

The Children's Christmas,

AS DEPICTED BY FAMOUS BLACK AND WHITE ARTISTS.

BY A. B. COOPER.



CHRISTMAS is the Festival of Childhood, the Carnival of Innocence, and it is right and fitting that it should be. Its first occasion was one of joy—the greatest joy that can come to homes and hearts—the birth of a little child. And the annually recurring celebration of that greatest event in the world's history—the birth of the Christ-child—is most appropriately given over to the little ones. It is the one day in the year when even the selfish become generous; the hard, tender and sympathetic; the careless and callous, loving and gentle; and when the little ones, who are typical of all that is innocent and beautiful in life, are set in the forefront and their happiness and pleasure considered as the chief object of the festival.

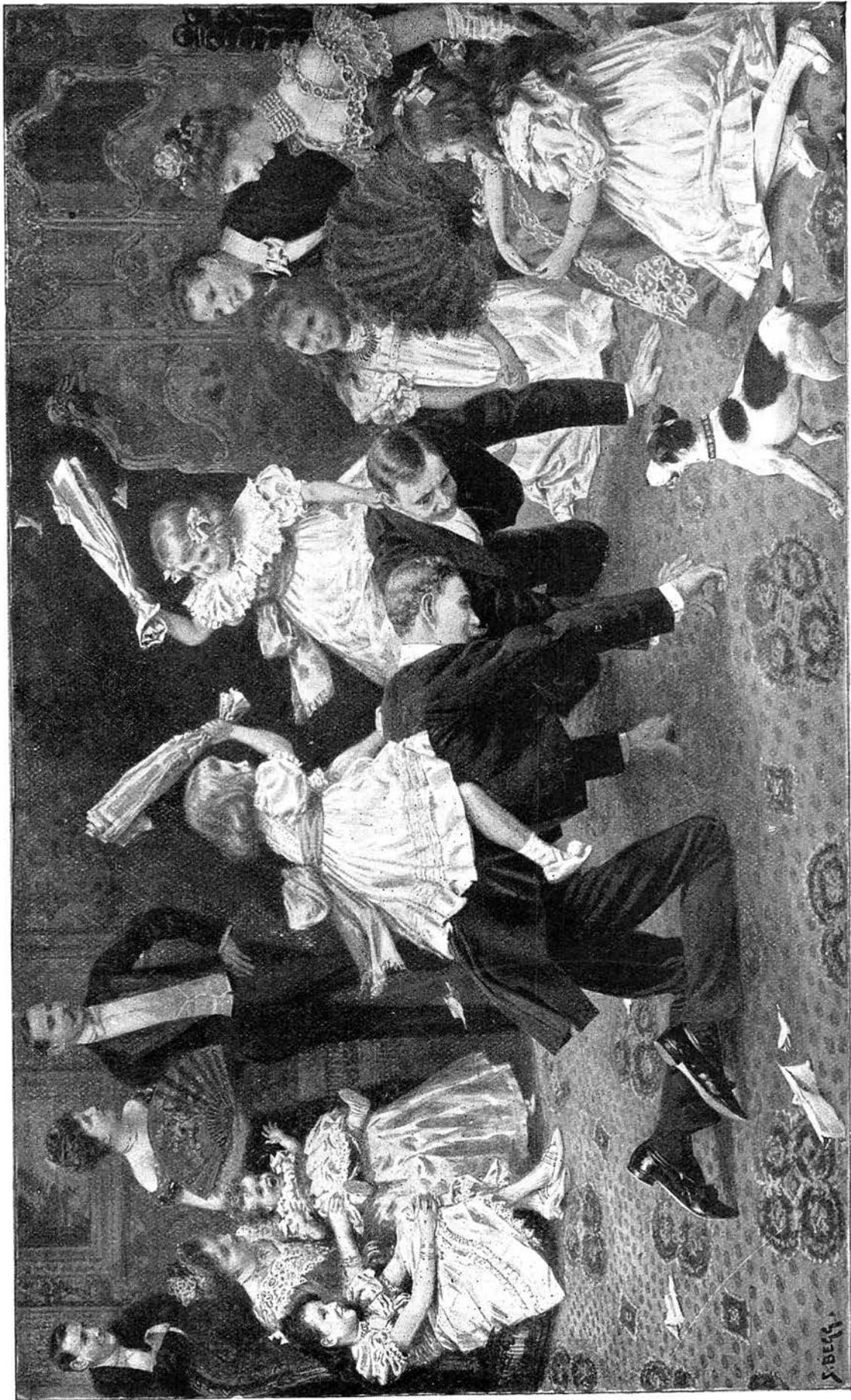
Who can estimate the difference which the

advent of the Babe of Bethlehem made in the world's attitude towards children? Just as Christ's treatment of Woman entirely revolutionised her status in all Christian countries, so the fact that the Lord of Glory was Himself a helpless babe has for ever sanctified childhood, and the passage of the ages has more and more impressed the heart of the Christian world with the great fact that the welfare of the little child is the highest care, not only of the family, but of the State.

And thus Christmas to the thoughtful mind means more than merriment and jollity. And this is the note struck by Beatrice Offor in our frontispiece. It brings the evangel of innocence, love and purity, and inasmuch as it weans men's thoughts from stocks and shares, from buying and selling, from "cares of to-day and burdens for to-morrow," sets them to thinking with equal earnestness of Christmas trees, Christmas



CRACKERS.
Drawn by S. Begg.

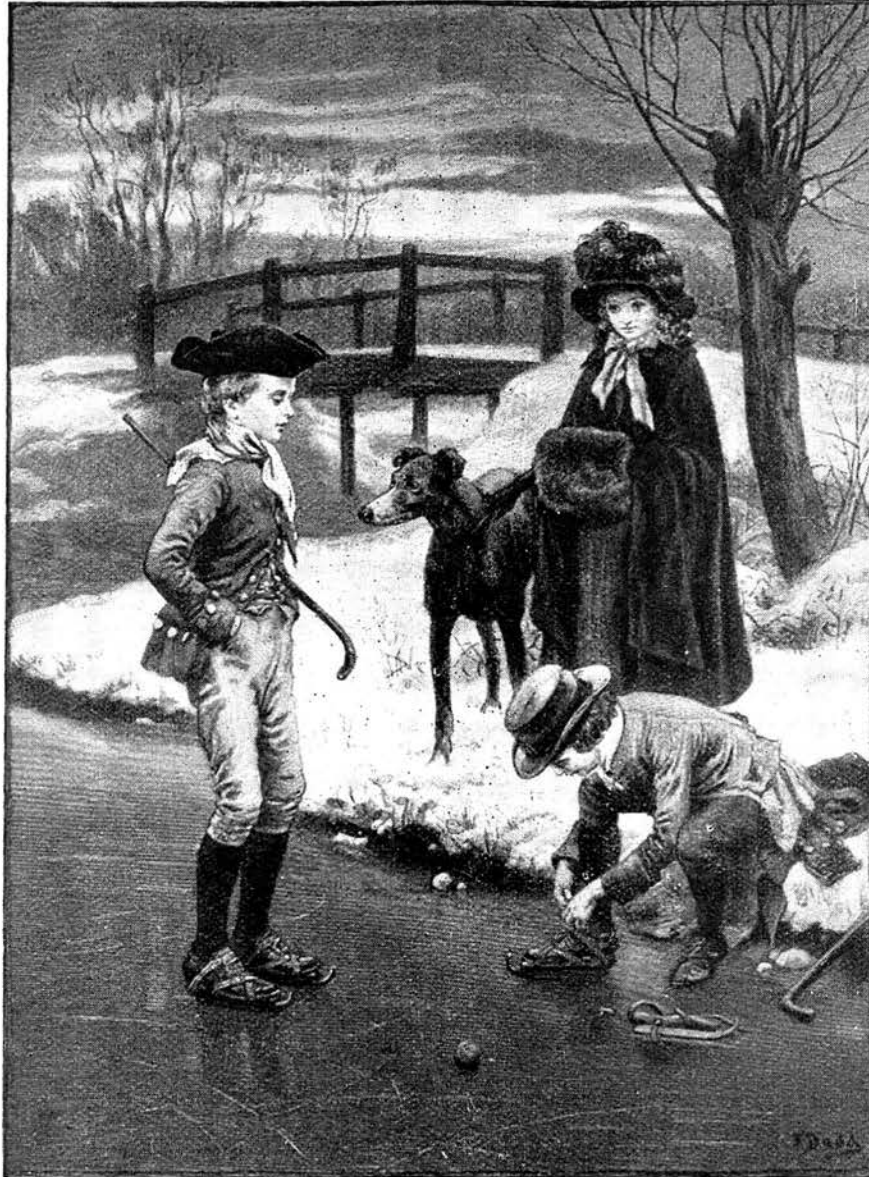


THE TOURNAMENT.
From the painting by S. Biggs.

stockings, Christmas parties and merry times for the little ones, so far are they the nobler, the gentler, the better for Christmastide and its happy customs.

Nothing is more characteristic of Christmas than its Christmas Numbers. The large-hearted Charles Dickens set the ball rolling and, like a snow ball, it has grown bigger and bigger as it rolled, until to-day the book-

It is our pleasure to present to the readers of the *Sunday Strand* some of these delightful creations. Though they are not religious pictures in the exact sense of that much-abused word, yet they are, to every child-loving heart, so full of the spirit of kindness, love and tender humour, that they will probably warm hearts which a more serious set of pictures would leave untouched.



IN DARK DECEMBER.

Drawn by Frank Dadd, R.I.

stalls groan with their weight of Christmas literature. The pictures are half the battle, and why? Because the children like them. Father carries home the illustrated magazines and papers because the artists have revelled in the glorious and congenial task of drawing pretty children, occupied in every conceivable Christmas pastime and custom.

Mr. Sidney Begg has made a happy hit in *The Tournament*, and, furthermore, his picture is typical of Christmas. The children are emphatically "on the top." All mere men must bow the knee to the conquering child and be content, despite immaculate linen and dress clothes, to play charger while childhood rides in state. Doubtless the two



A CHRISTMAS DANCE: THE CLASSES.
Drawn by Frank Craig.



A CHRISTMAS DANCE: THE MASSES.
Drawn by Frank Craig.

men on their knees are enjoying themselves better than anyone else in the room, unless it be the two cherubs engaged in mimic warfare or the babe screaming with delight on his mother's lap. Even the dog is there and seems to be enjoying his Christmas as much as anyone.

There is another specimen of Mr. Begg's delightful art in *Crackers*. It is a similar party but at another stage in the proceedings. Everybody is waiting for the crack of the cracker, and again the centre of all interest is a little child. It is her courage which is belauded; it is her sensations which are

comedy, something which, while we laugh, touches the fountain of tears and turns our thoughts, unawares, to those great problems which to-day are crying out for solution in our densely populated cities and towns. The "classes" and the "masses"—these in the brilliantly lighted room, surrounded by every luxury and refinement which wealth and culture can command—those in the wet street, dancing to the tune of the barrel organ; both happy in their own way, but, oh, the difference—the sad, pitiful difference between the lot of the one and the other.

They are all Christ's little ones. He is the



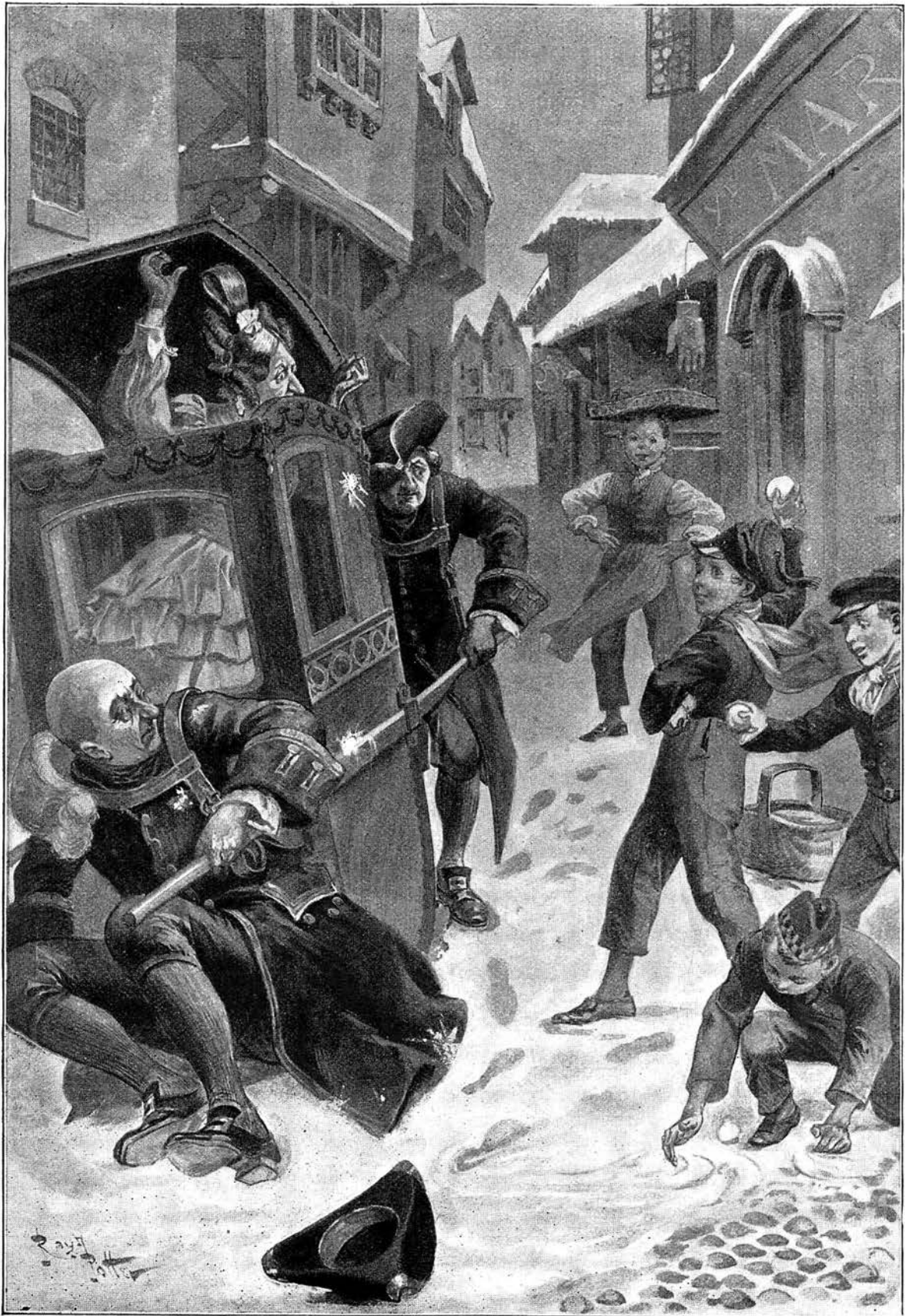
AN AMBUSCADE.
From a drawing by F. Barnard.

uppermost in everybody's mind. And note the little idyll behind the chair. The sweet maiden, wearing the pretty cap she has extracted from her cracker, is bashfully reading to a boy friend the motto which was also one of its hidden treasures. Thus the world goes round and is kept sweet and innocent, and the boy and girl grow up to plight their troth and to make a home of their own and carry on the old traditions in the old sweet way.

Frank Craig touches, perchance, even a deeper note. It is not a note of tragedy—such would be unsuitable to the season—but there is just a spice of tragedy in the

Saviour of the "classes" and the "masses," and with Him, who looks not at the outward appearance but at the heart, the nobility and aristocracy of character dwells both in the East and in the West, and if there is a time when this great truth comes home to all hearts, it is surely Christmas, when we commemorate the great proclamation of peace and goodwill to men.

Frost and snow are in our Northern latitudes inseparably connected with the festival of Christmas. A race of English-speaking people will arise, however,—nay, has already arisen,—who will know nothing of this. The Australian Christmas comes at mid-



HOSTILITIES.
Drawn by R. Potter.



THE COMING OF SANTA CLAUS.
Drawn by Lucien Davis, R.I.

summer and Christmas there, from our point of view, is all topsy-turvy. But here, in the old country, what a joy a good old-fashioned Christmas-cardy Christmas is, when the eaves are hanging with icicles, when the pond is frozen hard enough for a waggon to drive over it, and when every ironmonger's shop-window is beplastered with the magic word "Skates"!

Frank Dadd has given us a pretty picture of an old-fashioned Christmas in the double sense of the word. The boy putting on his skates, the other standing shivering and eager to be off, and the quaint maiden on the snowy bank have been grandparents these twenty years or, more likely indeed, have joined the great majority. But the sentiment is still true. It is a typical English scene, and may the day be far distant when it ceases to be.

And what shall be said of snowballing? Even the victim can hardly be seriously "cross" when a party of merry boys and girls, such as Fred Barnard could draw so well, let fly showers of snowy missiles, not only from behind the trees but under cover of the very barrow-load of holly and mistletoe which the poor fellow has set down in order to attend to his self-defence. It is certainly a warfare in which the advantage is all on one side but, unlike all other warfare, it is

kindly meant and there is no malice in it. The picture is typical of Fred Barnard's art, and the man who so sympathetically illustrated Dickens has a congenial subject. But it is not every one, after all, who takes snowballing kindly, and Mr. Reginald Potter gives us a case to the contrary. It is again one of those old-fashioned English scenes that, with "black and white" men, are so much in vogue. The quaint schoolboys with high peaked caps, the 'prentice with his pies upon his head, the sedan chair of the period, the be-flounced and crinolined dame, the chair-carriers, wigged and wigless,—what can be more complete? But the old lady is angry; there can be no mistake about that. She doesn't take kindly to snowballs at all, and, true to their nature, the more unkindly she takes it, alas, the more the little urchins like it. But let us hope she had kindlier thoughts afterwards.

In "Justice on the Heels of Crime" we have a scene which is just as modern as the other is archaic. Mr. Forester has hit off the situation delightfully and has added to the humour of the picture by the humour of the title. We have all been there. We have all committed the unpardonable sin of making a "slide" in the public road, seen the policeman loom large round the corner and made a frantic endeavour to get a last



A QUIET CHRISTMAS.
Drawn by Cecil Aldin.

slide before we ran. This time, the corner is very near and the policeman very nimble, but,—alas for the hopes of men,—the prey which was well-nigh in his clutches, eludes his grasp and down he comes on the very slide it was his duty to prohibit. A fearful joy is depicted on the faces of the children, while the bigger and rougher boys on the top of the bank, who have probably often been “chivvied” by this self-same policeman, have the utmost difficulty in controlling their risibles. The children themselves have probably been counting their “Christmas Bumps” and here is Mr. Peeler himself actually

Cowper. But this time the children have been to Santa Claus’ headquarters, to his storehouse and magazine, and they are coming back laden with spoil, or, perchance, going to another room to add to their possessions. What perfect joy is depicted on the face of the little child who marches well in front with her new doll clutched to her fur-bound coat! But even her excitement is surpassed by the brother who follows in her train, gun over shoulder and drum slung about his neck. Wait till he gets home, indeed? Not he! He must “drum” now, this very minute, and no power on earth shall

indulging in one. What a triumph!

Then there is the Santa Claus legend—that old, old idea which custom cannot stale, because, to every new child who comes into the world, it is as new as the world itself. Mr. Lucien Davis has given us a delightful picture. It is again the old theme, the “grown-ups” plotting and planning on the one side and the children behind the curtain wildly expectant on the other. This is Santa Claus indeed, the identical individual, the chimney climbing, deer-driving saint himself; and what a load he has got! Sufficient to go round and something to spare. The fair ladies who lift the curtain, and the rest hugging themselves for very joy in the joy of the little ones, have been through it all themselves and know just how it feels. Can you not hear, a moment later, the cry of rapture which goes up from the shadowy party within? Mr. Davis’s talented pencil has seldom done anything better.

Children and toys again by Mr. Max



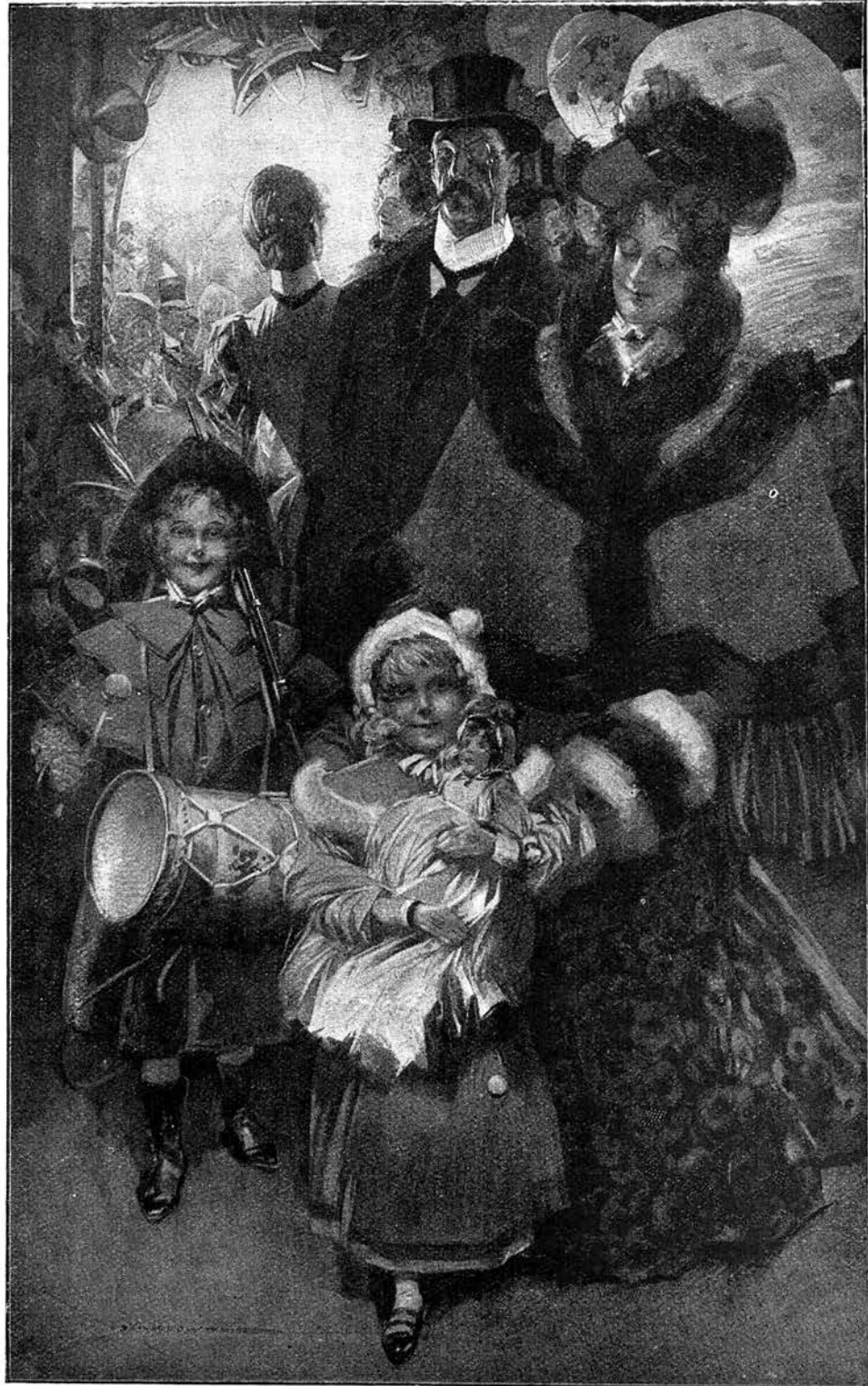
JUSTICE ON THE HEELS OF CRIME.
From the drawing by Forestier.

stop him. Ah! the martial spirit is strong in boys, but if, under Christian influence and training, it becomes sanctified into true patriotism and a passion for righteousness, into the courage which faces death rather than disgrace, it is not to be lightly esteemed.

And now as we draw to a close, two of the most popular and truly English of all black and white artists remain to be mentioned. The first is Cecil Aldin, the true successor of Randolph Caldecott, a man of delightfully quaint humour and wonderful execution. Probably no man living reproduces the old English atmosphere so well as this fine artist, and the drawing we present to our readers is a typical example. The artist's kindness of nature is proved by his choice of subject, for he seldom omits a child and a dog. They are both here in the very forefront and the combination of old age by the fireside, slippered and pantalooned, the tiny mite on the old man's knee, listening entranced while he bridges the years that lie between with a tale of some Christmas long ago, and the lovers at the window, looking out upon a world transfigured by hope—make a picture worthy of any painter's brush.

Outside it is cold and bleak, but inside, despite the fact that there is no exceptional Christmas cheer, there is the happiness of a home life where the old and young live in unity.

And, lastly, comes the ever-popular Louis Wain. He is the man who makes cats human.



A CHRISTMAS EVE IN TOYLAND.
Drawn by Max Cowper.

It has been said that his cats are not like cats, but when someone asked: "If Louis Wain's cats are not like cats, what are they like?" the question suddenly became difficult to answer. However that may be, his wonderful skill in making his cats play the rôle of human beings is unique in art and he does it supremely well. This is one of his most typical pictures, and, like all his work, tells its own story admirably.

Some wag has sent out invitations for a Christmas party, and there is joy in infant cat-land. Fond mothers bring their little ones by coach, carriage, and on foot, through the deep snow, to join in the merry-making. But what is this they see on arriving? The broken windows of the house, its generally deserted appearance, and more than all the great staring sign over the garden wall, unmistakably announce the fact that the house is empty, and that a hoax has been played upon the unsuspecting parents. There

are vows of vengeance, deep if not loud. Who has done this deed? If it should ever leak out, then woe betide him! Two of the little ones sit upon the family trunk and weep bitter tears. Another, by the aid of a friendly back, climbs over the fence to make further and more particular investigation, but the majority are expressing their feelings, and it is well for us, perhaps, that the picture is only a picture, for the things that a cat can say on occasion are neither pleasant nor polite.

Yes, the man who can draw has a great power in his hands, and it is well, as in the pictures we have chatted about, when the pencil is used to give innocent pleasure. There are higher forms of art than this, but there are few which give greater enjoyment to a greater number, and we are glad to be able to present the pictures to our readers and to wish them all as merry a time as the merriest and happiest to be found in our Christmas Picture Gallery.



THE CHRISTMAS INVITATION: A HOAX.
Drawn by Louis Wain.



THE COMING OF SANTA CLAUS.
By Louis Wain.