

**J. W. PALMER'S
LIST OF PUBLICATIONS.**

MUSICAL ALBUM,
Containing the Philatelic Poika, the Postage-Stamp
Waltz, the Collector's Quadrille. Composed by Frances
Mary Palmer Published at 6/-, post free 3/2.

A Good Song for the Drawing Room.
THE STAMP COLLECTOR'S SONG.
Written and Composed by Frances Mary Palmer.
Published at 3/-, post free 1/7.

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A ♦ FIRELIGHT ♦ FANCY.

By J. W. PALMER.

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281, STRAND, W.C.

1890.

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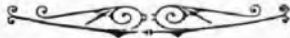
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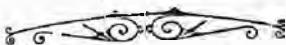


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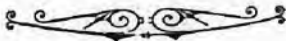




A FIRELIGHT FANCY.



By J. W. PALMER.



DEDICATED,
WITH FEELINGS OF GREAT RESPECT,
TO THE
NOBLE AND DISTINGUISHED
PHILIP VON FERRARY.



A FIRELIGHT FANCY.

HEAP on more coal, Frances, ere the radiancy
 expire,
 And all the fairy scene dissolve in dust its
 glory ;
Come, gather with the children round the fire,
 And I will tell a story :

A tale for Christmas, neither grim nor gory,
 With none for heroine but mine own dear
 wife—

A strange, eventful, all-true story,
 The story of my life :

The simple story of a human heart,
The story of its aspirations, hopes, and
fears,
And of the times of which I am a part—
A history of thirty years.

The glowing coals assume fantastic form,
And shape themselves to well-remembered
places,
And as they crumble in a fiery storm,
I seem to recognise familiar faces.

That hissing coal from which the gas is
burning,
With what a flow of memories I greet!
I see the busy Strand, and off a turning
A shop in Catherine Street.

'Twas there, full thirty years ago or more,
I stood the first philatelist in town,
And there in penny packets garnered up my
store,
And rules of life laid down.

'Twas there when stamp-collecting first became
 the vogue,
 With perseverance I pursued my way,
 The friend of all mankind—except the rogue—
 For honesty's the policy to pay.

My all was little in days now flown,
 Yet little will suffice when hope abounds,
 And from a single stamp has grown
 A stock worth seventy thousand pounds.

In that small shop hard by the old Arcade,
 Where now is Gaiety and all is calmer,
 'Twas there the first attempt was made
 To found the house of PALMER.

Come, stir the fire, and let us change the
 scene.

What transformation have we to admire?
 Now fortune 's rosy, and life is all serene—
 The flames dance gladly in the fire.

The coal breaks up. What means that ardent
flame ?

Is that the flame that Love will oft inspire ?
I see the day my great good fortune came—
I see a bridegroom in the fire.

Heap on more coal. How melancholy black it
seems !

The ruddy light is flickering to a ghostly
pale,
And mournful figures from the Land of Dreams
Take up the tale.

I see Death stealing through the thick white
cloud ;

I see thee, Mother, as the vapours rise
And overwhelm the fire as with a shroud,
And bring tears to my eyes.

With thee I live my childhood through again,
And thou art near to shield me with thy
care,

A comfort in my suffering and pain ;
And now a stranger sits in mother's chair.

A stranger now sits in poor mother's place,
Another now fulfils the wifely part ;
But none a mother's image can efface
From out a sorrowing heart.

All yield at last to death in the long strife ;
He points his arrows at our friend—our
brother :
A man may find a second wife ;
A son can find no second mother.

And as reflection o'er my spirit steals,
I feel the consolation memory brings ;
The brightest picture that the fire reveals,
Finds vent in words the poet sings :—

THE BRIGHTEST PICTURE.*

*I still see plainly as the years steal one by one
away,*

*A lady with a gracious face as open as the day,
With clear grey eyes which tell a tale as sweetly
old as new,*

*A tale of love as pure and strong as ever woman
knew.*

*A love that lives when others die, that smiles when
others frown,*

*That buds in everlasting green when others fade to
brown.*

* These lines, by the accomplished poet who writes under the name of "Kay Bee," are extracted from a poem that appeared in the *People*. The poet has interpreted my feelings so much better than I could express them that I make no excuse for reproducing her lines, but simply express my obligation.

*A love that smiles at change and death ; tell me
 whose love, oh, man !
 Can ever last as long as this ; none but a mother's
 can.*

*Nay, do not smile at this, oh, hearts ! when once a
 mother's prayers
 Have lifted up towards the light o'er life's rough
 sea of cares ;
 While other passions come and go like waves upon
 the sand,
 Her love shines out a beacon light, towards the
 promised land.*

*And does that home upon the hill look as it did of
 yore ?
 Does the same tender evening grey tell that the day
 is o'er ?
 And do the rose-trees that she set their wealth of
 blossom bear ?
 Oh ! no, it cannot look the same, because she is not
 there.*

*My skies are changeful, sometimes dark and some-
times bright appear,
But ever in a golden mist that face is shining
clear ;
It is a picture time nor change will e'er have power
to blur,
For she was all the world to me, I all the world to
her.*

See now the flames are flaring up again,
And all is bright once more and lively red,
So solace ever comes to chase away our pain,
And life renewed is in the dead.

Like a warlike banner in the sun,
Flashes the flame of myriad little lamps,
A signal that the great campaign has now
begun,
The war against Forged Stamps.

The war against the forger was hopefully
begun,
For right was on our side, and good our
cause ;

We opened fire with that tremendous Gun,
 The Seventh (Palmer's) Clause :

The Clause that is our bulwark of defence,
 That makes of "forgery" a legally estab-
 lished fact,
 For which we spared not time nor large
 expense,
 In the Post Office Protection Act.

The cry was raised of "Forward to the fray!"
 We fought the fight alone with our own
 hand;
 We meant to win, and were prepared to pay,
 And vindicate the Temple of the Strand.

And many a weary day and weary night,
 And much good money too, we spent;
 For us the victory, we won the fight;
 And are we yet content?

Content! Not quite, not yet, nor shall we
know

The simple, sweet content that the victor
feels

Till the dire enemy, now knocked low,
Is crushed beneath our heels :

Till every stamp collector's path is safe and
sure

From counterfeits of all kinds, rough and
polished,

And from the forger's enterprise is secure,
And " dies " abolished :

Till young collectors, by the forger's arts,
No longer need fear being circumvented,
Till the law is all enforced, and not in part,
Till then we shall not rest contented.

The flames dance merrily, the shadows on the
wall

Incline our heart to be of goodly cheer ;

The day inevitable will come when forgery
shall fall—

The day, we hope, is near.

And when the law's enforced, it is not only we—

We who collect that will be gainers by it,
The Government the richer far will be
If they would only try it.

If forgeries were all that they are made to
look,

Those obtained by Palmer, one by one, he
Would, collected all in one great book,
Worth near a million English money.

What evil follows in the forger's train,

What mischief to the Revenue his works
portend,

All this has Palmer shown, and will again,
Until he conquers in the end.

Content! Not quite, not yet, nor shall we
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Until he conquers in the end.

Leap high, bright flames, and let your light
Be as an omen happy that proclaims the
day
That shall succeed the fearsome black of
night,
When forgery has passed away.

Leap higher, flames, and higher still,
Now let your fiery tongues lick out the
blot,
Now let the law have all its will—
Exterminate the lot.

The flames are flickering one by one,
They lose their glow and one by one
expire,
Till the last coal burns out, and all is done.
What lesson see we in the fire?

Not all is done, for, aided by the Press,
With whose approval we had waged our long
 campaign,
The stamp collector may be eased of all dis-
 tress
Ere Christmas comes again.

In presenting to our friends this little book—the smallest of all the Christmas Annuals—we hope we may anticipate for it the kindly welcome that has been extended to the five little books of the same series that have gone before. The New Year is the moment for turning over new leaves, for making good resolutions, and we take some pleasure in thinking that the message, unobtrusive as it may be, of this "Firelight Fancy" will be taken to heart by all collectors, if not by the evil-doers whom we are trying to direct into the proper course. We have done all that can be done at the sacrifice of time, and money, and health, to suppress the sale of forged

stamps. We have followed old Abe Lincoln's sage counsel. We have kept pegging away these many years past, and as the dripping water wears away a stone, so we hope to effect our purpose in the end. When that day comes, then all our Christmases will be merry, and happy every New Year; and with that aspiration in our heart of heart we greet our readers, one and all, with good wishes, and

The Compliments of the Season.

J. W. PALMER.



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