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THROUGH FIFTY YEARS.

THE ROMANCE OF THE POSTAGE STAMP.

1840-1890.

BY J. W. PALMER.



281, STRAND, W.C.

1889

J. W. PALMER'S LIST
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STAMPS,
IN PARCELS (Thirty-Third Series).

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Through Fifty Years.

THE

Romance of a Postage Stamp.

BY

J. W. Palmer.

TO
HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY
THE QUEEN.

THIS RECORD OF THE PROGRESS OF THE
POSTAGE STAMP

IS DEDICATED, IN ALL HUMILITY AND LOYALTY,
BY THE AUTHOR,

WHO HAS FOLLOWED, FROM HIS BOYHOOD, THE
HISTORY OF THIS INVENTION, WHICH IS NOT
THE LEAST CONSIDERABLE OF ENGLAND'S
GIFTS TO CIVILISATION DURING HER
MAJESTY'S MOST BENEFICENT
REIGN.

Through Fifty Years.

THE moon was sailing through the winter sky,
And silence filled the whole St. Martin's-le-
Grand ;

The church bells tolled the early morning
hour,

And all deserted was the narrow Strand—
Save for the sole policeman on his beat,
Who woke the echoes as he trudged the street.

Ghost-like, he passed beneath the shadow of
St. Mary's,

And as he passed he smiled a smile seraphic,
And looked upon the church, serene by night,
By day a standing menace to the traffic.

"Spirits above," he murmured ; "spirits
divine,
Spirits below,"—he winked his eye—"spirits
of wine."

To and fro he marched between the churches,
 And saw the lights grow sallow in the lamps.
 Awhile he paused and peered through PALMER'S
 window,

And looked amazed upon the wondrous store
 of Stamps.

Very much he marvelled whether PALMER'S
 would be moved,

When by the County Council the highway is
 improved.

The Temple of Philately, throughout the
 fleeting years,

Has looked upon the tumult of the Strand,
 And to its portals pilgrims numberless have
 flocked,

Or sent their welcome messages from many
 a distant land ;

Wherever Stamp-collecting thrives, from
 Norway to Japan,

The Stamp-collector's friend is known, and
 PALMER is the man.

As the traffic in the Strand has gradually
 increased,

So, with the rolling years, has extended
 PALMER'S fame,
 And never a collector but knows the old, long
 shop
 That for years has been connected with his
 name ;
 And when he leaves the old house, with all its
 past, behind him,
 He'll seek a new address, and there he hopes
 his friends will find him.

Many a year has come and gone and helped to
 swell the past,
 Since the invention of Postage Stamps was
 made by CHALMERS ;
 Many a moon has waxed, many a moon has
 waned,
 Since the Strand first saw the opening of
 PALMER'S.
 Troublous days, and joyous days—joyous days
 and fleet,
 Have vanished like a shadow—or the police-
 man on his beat.

In fifty years the world has seen surprising
changes:

'Tis fifty years since first Adhesive Stamps
were seen.

Whilst the world endures the year of '87 will
be remembered:

Then was celebrated the Jubilee of the
QUEEN.

The year 1890 the Jubilee will show
Of the Postage Stamp, invented just fifty
years ago.

What great events and little mingle in the
dust of years,

What episodes historical, what scenes of
private life:

In this year GLADSTONE fell, in that the Strike
occurred.

In such a year our luck was in—'twas then
we took a wife.

Surprises follow one another, as Old TIME
onward tramps.

Now it's love among the roses—or champagne
among the Stamps.

Then a darkening shadow falls across the
pathway of our life ;

Our MOTHER'S death made all the world
awhile seem blank and drear.

Three years ago her spirit passed away to join
the bless'd ;

Three years—so long ago—so far, and yet
so near.

The shadow of the sorrow by which we have
been tried

Shall ne'er, it seems, be lifted from the house
where MOTHER died.

The history of the world for fifty years

May be read, as if by some magician's lamp.

The change of rulers and of Governments

Are plainly indicated on the Postage Stamp.

If Stamp-collecting serves this purpose, who
shall scoff it,

And suggest the pursuit is devoid of profit ?

Not only history, but geography is taught,

By studying the issues of all the nations.

How baseless, then, the ignorant protest

That Stamp-collecting is an idle occupation.
 A "craze," a "mania" that serves so many
 useful ends
 Deserves no enemies, and each day makes us
 friends.

When lawyers, politicians, merchants, spend
 their time,
 And—what is no less to the point—their
 money,
 In making great collections of rare Stamps,
 It sounds, to say the least of it, extremely
 funny
 To hear Philately contemned by some wise
 fools,
 As only fit to occupy the minds of boys at
 schools.

In the Story of the Postage Stamp throughout
 these fifty years
 The history of the world is read as in
 a book.
 Each separate issue tells its own particular
 tale:

As, when upon the new threepenny card we
 look,
 We shall ever recollect the year of great
 commercial strife,
 The year that saw a Royal Princess married
 to Lord FIRE.

The portrait of HER MAJESTY adorning the
 new card,
 Depicts the QUEEN full length in her habit,
 as she lives—
 A likeness of our SOVEREIGN as she now
 appears—
 Instead of that old portrait that each
 Stamp, save this one, gives.
 'Tis the portrait of VICTORIA in the present
 year of grace,
 Not she of fifty years ago, with the maiden's
 open face.

The card itself is welcome, we have waited for
 it long ;
 It gives us hope of realising all our postal
 schemes.

So far, so good; the Penny Ocean Post in
time will come,

Likewise the Farthing Post will run outside
the land of dreams.

Many things he's prophesied, and much has
PALMER done,

But reforms come always slowly, and they
are coming one by one.

For years he agitated for the widening of the
Strand,

And in the fight with TIME, Old TIME him-
self is beaten.

The Ocean Card was PALMER'S scheme many
years before

Any man had thought of it—including
HENRIK HEATON;

Though HEATON'S thoughts shape themselves
as PALMER'S do,

No wonder, then, he takes our old ideas and
thinks them new.

The Farthing Post will not for long delay its
coming,

The need of it is recognised by those who
 would have nought of it;
 And we shall hear, no doubt, when once we
 have the Stamp,
 Of many other people who had "thought
 of it."
 'Tis always thus with every new idea or
 invention:
 So far, the Farthing Post has not attracted
their attention.

And, oh, POSTMASTER-GENERAL, give us our
 Farthing Stamp,
 Bearing a true and faithful likeness of our
 SOVEREIGN'S face,
 Not as she was, full fifty years ago,
 But as she is in the present year of grace:
 Grant us this boon, POSTMASTER, and you will
 not regret it,
 It will make you great; and we—we shan't be
 happy till we get it.

The Stamp-collector owns a Royal Portrait
 Gallery:

From the oldest to the youngest—the infant
 King of Spain,
 Whose likeness tells no very flattering tale.
 'Tis the portrait of a baby, very plump and
 rather plain.
 He has a portrait of our visitor, the SHAK,
 among the rest ;
 A picture that of all his portraits is un-
 doubtedly the best.

Some people put their money into stocks and
 shares,
 Which are subject every day to violent
 fluctuation,
 Some invest in pictures, others in china rare—
 Things which go up one day and down
 the next in valuation,
 But the value of a Stamp is as certain as
 creation
 —As certain as that Clare Market will
 become a railway station.

A Stamp that's worth a pound, or ten, to-day,
 Does not depreciate in price—but rises.

It must become more valuable on getting
scarce,

For Stamp-collectors there are no such
grim surprises

As some collectors get, who find out what
they've lost,

In selling off their pictures, or what-not, below
their cost.

Thus the value of rare Stamps is regulated,

And Stamp-collectors need entertain no fear,
Their money is as safe as in the bank,

They cannot purchase cheap to-day what
yesterday was dear.

Whilst the demand for rare Stamps does not
cease,

The prices cannot fall, they must increase.

One trouble still destroys the Stamp-collector's
peace :

One trouble only threatens his security,
Forged Stamps are all he need contend against ;
And looking hopefully into futurity,

We trust to see the day when the law will
 reach the scamps
 Who defy the Post authorities by uttering
 Forged Stamps.

The Post Office Protection Act contains a
 clause,

That ought to bring the forgery-monger to
 the dock,

The Seventh—PALMER'S—Clause of that same
 Act,

Should have served to end him and his stock;
 But though it figures in the country's laws,
 The Post Office will not enforce the Seventh
 Clause.

To get this Seventh Clause upon the statute-
 book,

To bring the matter into Parliament,
 For years was PALMER'S constant aim,
 And time and money both ungrudgingly
 were spent.

The Peers and the Commons argued both
 about it,

We got the Act, and now—we might still be
without it.

But the Post-Office authorities will yet discover,
That it is for them no less than the collector,
That the constant services are now required
Of some skilled forgery detector.

For years has PALMER warred against the
reckless imitator,
But the tribe has even baffled the Ex-
terminator.

The battle still goes on. It is "down with
forgeries ;"

Nor will the Stamp - collectors' friend
contented rest

Until we see the last of them,
And the trade in spurious Stamps for ever
is suppressed.

Until the nations one and all make common
cause,
And by united action vindicate the laws.

So, musing on these things, the policeman
went his way,

And much perplexed concerning many
questions,
He determined, when off duty, to return to
that same spot,
And get advice from PALMER, and suggestions.
And if you find yourself in that policeman's
plight,
Why, follow in his footsteps—PALMER will put
you right.



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.

STAMPS, STAMPS.—BUY, SELL, and EXCHANGE with PALMER, who agitated Parliament to pass Act to stop forged stamps. Cheapest house. Best prices given for collections. Opinions on Stamps gratis. Bric-à-Brac, &c. Stamps sent on approval—Palmer, 281, Strand, London.