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1531(5)

TOPSY-TURVY, A CHRISTMAS ANNUAL.

By H. W. PALMER.



281, STRAND, W.C.

1887

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Topsy-Turby.

A CHRISTMAS ANNUAL.

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4—20	" of British Colonial Stamps	0 8
5—100	" of used Foreign Stamps ...	1 0
6—150	" ,, and unused Foreign do.	1 6
7—200	" " " " " "	2 0
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Topsy-Turby.

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BY

J. W. PALMER.

1851

THE

CHRISTIAN

ANNALS

FOR

1851

BY

JOHN P. GARDNER

A CHRISTIAN

TO

MY WIFE

By W. P. Gardner

Topsy-Turvy.

It was the middle of the night,
The sun was shining red and bright :
It was a most unusual sight,
Of which I made a rapid survey ;
For though 'twas time to be in bed,
The world was wide awake instead,
And everything seemed topsy-turvy.

Was I asleep, or was I waking ?
There surely could be no mistaking
The things I saw before my eyes :

I saw them plainly. It would seem,
 One sees things plainly in a dream,
 Although one never feels surprise.

'Twas Christmas-time, I know that well;
 I smacked my lips, for I could smel'
 The Christmas goose a-cooking;
 And I was in my room upstairs,
 Stretched out at ease on two soft chairs,
 And from my window I was looking—

Looking out upon a park—
 Looking, though 'twas densely dark.
 I saw on either hand
 Crowds going this way, pushing that,
 And from the corner where I sat
 I saw them pour into the Strand.

Old and young, poor and rich,
 I hardly could tell which was which,
 For all were well provided

With Christmas cheer. Peace and good-will
Seemed every happy heart to fill :

The gifts were well divided,

Every man had a plenteous store,
And no man seemed to want for more,

And all the world was kin.

It was a feast of brotherly love,
And blessings poured down from above,

And cleansed the world of sin.

The rich man helped his needy brother,
In giving all vied with each other :

Charity was neither cold nor scurvy.

No poor were standing at our gates,
There was no workhouse, no poor-rates,

In the land of Topsy-turvy.

The labourer was worth his hire,
And work was all his heart's desire,

And he was well content ;

And none refused to earn his pay,
 And none was there to lead astray,
 And every man paid his rent.

Politics were not a matter of party,
 For all men were honest and strong and hearty
 In making a common cause;
 And every-one loved his mother-land,
 And Englishmen all joined hand-in-hand
 In supporting their country's laws.

No man snatched the wreath of fame
 From the brow of him who had won the same--
 Genius had no such tormentor;
 And JAMES CHALMERS held an honoured place
 In all men's mind, as the friend of his race--
 The Adhesive Stamp Inventor.

And there upon the scroll of fame
 Was writ—in small—another name,
 Coming later :

A generation after Chalmers
 Came the world renown of "PALMER'S"—
 'The Forgery Exterminator.

And as I gazed I felt elated,
 For forgery had been exterminated
 In this strange land:
 I read the legend—"No forged stamps"
 Methought I stood beneath the lamps
 At PALMER'S, in the STRAND.

Then came I to a sudden stop,
 And walking into Palmer's shop,
 And out of danger,
 Palmer I saw him from his shelf,
 And so I asked to see—myself!
 Could anything be stranger?

"You are Mr. Palmer." "True."
 "And I am Mr. Palmer too,"
 Thus to myself I spoke.

"I've come from—where, I cannot say,
To spend with you my Christmas day."

It seemed a Christmas joke.

"I'm very pleased indeed you've come,"
Said Mr. Palmer number one

To Palmer number two.

"Now sit you down, and bide a wee:
Wherever there is room for me,

There's always room for you."

And so I sat down by myself—

But not alone: that other elf,

That other Mr. P.,

Found himself a resting-place,

And seemed to reproduce my face

In front of me.

"No compliments between us two."

"I think exactly as you do."

So our talk began.

"I have no secrets, sir, from you."

"That is, believe me, just my view—

We'll speak as man to man."

"I see you're down upon the scamps
Who trade in reprints and forged stamps
As genu-ine?"

"I am; and my opinion, friend,
Is that their reign is at an end."

"It's also mine."

"You know as well as I do how
I've worked, and still am working now,
To set collectors free
From forgerymongers and all such—
No man, I'm sure, has done so much."

"Excepting me."

"Excepting you!" I cried. "What have you done?
Help in my work I have had none—
None to lend a hand."

Alone I plunged into the fray,
 And when success shall crown the day,
 Alone I'll stand.

I fought and worked through all these years,
 I lived in hopes, and lived in fears,
 I gave my time and self;
 And still is there much more to do,
 I will confess so much to you—
 It's like confessing to myself.

You know—it is a well-known fact,
 How the Seventh Clause got in the Act
 'Twas Palmer's agitation.
 'Twas I petitioned Parliament
 The stamp-forgers to circumvent
 By special legislation."

From postage stamps the conversation changed,
 From one to sundry other topics ranged,
 Until I found myself in bed.

My friend is gone, and sound asleep I seem,
 And dreaming now—a dream within a dream—
 A dream all lurid red.

My wife is sudden seized with anxious fear,
 And cries distressful fall upon my ear;
 Then the smell of smoke
 Assails the nostrils, dims the eyes,
 And louder, nearer seem the piteous cries;
 Then all the house awoke.

The house is all agog. Alarm of fire!
 And all agog the Strand, from spire to spire,
 The flames light up the street.
 The panting of the engines in the noise
 Is heard above the mother's cry, "My boys! my
 boys!"
 And the scurrying of feet.

And in the rush of terror and distress
 Comes the warning, We must up and dress.
 The flames may spread.

Oh, wife, forget your weakness; children dear,
 Cling to your parents, banish all your fear;
 For us, there is no dread.

Open now my door, I take my stand
 Under the lamp: I see the Strand
 A scene of wild affray.

Policemen, firemen, moving to and fro,
 A ghostly mob, wandering in the glow
 Turning Night to Day.

Fling open wide the door. What have we here?
 A mass of pale humanity, dumb with fear,
 In trouble's hour—

A woman rescued from the greedy flames,
 Which leap about and lick the window-frames,
 Seeking whom they may devour.

Then frantic for her "boys" the mother calls,
 And moaning at our feet the woman falls:
 "Where are my boys?" she cries.

They shall not answer to her call again—
 Her boys are free, for ever free, from pain,
 Beyond the skies.

We tend the frenzied woman ; but it is best,
 The gallant constables suggest,
 That she should go—
 That they will best be able to attend her
 At the hospital, and there befriend her
 In all her woe.

But in what physic can they find
 Relief for such distress of mind
 And agitation?
 And so from there they send her straight,
 To find within the workhouse gate
 Rest—and consolation.

Rest! within the gloomy workhouse gates.
 Can Sorrow mate with these workhouse inmates,
 Noisy, drunk, and worse?

What cheerful consolation can be found
 In hearts as cold as is the stony ground,
 Or workhouse nurse?

For the orphan and the motherless,
 The true unfortunate in their distress,
 Our sympathy is free.

Mark well what says our Lord and Priest of them :
 He that hath done it to the least of them
 Hath done it unto Me.

And so I turned to go to bed again,
 With thoughts of all the world's great pain
 Revolving in my mind.

And lo! my friend—that other Mr. P.—
 Who sat so long before in front of me,
 Was now behind.

“You speak my sentiments,” approvingly says he.
 “If all thought so, how happy all would be!
 My friend with me agrees.

A fact it was, which could not fail to strike,
 We thought—just as we looked—alike,
 Alike as two split P.'s.

“I wish,” I muttered to myself, “this fire——”
 “Had been,” said he, “the forgery-monger’s
 pyre.”

“My thought, sir, you divine.
 I wish, indeed, all reprints and forged stamps
 Had been destroyed, and so destroyed the scamps.

“Your thoughts,” said he, “are mine.”

“The war against the forgery-monger, friend,
 Is drawing near to a victorious end.

We pricked the bubble,
 And we shall yet have our return one day,
 If any satisfaction can repay
 For all our time and trouble.”

“We!” I cried, indignant. “What has been done,
 What has been done I did myself—alone;
 I gave my time and self.”

Thus to this second Mr. P. I spoke,
And with the noise of my own voice I woke,
I had been speaking—to Myself.



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