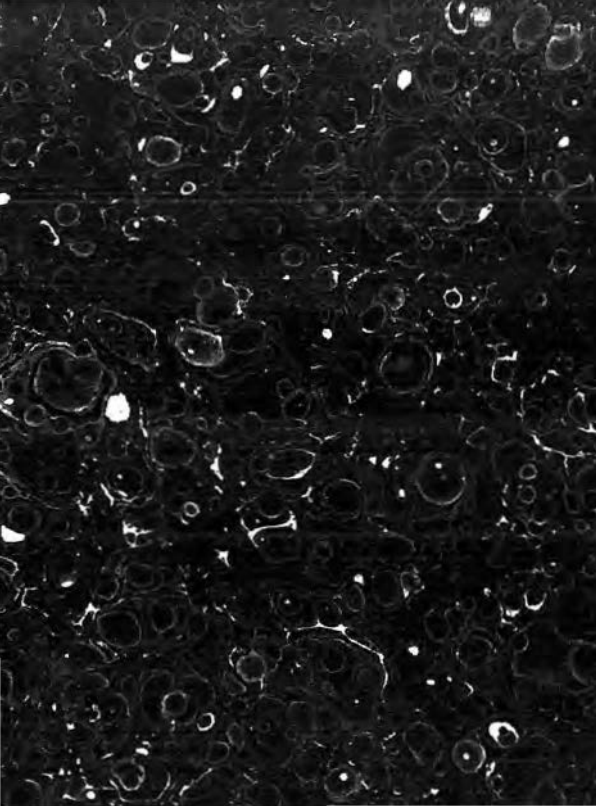




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PHILATELIC SECTION



Brewford 1531(2-9)

LATELICAL
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THE

SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS.

By J. W. PALMER.



281, STRAND, W.O.

J. W. PALMER'S LIST
OF
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STAMPS,
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THE

Spirit of Christmas;

OR,


Rhyme and Reason

For the Festive Season.

BY

J. W. PALMER.

TO THE NOBLE
PHILIPP VON FERRARY,
PRINCE OF PHILATELISTS, AND BEST OF MEN,
THESE FUGITIVE VERSES -
ARE DEDICATED
AS A MARK OF ENDURING REGARD
BY
THE AUTHOR.



The Spirit of Christmas.

DONE INTO RHYME

By J. W. Palmer.

The day was fast declining into night.
The winter's day is dead : in a winding-sheet
of snow,
It is buried in the darkness. "Mary, bring a
light ;
Heap on more coal, good Mary, for the fire
is burning low."

The shadows come and go in weird shapes upon
the wall,
Dancing higher, higher, higher,
As the flames leap from the fire,
Then vanishing like spirits when the living
coals expire,

And a darkness, as a cloud, falls over all
 Like a pall,
 And a gloom
 Fills the room,
 As solemn as the silence of the tomb.

As sure as I'm a sinner,
 I have made a hearty dinner,
 And stretched upon my sofa near the door.
 With eating and with drinking,
 I am in no mood for thinking:
 I am sinking, sinking, sinking,
 Sinking through the floor.

There's a sense of comfort creeping
 Through my body. Am I sleeping?
 Am I sleeping on the sofa or the floor?
 Good gracious! how I started
 When that lurid flame just darted
 From the fire, and reflected on the ceiling!

The fire is burning blue,
 The wind is roaring in the flue,

And my mind begins to reel in a luxury of
feeling.

Did I really hear a tapping,
A gentle spirit rapping,
Tapping, tapping, tapping at the wall?

Do I wake or dream? Is it
Only fancy, or a visit
From a friend, who comes to make a Christ-
mas call?

So I step outside my room,
And I peer into the gloom,
And a visitor—a stranger I behold.

Then I make a bow, and say,
“Sir, just step in this way—
Pray step inside at once from out the cold.
It was you, then, who came rapping.
I'm afraid you've caught me napping.
And your business is—if I may make so bold?”

“I'm the Spirit,” answered he—
“Spirit of Philatelee,
And I've come on earth just for an hour or two

To find an honest man—
To find one, if I can,
And to spend my Christmas Eve, my friend,
with you.

I have come from underground
To have a good look round,
And see how folks are trifling with my fame.
I will not mention names,
But you've no idea the games
Which some stamp-dealers practise in my name.

I'm sure you're very kind,
And if you do not mind"—
Here the Spirit's spirit grew a little calmer—
"I will take you along with me,
For I want to call and see
A good old friend of mine, one William Palmer.

In the kingdom whence I came
We look upon his name
With the reverence due to his exceeding
worth;

And we take him for our guide,
 And, what is more beside,
 He represents our Spirit here on earth."

Here I broke in again:

"In a word, sir, to be plain,
 I thank you for your gracious condescension.
 Your praises, sir, I see,
 Are intended all for me:
 I am the William Palmer that you mention."

"If that's the case," says he,
 "Come, fly away with me,
 And I will show you many curious things."
 "Whate'er I can," said I,
 "I'll do for you; but fly
 I really can't, I haven't any wings."

Then wings of awful size
 He spread, to my surprise.
 "I've wings enough," the Spirit said, "for two.
 You will manage, please, to cling
 To my stronger, right-side wing."
 Then he fluttered like a bird, and off we flew!

Over house tops we went flying—
Saw the poor man nearly dying,
And the rich man feasting in the heartless city,
For this time of peace and plenty
Found many a cupboard empty;
And my heart unto the poor went out with pity.

And many a touching sight
We saw that bitter night,
And I was moved to tears by all this want and
cold.
I wished them better cheer;
And whene'er I dropped a tear,
The tear which fell among them changed to
gold.

And so we flew along,
Till we came upon a throng
Of happy boys returning from their schools.
Then the Spirit sudden stopped,
And so to earth we dropped.
“Now listen,” said the Spirit, “to these fools.”

They were talking altogether
 Of their toys, their friends, the weather
 As their hearts turned homewards with their
 feet pit-pat-ily ;
 And a little knot, enraged,
 Were angrily engaged
 In disputation, and the subject was Philately.

“ Look here, you little scamp,
 This is a worthless stamp! ”
 Cried one. “ And here’s another! I’ll tell you
 what:
 I don’t care what you paid,
 Or with whom you trade,
 I wouldn’t give a shilling for the lot.”

Then another from his jacket
 Produced a PALMER’S PENNY PACKET.
 “ Look here, tell me what you think of mine.
 They’re not rare, and as such
 I know they’re not worth much—
 At any rate, I know they’re genuine.

I bought them in the Strand,
 Of Mr. Palmer, and
 I tell you chaps to do as I have done.
 He's dead against the scamps
 Who trade in forged stamps;
 His place is in the Strand, 281."

Then we rose again, and so
 We went flying to and fro,
 And saw how roguery stalked throughout the
 land.

And the Spirit said, "You see
 The foes of Philatelees.
 'Tis only Palmer keeps them from the Strand."

We saw what tricks were played
 By members of the trade,
 Who thrived upon the innocent, who never
 fail.

We saw one man with many names
 Practising illegal games,
 Till the law stepped in and carried him to jail.

And the Spirit dropped his head.
 And "Woe is me," he said,

“ That I should see Philately's disgrace!

Palmer, you are true,

So let me look at you; ”

And the Spirit turned to me a smiling face.

“ Honest men may prosper, friend.”

“ So,” said I, “ I apprehend.”

Here the Spirit gently sighed and pressed my
hand.

All through England we had been,

All the evil we had seen,

When, a turn, and we were once more in the
Strand.

“ Here we are,” the Spirit sighed ;

And I found myself inside

A long and lofty warehouse, light and clean.

“ In this place,” the Spirit cried,

“ Doth honesty abide.”

And I turned from him to look upon the scene.

As I made a brief survey,

Something seemed to say

That the place was all my own, so familiar did
it seem ;

And, with a glow of pride,
I turned and stepped outside,
And I looked up at the windows like a person
in a dream.

And I looked upon the name :
It was PALMER, and the same
Was scored in striking letters, great and
greater.

The number, it was mine,
And I recognised the sign—
PALMER, THE FORGERY EXTERMINA-
TOR.

Then I walked inside again,
The vision to explain,
And I saw as I stepped in from out the streets
The girls engaged in mixing
Paste, and busy fixing
Stamps of all descriptions on the sheets.

And the Spirit, standing near,
Whispered in a maiden's ear,

"Choose me but one forgery from these stamps,
 if you can ;
 Give me, child, but one."
 Said the maiden, "There are none."
 Cried the Spirit, "I have found an honest man."

There were stamps of every nation,
 And of each denomination,
 In varied forms and colours, shape, and size ;
 And not one of them all,
 Was their value great or small,
 But was fully worth its reasonable price.

"It is, then, a fact,"
 Said the Spirit, "that the Act
 Which has done so much to benefit the trade
 Owes its origin to you, sir.
 Then I make you my excuse, sir,
 For the splendid efforts, Palmer, you have
 made.

And what was your reward ?
 For you've worked both well and hard,
 And your efforts have brought universal good."

“ My reward ? ” I answered. “ Well,
 I hardly like to tell,
 For it seems that I have been misunderstood.

And those for whom I've striven
 Their praises they have given
 But grudgingly, and some have e'en denied it,
 I have laboured, I opine :
 The gain is theirs, not mine,
 Yet there be some who actually deride it.”

Said the Spirit, with a “ Hum !
 Your reward is yet to come,
 For your patience has been surely quite angelical ;
 And you will reap your rich reward
 When their senses are restored,
 And the public know your labours Philatetical.

Good cheer ! my friend, and nerve—
 You will do as you deserve,
 As sure as the Spanish real is Spanish ;
 So there's fortune yet in store for you,
 And whatever I can do for you,
 Remember me.”—I turned, and saw the Spirit
 vanish.

And in his place there came
A poor, ill-clothed old dame.

"I've brought," said she, "kind sir, for your
inspection"—

And then her head she shook,
And produced a little book—

"I've brought my husband's wonderful collection

It is all our worldly store—

We have nothing—nothing more,

But we must part with it to pay for bread."

"Then," I said, "I grieve to say

That the book can hardly pay,

For the better part are forgeries." The woman
bowed her head.

"Forgeries!" she repeated.

"Yes," said I, "you've been cheated;

The book is not worth a tenth of what it cost.

It's really not worth buying.

And pray don't stand there crying:

'Tis no use crying for time and money lost."

I felt for that poor creature,
 And the lesson I'd to teach her ;
 And I pondered sadly on her fate, so blank and
 drear.

And I tried to make things pleasant,
 And gave a little present,
 To soothe her disappointment—to help her
 Christmas cheer.

The woman went, and in her place
 I saw another smiling face ;
 And a Spirit bending over me, whispered in
 my ear :

“Good man, I am sent
 To bring to you content ;
 I am the Spirit, friend, of Christmas cheer.”

I turned to where the Spirit sat,
 And—gracious goodness ! what was that ?
 'Tis only Mary bringing in the lamp-light
 beaming.

I started up when Mary spoke ;
 I lifted up my head—awoke !
 I must have been asleep some time—and
 dreaming.

STAMPS, STAMPS.—In consequence of my selling genuine foreign Stamps—no forgeries or reprints—I am really in want of good collections, and can pay the best prices, but before I can offer for any collections I must see the Stamps. Any one therefore desiring to sell their collection, should bring or send it to 281, Strand, W.C., either by post or rail, at the same time quoting the lowest price they are prepared to take. I undertake on receipt of a collection to say, by return of post, whether I will give the price asked, or if not, how much, and to remit the amount directly it is agreed on.

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