbery is thus suppressed. The clause relating to stamps, we may state, was drafted by Mr. J. W. Palmer, at whose instigation the subject of forged stamps was included in the scope of the Bill, the expense, from first to last, having been £7,000. We can recommend the little work, the price of which is only 6d.”—*Sale and Exchange*.

“The great difficulty that the collector has to contend with is the enormous quantity of so-called genuine specimens with which the market is flooded, and which are worthless forgeries. Mr. Palmer has been a dealer in stamps for over thirty years, and Philatelists should pay a visit to

Mr. Palmer at 281, Strand, where they can see many rare and valuable specimens, and obtain a sound opinion upon all matters connected with this interesting study.”—*Winning Post*.

“Stamp collecting a frivolous occupation! I can imagine no more profitable source of amusement. It is excellent training for the eye, to begin with. It quickens the perception, and it familiarises one with the geography of the world, and not only its geography, but its history. Turn up France in this album, for instance, and you have the history of the country before you. You can read its fortunes and misfortunes in its postage stamps. Frivolous occupation, indeed! I could give you the names of I don't know how many men, eminent in the Church and the Law at the present moment, who are among my oldest and best customers. I have served two generations of collectors. I remember Dickens, Jerrold, Cruikshank among my visitors, and the late Duke of Albany, who was undoubtedly a serious young man, was, within a short time of his death, in communication with me.’ So spoke to his enterprising interviewer Mr. J. W. Palmer, the greatest stamp-collector in the world, the man who has made his fortune out of stamps and stamps alone, the inventor of the curious science of ‘Philately.’ It is a new and interesting way to look at the matter; and the big names mentioned by Mr. Palmer lend some dignity to what is usually considered a mere craze of boyhood. Anyhow, it will be seen from the pamphlet called *Romance in*

*Reality*, written by Francis Neale, and published by J. W. Palmer, 281, Strand, London, how the enthusiasm of Mr. Palmer for that craze, and his industry and perseverance in it, have raised stamp collecting and dealing to the rank of an acknowledged and honourable trade. The story of Mr. Palmer's life is well told, and, as the writer remarks, illustrates the old proverb that 'truth is stranger than fiction.'"—*Fifeshire Journal*.

"That a Philatelist is one who collects postage stamps, with or without the ulterior object of amassing money, may, we think, be pretty confidently reckoned a thing not generally known. So much, at least, we have learnt from this curious pamphlet, together with some other facts better worth learning."—*Life*.

"A little book entitled *Romance in Reality*, dealing with the incidents of his campaign against the trade in forged postage stamps."—*City Press*.

"The subject is one, we believe, which is interesting to the public in general, and to collectors and connoisseurs in particular. The methods of the forgers of postage stamps are exposed, and the tricks of dishonest traders who practise upon the juvenile community are discussed. Under the new Post Office Protection Act, which was passed at the end of the late session, and which came into operation on the 1st of September last, the sale of forged stamps is rendered illegal, and a system of wholesale robbery is thus suppressed. The clause relating to stamps, we may state, was drafted by Mr. J. W. Palmer, 281,



Strand, W.C. The incidents of the campaign against forgery are detailed in the pages of *Romance in Reality*, with other matters of interest, historical and philatetical.”—*Jarrow Express*.

“A little book dealing with the history of the postage stamp. The subject is interesting to the public in general, and to collectors and connoisseurs in particular, and especial attention may be called to those chapters in which the methods of the forgers of postage stamps are exposed, and the tricks of dishonest traders who practise upon the juvenile community are discussed. Under the new Post Office Protection Act, which was passed at the end of the late session, and which came into operation on the 1st September last, the sale of forged stamps is rendered illegal, and a system of wholesale robbery is thus suppressed. The clause relating to stamps, we may state, was drafted by Mr. J. W. Palmer, at whose instigation the subject of forged stamps was included in the scope of the Bill. By means of petitions to Parliament, which originated with Mr. J. W. Palmer, of 281, Strand, W.C., the attention of Parliament was directed to the frauds which the seventh clause of the present Act is designed to combat. The petitions were presented to the House of Commons by Mr. Tomlinson, M.P., and to the Peers by Lord Bramwell. Mr. J. W. Palmer defrayed the whole expenses incurred in bringing the matter before Parliament, and it may be of interest to state that the agitation, which has been carried on by the firm for a period of fourteen

years, has from beginning to end entailed costs exceeding £7,000. In the suppression of the trade in forged stamps Mr. J. W. Palmer has at length achieved his end, at least in this country, and he has reason to believe that other countries, notably Germany, will shortly follow the example of our own legislature. The incidents of the campaign against forgery are detailed in the pages of *Romance in Reality*, with other matters of interest, historical and philatelic.—*Bromsgrove Weekly Messenger*.

“This is not a novel, but a pamphlet which professes to be a biographical, historical, and philatelic sketch for stamp collectors, connoisseurs, and others. It is dedicated to the Right Hon. Henry Fawcett, Postmaster-General, deals with the history of the postage stamp, sets forth the methods of the forgers of postage stamps, which it exposes, and other matters of interest, historical and philatelic. The pamphlet is accompanied by a photograph of Mr. J. W. Palmer, at whose instigation the subject of forged stamps was included in the Post Office Protection Act, which came into operation a short time ago.”—*North Wales Chronicle*.

“This little pamphlet gives a sketch of the life of J. W. Palmer, an eminent stamp collector, with a full account of stamp collection and its uses and special interest.”—*Western Times*.

“A ‘biographical, historical, and philatelic sketch for stamp collectors, connoisseurs, and others.’ Its author is Francis Neale, who, in an interesting sketch, gives a history of the business

of stamp collecting as developed by Mr. J. W. Palmer, of the Strand, who was the author of the clause in the Post Office Protection Act making the sale of forged stamps illegal." — *Middlesex County Times*.

"The story of Mr. Palmer's wonderful work in connection with stamp collecting, and his efforts against the forgery of stamps. The life is a most eventful one, Mr. Palmer being a great enthusiast in this fascinating pursuit." — *Norwood Review*.

"This little work, really a history of the postage stamp, and therefore of special interest to stamp collectors, contains a full history of the Post Office Protection Act, which was passed at the end of the last session of Parliament, and it is hoped will do much to prevent the sale of forged stamps." — *Retford Times*.

"A little book dealing with the history of the postage stamp and the remarkable career of the publisher, Mr. J. W. Palmer, of 281, Strand, as a successful trader in stamps. The firm, of which Mr. Palmer is the head, has spent £7,000 in the campaign for the suppression of forged stamps by legislative enactment, and details of the agitation, with other matters of interest, historical and philatelic, are given in the pages of *Romance in Reality*." — *Trewman's Exeter Flying Post*.

"The work shows that the tricks practised by forgers upon stamp collectors, and thus, to the many who take an interest in obtaining stamps, an idea as to whether or no the buyer is being imposed upon with forged stamps can be gained

through a perusal of this book. Mr. J. W. Palmer has suppressed the trade in forged stamps through a Bill from Parliament, the costs connected with the passing of the Bill exceeding £7,000. The little book is inexpensive and interesting.”—*Brighton Gazette*.

“As ‘a fortune was made by one penny postage stamp,’ verily it may be stamped as a strange life ‘to lead,’ or ‘A Life of a Strange Stamp.’”—*Fun*.

“A wonderfully interesting little book. Genius, tact, perseverance, and the concentration of energy in a chosen track are powerfully illustrated in this little book as being the sure road to success. The book contains a portrait of J. W. Palmer, and his autograph.”—*Mansfield Times and Midland Gazette*.

“The book is sure to both please and amuse stamp collectors.”—*West Sussex Gazette*.

“The purchaser will be amply repaid if only for the valuable information in respect to the extensive and impudent forgery in stamps now being carried on. The frontispiece is a carte-de-visite of Mr. Palmer.”—*South Wales Press*.

“Really a thrilling biography of J. W. Palmer. It is a capital sixpennyworth. This firm also issues a list of their enormous stock of stamps, the largest in the world.”—*Oldham Evening Chronicle*.

“A small treatise published by J. W. Palmer, of London, and dealing with the history of the postage stamp in England and other countries from the commencement of its use for franking letters. The subject is one interesting to the public generally, and to collectors and connois-

seurs in particular. The greater portion of the book is devoted to the history of 'Philately,' as the art of stamp collecting has been named, and to the life of its father and founder, Mr. Palmer. Those who wish to discover how the business of stamp collecting may be made interesting, instructive, and remunerative, cannot do better than purchase this little work."—*Kent Examiner and Ashford Chronicle*.

"This little book, which is by Francis Neale, will prove of great interest and value to stamp collectors. It contains a history of the postage stamp from the time of its origin, and a biographical sketch and portrait of Mr. Palmer, who, after many unavailing efforts, at last succeeded in enlisting the support of the Post Office authorities to a Bill for the prevention (among other things) of forgery of postage stamps, and is to-day the largest dealer in postage stamps in the whole wide world. The interesting sketch concludes with 'A Chat about Stamp Collecting,' the result of an interview with Mr. Palmer by the well-known journalist, Mr. Edward A. Morton, quoted from *Our Boys*."—*Wednesbury Herald*.

"The subject is one, we believe, which is interesting to the public in general, and to collectors and connoisseurs in particular. The author especially calls attention to those chapters of the book in which the methods of the forgers of postage stamps are exposed, and the tricks of dishonest traders who practise upon the juvenile community are discussed."—*Montrose Standard and Angus and Mearns Register*.

“This is a ‘Story of an Eventful Life,’ a biographical, historical, and philatelic sketch for stamp collectors, connoisseurs, and others. The *Romance in Reality* is founded on the history of the postage stamp, a subject which must be interesting to the public in general, and to collectors and connoisseurs in particular. The book is written by Francis Neale, and chapters are given in which the methods of the forgers of postage stamps are exposed, and the tricks of dishonest traders who practise upon the juvenile community are discussed. Under the new Post Office Protection Act, which was passed at the end of the late session, the sale of forged stamps is rendered illegal, and a system of wholesale robbery thus suppressed. The incidents of the campaign against stamp forgery are detailed in the pages of *Romance in Reality*, with other matters of interest, historical and philatelic. The book is published at sixpence, and contains a photo of Mr. J. W. Palmer, Prince of Stamp Merchants.”—*Man of Ross*.

“Another edition of this little work has been published, and we would advise every youth in the country who has not already read it to do so at once. There is in it a noble example for all young persons to be industrious and careful, and the famous Mr. Palmer, the stamp collector, is the person who is laid down as an example to follow. We hope the book may be much more widely circulated than ever it has been in the past.”—*Invergordon Times*.

“Devoted to the interests of Philately, or stamp

collecting. It is well to remember that the hero of this 'romance' has made it a penal offence to sell forged stamps, either British, colonial, or foreign, in this country. The brochure is very interesting."—*Taunton Courier*.

"This little history of the postage stamp is dedicated by the author, Francis Neale, to the Postmaster-General. It narrates the origin and growth of foreign postage-stamp collecting, and the recent legislation affecting the fabrication of forged stamps, due in a great measure to the perseverance of Mr. Palmer, who has himself made a fortune as a Philatelist."—*Clifton Chronicle*.

"A remarkable little biography of a man who has made for himself a name among stamp collectors, and, after many struggles, seems now to have established a large business devoted to the sale and purchase of postage stamps of all nations. Mr. Palmer is evidently an authority on genuineness of foreign stamps. His address is 281, Strand, and our young friends who are stamp collectors will find at his office what is believed to be the largest collection of foreign stamps in the world."—*Earthen Vessel and Christian Record*.

"A biography of Mr. J. W. Palmer, the well-known Philatelist, and will be read with pleasure by all those who collect postage stamps. Valuable information is given with regard to stamp forgeries." — *Peterborough and Huntingdonshire Standard*.

"We have had forwarded to us a pamphlet termed 'A Strange Life, or the Philatetical Mil-

lionaire,' containing some rather remarkable statements respecting postage stamps, their collection and sale. Most of our readers are aware to what an extent stamp albums have been introduced into their domestic circles, and many a household, especially so far as its youthful members are concerned, can exhibit a larger or smaller number of valuable 'specimens' of defaced or unused of the above articles. Much is also stated about forged imitations of foreign stamps, even to the extent of the obliterating marks thereon, and it is well that our younger friends who are so laudably anxious to add to their stores should be careful as to the genuineness or otherwise of the specimens they preserve in their respective repositories. The pamphlet, on the whole, is interesting, and shows to what an extent the practice referred to has grown within the last few years."

—*Lowestoft Journal*.

"The work is composed in the spirit of truth and justice, with the laudable and honourable object of inducing young people to follow the example of the life led by the honest stamp collector. All young persons should be in possession of this work."—*Invergordon Times*.

"A sixpenny pamphlet of 63 pages, dealing with the life of Mr. J. W. Palmer, and showing how he 'amassed a fortune of £20,000 by honestly using his one great talent, a postage stamp.' A portrait of the distinguished Philatelist, with a facsimile of his autograph, forms a frontispiece to the book."

—*Accrington Gazette*.



“This is a little book written by Francis Neale, dedicated to the Postmaster-General, dealing with the history of the postage stamp, and containing chapters in which the methods of the forgers of postage stamps are exposed, the tricks of dishonest traders who practise upon the juvenile community discussed, and other matters of interest, historical and philatelic, detailed.” — *Peterborough and Huntingdonshire Standard*.

“We may premise for the benefit of those of our readers who have not met with the word, that a Philatelist is one who has for a hobby the collection of postage stamps. The little publication now under discussion is the biography of one of these scientists, who by perseverance and tact has, to use an American term, ‘made his pile.’ To those who are interested in the pursuit of stamp collecting, the publication may convey considerable information.”—*Governess and Head-Mistress*.

“The real motive of the story, however, is to prevent further sales of forged postage stamps, English and foreign. In connection with the subject, an effort is in progress for a deputation of collectors to memorialise and wait upon the Home Secretary, the Postmaster-General, and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the Colonies, with the object of stopping any further importation of forged stamps, and to introduce a law whereby the sale of such stamps shall be subject to police jurisdiction.”—*City Lantern*.

“Ordinary people desirous of finding a royal

road to the knowledge of geography and history could hardly have hit upon stamp collecting as the desideratum if left to themselves. Philately possesses other virtues than the above, however, according to Mr. Neale—among the benefits which have not hitherto been placed to its credit being, according to him, ‘an improvement in the health or tone of mind in invalids or hypochondriacs resulting from their having been drawn out of themselves by interest in stamp albums.’ This slim book—of forty-eight pages only—is rather a curious one in its way. The editorial style in which Mr. Neale writes is amusing, and the ingenious way in which the biography of the senior partner of the firm who publish the booklet is made to advertise their business at the same time is equally amusing. All Philatelists and connoisseurs will, however, no doubt concur in the lesson sought to be enforced, that ‘honesty is the best policy,’ and the hatred of forgeries be shared in more generally than by enthusiasts in this particular hobby—‘spurious imitations’ being naturally looked on with an indignant eye by upright traders and unsuspecting purchasers in all departments of business. The little sketch is dedicated to the late Postmaster-General.”—*Aberdeen Journal*.

“A little book written by Mr. Francis Neale to illustrate the history of the postage stamp. The publisher, Mr. J. W. Palmer, justly prides himself upon having been mainly influential in suppressing the trade in forged stamps.

Several chapters of this book are devoted to the methods of forging postage stamps."—*Christian World*.

"This little work contains an amusing account of the life of the publisher, who is the founder of the art of postage stamp collecting in this country, and who has also built up a great business in the same by the union of keen intelligence and the most indomitable business pluck. To Mr. Palmer the public are also largely indebted for the legislation that has done so much to save stamp collectors from the tricks of the forger."—*Southampton Observer*.

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#### "THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS."

"'The Spirit of Christmas' is the title of a little *brochure* which has been issued by Mr. J. W. Palmer, of 281, Strand, W.C. The verses deal with the subject of forged stamps, against which the author has taken such a prominent part, and his opinions on the matter are expressed by the Spirit of Philately. Our readers will remember that Mr. Palmer's establishment formed the subject of a recent illustrated article of our 'Warehouses Worth Visiting' series. —*The Tourist*.

"Mr. J. W. Palmer issues a neat little *brochure*, entitled 'The Spirit of Christmas; or, Rhyme and Reason for the Festive Season.' It comes from 281, Strand."—*Dumbarton Herald*.

"Mr. J. W. Palmer, 281, Strand, W.C., has just issued a poem, entitled 'The Spirit of Christmas,'

in which Philately is celebrated in verse. The clause in the Post Office Protection Act, 1884, which is intended to suppress postage stamp forgeries was obtained at much trouble and expense by Mr. J. W. Palmer, and his services to the public are commemorated in a pleasant fashion in the dainty little book under notice."

—*Post.*

"A nice little book on 'Rhyme and Reason for the Festive Season.'"—*Cambridge Express.*



## CHAPTER VIII.

### PALMER THE PHILATELISTS.\*

PHILATELY, to use the titular expression in vogue amongst those initiated in the science, while at present in the enjoyment of considerable popularity cannot of necessity boast an extensive history. For the same reason that the heroine of the play in Sheridan's *Critic* was unable to 'See the Spanish fleet because 'twas not in sight,' so stamp collecting could only commence after the introduction of postage stamps. A Gallic neighbour has stated that the postage stamp was known in France over 200 years ago, but even if this could be borne out by evidence, there is no specimen extant which can be taken as evidence. It may be dismissed as being on a par with the amusing story told of a man who advertised a rare specimen of a postage stamp of the time of Henry VIII. for sale. On a visitor remarking that there was no such thing at that time, the curiosity dealer said, "Well, that is just what makes it so exceedingly rare."

The postage stamp originated in this country. Sir Rowland Hill and other claimants disputing the honour of giving birth to the idea. Other countries speedily followed this example, until now they are in general use in all civilised countries,

and a good many uncivilised ones in addition. Who the first collector was is not known, but it is only about twenty-five years ago that the practice became common. It can be, and is, indulged in from the highest to the lowest in the social ladder. The finest collection in existence, it is said, is in the hands of Mr. P. Von Ferrary, its value being inestimable.

Philately, like book collecting, numismatology, and such similar practices, cannot be fully appreciated by every one. It is, however, not only interesting, but useful, and significant, in many cases, of a high degree of culture and taste. Geographically and politically there is information to be obtained from a collection. For instance, few would know of Bergedorf but for its stamps, and on these the divided arms of Hamburg and Lübeck at once show its old political position. In Nevis, the stamp impresses on the mind the mineral springs of that island. The union of the German States and Prussia is shown in the disappearance of the Prussian, Saxon, Brunswick, and other labels to make room for those of the German Empire. Changes of currency can at once be noted, as in many of the British Colonies. The stamps of a recent date of Bulgaria form a reminder of the last Russo-Turkish war; those of the Transvaal show what has been going on there between the Dutch and British; the Peruvian surcharges bear evidence of the war with Chili; the varied history of France is to be seen at a glance; in Spain the same holds good; and

opportunity, both for recreation and study, is afforded. To connoisseurs, a visit to 281, Strand, London, W.C., the establishment of Mr. J. W. Palmer, will afford much material for interest. To the scholarly collector generally, "Palmer the Philatelist's" is certainly a "Warehouse Worth Visiting."

The business now carried on at 281, Strand, may be said to have originated by Mr. J. W. Palmer, at the early age of seven, when he commenced operations with a three-cornered Cape of Good Hope stamp. This was his capital and stock-in-trade; and while yet at school, he carried on his dealings privately. Subsequently devoting all his spare time to this occupation, he speedily acquired a good collection. His next move was to mount his stamps on sheets of cardboard, and got shopkeepers in his neighbourhood to display them in their windows, on the "sale-or-return system."

As young Palmer's custom increased he had some difficulty in supplying the demand for special foreign and colonial stamps ordered from him, and it occurred to him that office-boys in the legal district near the Temple could collect for him, and communications being opened, the results proved satisfactory. Extending this system to the City, an extemporised place of business was formed under the colonnade of the Royal Exchange, where at lunch-times he used to meet his youthful purveyors. About this time postage stamp collecting became a kind of craze, and Mr Palmer naturally

benefited thereby, and got many regular customers. It speedily became impossible for him to carry on his business through his various agencies, and he founded a central office under his immediate control. In a few years larger premises were required, and Mr. Palmer moved to the present building in the Strand; and after a time this, owing to pressure of business, had in turn to be altered. The long warehouse was reconstructed, stock-rooms fitted in the upper part of the house, and the accommodation for clerks improved. The career towards prosperity has, however, not been an unbroken one, for after Mr. Palmer's first successful start in establishing himself, he found it necessary to open accounts with various firms and collectors who dealt with him, and a bad debt of £700 led on to a number of others. Discouraging as this was, the lesson was probably of ultimate benefit, in inculcating caution in future transactions.

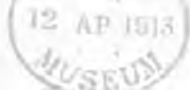
In the warehouse, over which we were courteously conducted by Mr. Palmer, are stored millions of stamps varying in value from a fraction of a penny to £30 or £40; and Mr. Palmer estimates his stock at a valuation of £25,000! The heart of the collector will warm at the sight of some of the specimens, not on account of their beauty perhaps, but of their rarity, for in Philately, prettiness and value are by no means synonymous.

In no branch of trade have forgeries been more prevalent than in that under discussion. Some very clever forgeries exist, others are excessively bad and feeble. An expert can detect



them at once, but the tyro might be easily swindled. Mr. Palmer had all along set his face steadfastly against this nefarious practice, and has been instrumental in getting a clause introduced into the new Post Office Protection Bill, by which those uttering, making, dealing in, or selling any fictitious stamp, is liable to a fine of £20. The United States have adopted a similar law, and Mr. Palmer, who is in communication with the representatives of various foreign governments on the same subjects, hopes that Germany will shortly follow the lead. From no place, probably, has more fraudulent material come than from there. Not only has Mr. Palmer benefited collectors in this fashion, at much trouble and expense, but he also undertakes to protect them from impostors by verifying any stamps which may be sent to him for that purpose. This is done free of charge, and no one need, therefore, consider himself liable to be taken in.

The warehouse which has been the subject of our remarks has no pretensions to architectural magnificence; it might even be passed by unnoticed by nine out of every ten persons. But the thoughtful tenth person will find it an interesting establishment in many respects, while it is probably unique of its kind. The amount of business transacted would hardly obtain evidence at the hands of those who consider stamp collecting a frivolous pursuit; but if anything is calculated to change one's opinion on the subject, it is certainly a visit to Palmer the Philatelist's.



# FORGED STAMPS.

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NOTICE RESPECTING FORGED STAMPS.

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## J. W. PALMER,

Oldest-Established STAMP MERCHANT,  
HEREBY GIVES NOTICE that he will certify as  
to the *Genuineness of every kind of Stamp*, free  
of any charge as heretofore.

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STAMPS BOUGHT, SOLD, AND EXCHANGED

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