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# SHADOWS ON THE WALL.

A CHRISTMAS ANNUAL,  
J. By **W. PALMER.**



281, STRAND, W.C.

1891.

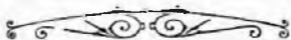
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# SHADOWS ON THE WALL.

*A Christmas Annual.*



By J. W. PALMER.



TO  
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
SIR JAMES FERGUSSON, BART.,  
POSTMASTER-GENERAL,  
THIS LITTLE BOOK  
IS  
RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.



# SHADOWS ON THE WALL.

A Christmas Annual.

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SHADOWS on the wall are lying—  
Day is dying, slowly dying—  
    Shadows black and tall;  
And the night begins to fall  
Like a funereal pall  
    Over all.

In the flicker of the light,  
Shadows come from out the night,  
    And rise and fall.  
In the fire's radiant glow  
They go and come, they come and go,  
    Shadows on the wall:

Shadows of the hopes of yore,  
Ghosts of dead days gone before,  
    Gone beyond recall ;  
Shadows of futurity,  
Prophetic of what is to be,  
    Projected on the wall.

Projected on the wall I find  
The thoughts take shape that cross my mind  
    And all is plain,  
The present and the future seem  
To join together in a dream,  
    The past to come again.

I summon from the crowded past  
A shadow spreading great and vast,  
    And forty years come at the call.  
I see the house with Palmer's name  
Made vivid by the rising flame—  
    A shadow on the wall

And fast the course of years has run  
 Since PALMER's campaign was begun,  
     The first philatelist.  
 Full many a strange and wondrous change  
 That time effects in that wide range,  
     I see as through a mist.

There's PALMER as the boy collector,  
 And later, Forgery Detector,  
     Armed with his Act appears,  
 To extirpate or to defend,  
 The forger's foe, collector's friend,  
     Of Forty Years.

Standing fearless and alone  
 Until the forgery-monger's done,  
     Fighting without pause,  
 Until by ceaseless work and tact  
 He wins for the Protection Act  
     The Seventh (Palmer's) Clause:



The Clause that brings the worthless scamps,  
 Who trade in no less worthless stamps,  
     Within the law's stern grip—  
 But pity 'tis the power's not used,  
 And scamps the leniency abuse  
     That lets them slip.

But Palmer's work is not yet done:  
 The new Society of One,

    For those who need guides or protectors,  
 Now offers (*gratis*) an opinion  
 Of all that comes in the dominion  
     Of stamp-collectors.

A war it was, not of mere words,  
 By which he, Palmer, stormed the Lords,  
     And carried on the fray.  
 Nor was it only work and wealth,  
 But with these, still more precious health  
     That Palmer had to pay.

Stress of labour told its tale,  
And Palmer's strength began to fail,  
    And sickness did befall :  
With aching limbs and fevered brow,  
I see him working even now—  
    A shadow on the wall.

He who fights the hardest, longest,  
The heart of iron of the strongest,  
    Must yield at length,  
And awhile he's stricken down,  
And then is ordered out of town,  
    In search of health and strength.

In Worthing's stimulating air  
He seeks his powers to repair,  
    And by degrees  
He picks up strength, nerve never fails,  
And health is blown upon the gales  
    Across the seas.

From Worthing's friendly, sunny shore  
 He moves, new regions to explore,  
     And leaves the ocean's foam  
 For country lane and sylvan glade,  
 And in West Hoathley's pleasant shade  
     He finds a quiet home.

But even when pain vexed his mind,  
 A solace always did he find  
     In sticking to his "post."  
 Come good, come ill, whatever might,  
 He never failed him, day or night,  
     To do his most.

To do his most to serve his friends,  
 On whose good pleasure he depends;  
     And whether ill or well,  
 He never yet was known to shirk  
 On any day a good day's work,  
     In that long spell,

Which kept him from the busy Strand,  
Under medical command,

Three months without recall.

I see him next once more in town,  
As I watch them, up and down—

The shadows on the wall.

I see the Strand's disgraceful state,  
I hear the cry, "Should London wait?"

Should St. Mary's stand?

A nuisance to the passing crowd,  
Should this nuisance be allowed,

A menace to the Strand?

I see St. Mary's Church pulled down,  
A vast improvement to the town,

And welcome change to all

Most welcome to the hard-pressed man,  
Pushing his way as best he can—

A shadow on the wall.

I see the Strand blocked day by day,  
 The County Council making way,  
     Yielding to public scorn.

I see the Strand made bright and gay,  
 With all its rubbish cleared away  
     At early morn.

I see all London bright and gay,  
 The German Emperor on his way  
     To visit the Guildhall :  
 A crowd of people fill the room,  
 And then dissolve themselves in gloom—  
     Shadows on the wall.

The shadow falling from the lamp  
 Assumes the shape of postage stamp,  
     'There's nothing in't ;  
 For the stamp that looks so rare a one  
 "Ain't worth the paper printed on,"  
     'Tis forgery or reprint.

Stamps good and rare and by the score,  
 Growing in value and more,

Pass in revision.

Collectors with their stamps in hand,  
 Making for 281, Strand,

For my decision.

I see the Penny Ocean Card,  
 For which I have been working hard,

The Sovereign's Head on all ;

Not the Queen as she has been,

Her Majesty as she is seen—

A shadow on the wall.

I see the Farthing Post a fact,  
 And by a purely gracious act,

Halfpenny cards they pass,

Sold for halfpenny apiece—

A sort of happy, slight release

For the poorest class.

All these reforms I see achieved,  
 These changes which I had believed  
     Had come in faster,  
 I see them flourishing amain,  
 A source of benefit and gain  
     To the Postmaster.

Flashing in a brilliant flame,  
 I see the Ministerial name  
     Brightest of all  
 Among those phantasies that show  
 In the fire's brightest glow—  
     The shadows on the wall.

I hear a human thunder raised  
 To greet him : when his name is praised,  
     The shout the echo wakes ;  
 And then in silence all subdued,  
 I hear, with all respect imbued,  
     The whispered name of Raikes.

A shadow, deep and mournful, falls  
 In darkness, as a cloud ; the walls  
     In blackness raise ;  
 And Sorrow in the silence wakes,  
 To breathe a sigh for Cecil Raikes,  
     Of honest praise.

He did his duty : who does more,  
 Does less. The stainless name he bore,  
     And his striving  
 After what was right and just,  
 Is his lesson from the dust  
     To the living.

\* \* \* \*

We sang of Shadows on the Wall.  
 Since then have gone beyond recall,  
     Beyond the reach of poet's lays,  
 Friends, whom all of mankind must  
 Agree to honour in the dust,  
     And sing their praise.



A shadow falls upon the Strand,  
 And stretches over all the land  
     Wherever Englishmen are kith,  
 And politicians cease dissension  
 At that name which all in honour mention.

WILLIAM HENRY SMITH.

He was a man of stainless name,  
 Who worked to win his country fame,  
     Not for his private ends.  
 He lived so far as this world goes,  
 And died respected by his foes,  
     Beloved of his friends :

He lived his life—an honest man ;  
 His course contentedly he ran.  
     Nor pride of birth,  
 Nor vain ambition vexed his heart ;  
 He played the noble patriot's part,  
     A man of sterling worth.

High and low, all now unite  
To keep his loving memory bright.

All that was best  
In English life to grace it with,  
Departs with William Henry Smith  
Unto his rest.

The shadow in the brightness goes,  
And yet another shadow grows  
Upon the wall.

A mighty name is his as well—  
The name of Charles Stewart Parnell,  
Whose rise and fall,

Whose struggles, troubles, pain, and strife  
Of the vicissitudes of life  
Teaches the sad story.

Peace be to that strong, restless soul  
Now he has reached the final goal  
Of earthly glory !

And still once more at death's behest  
 A good man passes to his rest,  
     Whose name is linked with Palmer's ;  
 A son well worthy of his name,  
 Who placed on high his father's fame :  
     Peace to Patrick Chalmers !

Now with his sire he sleeps at last,  
 Who sought the truth from out the past  
     And made his title clear to all.  
 A lesson still remains to-day,  
 Though they themselves have passed away  
     Like shadows on the wall.

And from thy grave, O mother dear !  
 Thou speakest yet what I may hear,  
     Who wear thee in my heart.  
 We are but shadows, one and all,  
 Who come like shadows on the wall,  
     And so depart.

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**281, STRAND, W.C.**

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