

## FIVE BLACK-AND-WHITE ARTISTS.

BY ARTHUR H. GIRDLESTONE.

*Illustrated by* L. RAVEN HILL, MAURICE GREIFFENHAGEN,  
EDGAR WILSON, S. H. SIME, *and* G. D. ARMOUR.



IF the phenomenal increase in the number of illustrated papers and magazines of recent years has not, as was anticipated, had the effect of raising the general standard of black-and-white art throughout the country—and I do not say that it has not—it has certainly produced an oligarchy, so to speak, of extremely clever artists, a select few whose work, differing in style and subject, is alike in the exhibition of the finest artistic qualities and the full appreciation of the black-and-white medium. This oligarchy, created by the natural order of events, and not in accordance with a mere arbitrary dictum, is composed, as one would expect, of young men—the average of their ages does not run to over thirty. It numbers perhaps some dozen or dozen and a half—to give an exact list would be invidious, though the editors of the illustrated papers, if for hard business reasons they are compelled to employ many contributors outside its ranks, are, if they “know their book” (to speak vulgarly), well acquainted with the list of members. Of five of these members I propose to speak here. The signatures on their drawings run: G. D. Armour, Maurice Greiffenhagen, L. Raven Hill, S. H. Sime, Edgar Wilson. Of these, Raven Hill and Greiffenhagen have been longest before the public, and are probably the best known, and it is therefore convenient to take them first.

The popular reputation of Raven Hill, undoubted as of course it is, would be greater still if either we had never had a Charles Keene, or had not a Phil May.

That is Raven Hill's misfortune—I speak entirely from the popular point of view. In the one case the memory of Charles Keene and his work is impossible to forget, and the fame of the man, the majority of whose subjects, or at least of whose subjects as the public know them, are somewhat similar to Keene's, and whose style, in the first instance, was admittedly greatly influenced by that brilliant master's, cannot fail to be somewhat hampered by comparisons, conscious or unconscious, drawn between

them. In the other case Phil May, whose wonderful work—when he chooses it to be wonderful—I am the first to admire, has come to be so associated with the idea of humour that the public mind, which, when it has once got an idol, is apt to take umbrage at the suggestion of anyone else having claims to admiration in the idol's particular line, has not, I fancy, despite itself, the capacity of appreciating another great humorist on his true merits, adopting the “Eclipse first, and the rest nowhere!” phase of thought. That, despite these disadvantages, Raven Hill's work

has won its present position in the public estimation is a striking testimony to its worth.

It is as a humorous artist, of course, that he is best known, and the humorous side of things is—though perhaps he would not agree with me—what he depicts best. As he said to me himself once, speaking of a time when, however humorous, he was a long way from being the artist that he is now, “It was the humour that got me through: they would have never taken my drawings at all if they hadn't been funny.” No one, not



*From a photo by*

*[Marten & Sallnow.]*

MR. L. RAVEN HILL.

even Keene, has ever drawn a drunken man like Raven Hill, and, curious contrast, no one has ever got at the humorous side of

absolutely irresistible. It is curious, by the way, that six of the best of these were purchased from the exhibition of his originals



"CAN'T GRUMBLE ABOUT THE CROP THIS YEAR, GILES."  
 "FERR BLE WEARIN' ON THE GROUND, THOUGH!"

(A cartoon specially drawn for the Windsor by L. Raven Hill.)

children like he. Raven Hill's "drunks" (to be vulgar again) will endure for many a day. One may have a delicately-minded objection to the subject, but the humour of them is

the artist held a year or two since in Pall Mall, by the head of one of our largest firms of brewers, on the same principle I suppose that one of *Punch's* drawings of a drunken



AN ILLUSTRATION BY MAURICE GREIFFENHAGEN.  
(Reproduced, by kind permission, from the "Lady's Pictorial.")

man adorns the walls of a Chancery Lane wine-bar. Another black-and-white artist remarked to me not long since, *apropos* of one of his own drawings, that his idea of humour was not to put two men on an otherwise blank piece of paper "grinning into space." There are black-and-white, and allegedly humorous artists—men, too, whose drawings can be found regularly in papers that ought to know better—at whom this reproach can be hurled all too well and all too often.

To characterise the method of Raven Hill in the light of this criticism is to say that to no single drawing of his that I can remember—and I have seen nearly all of them—could the remark ever have been applied with the very vaguest attempt at justice. His ideas—ninety-nine out of a hundred of which are the result of his own personal observation or conception, not sent him for illustration, as is the regular practice with some "humorous" artists—are humorous in themselves. In the drawing of them the humour, instead of evaporating, becomes intensified; the fun is not merely in the wording beneath the drawing, but an integral part of the drawing itself. Even if you take the letterpress away the humour still remains; you cannot get rid of it.

It has been declared—with what truth I do not suggest—that all really good art is national, racy of the soil from which it springs. If this be a true test, Raven Hill certainly emerges from it with entire success. He has treated the humours of English country and seaside life and doings as well as one can ever wish to see them treated. And here, as elsewhere, his observation is drawn at first hand. Some part of the year he always spends at the seaside or in the country—for preference he chooses a place where, within easy reach, he can find both. He comes back to town a perfect gold mine of fresh ideas; and when these run short, and the ordinary incidents of daily London life are not sufficient to provide material for the work he has on hand, he will be off again somewhere for a couple of days, returning to rain ideas into his drawings, with plenty to spare for conversation as well; indeed, he is a born journalist, and should his pen ever fail him in its present direction—which the gods forbid!—I make no doubt he could use it in the other.

It is unkind, I know, to snip off a bit of a man's idea, but, as representing his humorous sidelights on country life, I cannot resist quoting the under-lines of one of the best

drawings in that or any other line he ever did, which, published in a paper whose days regrettably were but few—the *Unicorn*—has certainly not received the publicity it deserves. The scene is laid in a country church, and one of the good old-fashioned choirs, with band instead of organ to accompany them, is practising the anthem, under the superintendence of the vicar. In the drawing the proud player of the double-bass is reaching forward to the fiddler in front of him, and the under-lines run thus:—

Basses (*repeating*): "Who is the King of Glory?"

Trebles (*ditto*): "Who is the King of Glory?"

Double-bass (*reaching over seat*): "'Ere, gi'e I that rosin and I'll show ee the King o' Glory!"

The earnest anxiety of the double-bass player to do proper justice to the line, and the horror-stricken mien of the vicar on hearing the request, are depicted in a way that would earn the man who drew it a big reputation if he never had drawn and never did draw anything else.

Raven Hill, though in most people's, including the present writer's, opinion, at his best in the class of work alluded to above—the nationally humorous, if the expression be permissible—the delineation of the humorous side of the People (with a big P)—has, notwithstanding, an astonishing number of other sides to his artistic talent. He will give you, for instance, a drawing that in lightness, yet withal firmness of touch, is for all the world a pure Forain, he will produce you a bold lithograph—I remember a most excellent series of lithographs of children—or an elaborate landscape etching. Indeed, his avidity for fresh mediums is perhaps almost too comprehensive. There is something bewildering in this gorgeous variety, one wonders whether his fancy will lead him next. And, like so many black-and-white men, he does not confine himself to black-and-white; and, by the way, his drawings for the illustrated papers are done in pure pen and ink, in a mixture of pen and ink or charcoal and "wash," or in pure "wash," with equal facility. The time snatched from black-and-white work is devoted to painting, and his achievements in this direction are to be seen yearly in one or other of the exhibitions. In fine, he gets through an incredibly large amount of work, more, I should say, than any other black-and-white man; but his ideas, notwithstanding the amount he turns out, seem inexhaustible.

Raven Hill, owing doubtless to the cut of his short beard, has often been taken for a Frenchman. As a fact, he is absolutely British. He was born at Bath and educated at Bristol. A great deal of his art educa-

If Raven Hill is essentially the prophet of the People, Maurice Greiffenhagen is even more—I refer, be it understood, to his black-and-white work—the prophet of Society. He is to our own illustrated papers all

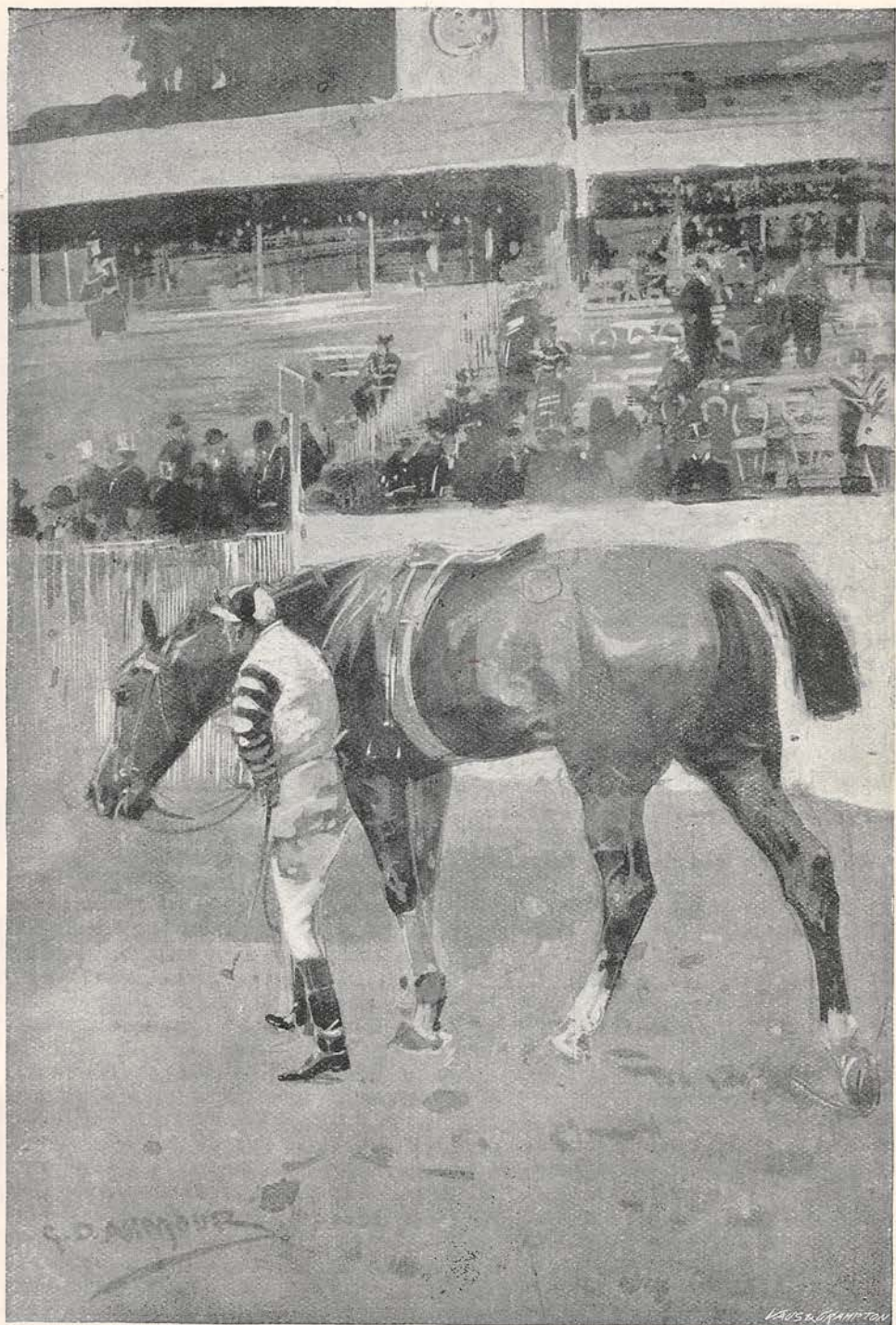
that Wenzel is to the illustrated papers of America, and a great deal more besides. His men and women are all well dressed—more, his men are gentlemen, and his women ladies. Judging by the scarcity of work of this class in the illustrated press, such subjects are not easy to draw. The common mistake is to represent the society man as an over-dressed shopwalker, and the society woman as a “Sunday-out” barmaid. There is even a story told to the effect that the editor of one of the really first-class “illustrateds,” in despair at the garments assigned to the society characters, in a story he was publishing, by the artists who were supplying the illustrations, put up a notice in the public office asking artist-contributors particularly to remember that “gentlemen do not pay morning calls in the country attired in silk hats and frock-coats.” To say that Maurice Greiffenhagen is not of this class of artist would be to pay him but a doubtful compliment. To say that he is one of the very few English black-and-white men who have depicted the real tone and atmosphere of English society is to pay



AN ILLUSTRATION BY MAURICE GREIFFENHAGEN.  
(Reproduced, by kind permission, from the "Lady's Pictorial.")

tion, however, he received in Paris, where he went through the regular students' course. His opinion of the French art schools at the present moment is not very flattering. He considers that they have fallen from the glory of their ancient high estate.

him a real one. To say, as one truthfully can say, that artistically he is a long way ahead of such others, is probably to pay one of more value to himself. For in fact, in conforming with a point of view perhaps urged upon him by the editors of certain



STEEPLECHASING: RETURNING AFTER A FALL.

By G. D. Armour.

(Reproduced, by kind permission, from the "Pall Mall Budget.")

illustrated papers, who have recognised the extreme value of such work to any paper whose readers are taken from the upper and upper-middle classes, and able, therefore, to detect at once the real from the shoddy—in conforming, as I say, with this view, if he will permit me to say so, Mr. Greiffenhagen has sacrificed nothing of his artistic self.

He is and always will be too much of an artist to become, or to be in the slightest danger of becoming, a mere photographer. When you look at any one of his drawings of fashionable society you feel at once that the thing is what it purports to be. The women's dresses are not in the least fashion-plates. If you took one of the drawings to a dress-maker and told her to make a dress like this or that in the picture, she would smile and tell you frankly it was impossible—there were no details. And that is just it, there are

no details. Yet, irresistibly, somehow the drawing, by subtle artistic suggestion, conjures up before you a picture of a woman in the very latest fashion—in the English equivalent for what our French neighbours call *le dernier cri du chic*. As a matter of fact there is probably no such actual dress on the paper at all. But the artist, as I say, by subtle suggestion, assures you that

there is. That is one of the triumphs of his art.

In black-and-white it is as an illustrator proper—an illustrator, that is, of stories—that Maurice Greiffenhagen has had his greatest triumphs. It is an unfortunate fact that a great many illustrators, instead of adding to, detract from the charm of the story they

illustrate. To use common parlance, their illustrations are “not up to” the text. I can remember a very large number of stories, mostly in the *Lady's Pictorial*—to which he is an old and a constant contributor—for which Mr. Greiffenhagen has supplied the illustrations. I cannot remember one to which these illustrations, apart altogether from their individual qualities as pictures, have not added a very real value. One reason for this is doubtless that the artist avoids the pitfall into which so many illus-



“TALLY-HO!”

By G. D. Armour.

(Reproduced, by kind permission, from the “Pall Mall Budget.”)

trators fall—a too studious and laboured endeavour to photographically reproduce some incident in the text. Just as he gives you, by suggestion and general “atmosphere,” an infinitely better idea of a well-dressed woman than the most accurate photograph could do, so his illustrations, instead of merely cataloguing, so to speak, with the brush what the writer has recorded

with his pen, shed a new but equally important light upon the characters and their surroundings. This is illustration in the best sense of the word, illustration which is itself creative, not only a mode of emphasis of someone else's creation.

Mr. Greiffenhagen's illustrative, and indeed all his black-and-white work, is now done in "wash." There was a time—not so long ago—when he worked in pen and ink as well. But the latter medium was never really suited to his method, which is perhaps rather, so to speak, that of a painter in black-and-white than of a hard and fast black-and-white artist; and he has been well advised in relinquishing it. Though it is as a portrayer of the moods and modes of society that the illustrated-



MR. G. D. ARMOUR.



"TEAR HIM! TEAR HIM!"

By G. D. Armour.

(Reproduced, by kind permission, from the "Pall Mall Budget.")

paper public knows him best, such work is far from being all that comes from him. Despite the limitations necessarily imposed on him in work of this kind, the result he achieves is marvelously successful. However trivial the subject depicted, he succeeds in imparting to it a quiet dignity which raises it at once from the commonplace; nor does he ever forget, whatever he has in hand, that he is an artist with an ideal which cannot be sacrificed, though it may perhaps be sometimes modified to square with the requirements of painfully practical editors. But it is in his work, other than his black-and-white work—and he is in reality more of a painter than a black-and-white man at all—that the whole of his fancy reveals itself. He has given us in this line some exquisite imaginative pieces—in particular, I remember one now in the Liverpool Art Gallery—and some fine portraits, and he will give us more. To speak at length of this side of Mr. Greiffenhagen would be outside the province of this article, but I may perhaps be allowed to express a hope, in the interests of



illustrated papers and their public, that he will always be able to find time for a little black-and-white. He fills a place in the black-and-white world which, if he quitted it, would perforce remain empty, for in the class of drawing that he gives us he has not even competitors, much less rivals. I should add that I have begged hard for a photograph or sketch of himself to accompany this article. But, despite my entreaties, he has remained obdurate. He has not any photographs, and he absolutely refuses to do a sketch.

It is curious, perhaps, that the last time I met Mr. Armour was at Mr. Greiffenhagen's house. For though, in the subjects treated, they are as far apart as the Poles, there is a



MR. S. H. SIME.  
(*Sketched by himself.*)

certain similarity about their methods. Each, to use a phrase I have used before, but which is the only one to adequately represent my meaning, is a painter in black-and-white rather than a black-and-white man pure and simple. To put it in a different way, each uses the brush more, or, judging by effects, seems to use it more, than other black-and-white men. In the black-and-white work of each there is a certain painting-like effect, a richness of colour which is quite remarkable.

Mr. Armour, who studied in Glasgow, is to be congratulated on having achieved a very difficult task. He can draw a sporting picture—it is to work of this sort, and particularly to hunting sketches, that his black-and-white is confined—which shall at once earn the entire approbation of the artistic

and the sporting eye. It must be confessed that the art of a good many of our popular sporting pictures is somewhat dubious, while at the same time scores of really good artists have come to indescribable grief when they have essayed to draw a horse. Doubtless it is largely due to the fact that he is himself as keen a sportsman, in the true sense of the term, as he is a good artist that Mr. Armour can produce a drawing which is at once good art and good sport. The fact at all events remains.

I could say a great deal more about Mr. Armour did space permit. But I do not not know that, though it would illustrate my statement, it would advance it one tittle. Anyone who has a joint knowledge of sportsmen and their requirements in a picture, and artists and the general canons of art, will realise that the man who can produce a picture which shall be to the infinite pleasure of both has achieved a very remarkable thing. That this is so in the case of Mr. Armour is indubitable, and he is to be very much congratulated thereon.

Mr. S. H. Sime, the "newest" man of my group, is, I would almost say, the most remarkable personality of them all. He is an artist and he is a philosopher. He has a tinge of Max Nordau and Ibsen in his composition, together with an imagination after the manner of Poe, and the infinite painstaking and scrupulous exactitude of a Dutchman. I am aware that this article is understood to deal with black-and-white art, but Mr. Sime's personality is such a part of his drawings that it is impossible to adequately treat the one without at least some reference to the other. I first saw him about a couple or three years ago. He came into the office of an illustrated paper bringing a drawing, or rather, I should say that he sent his drawing in to be inspected, and it struck everyone as so remarkable that he was at once invited to follow it. When he came in we felt that the artist was perhaps even more remarkable than the drawing. With all respect to Mr. Sime, I am bound to say that the sketch he has done of himself for reproduction with this article doesn't do him justice. It really gives very little idea of him; but he has no photographs, and, under the circumstances, it is the best likeness of him that can be obtained. If geniuses can be told off-hand, Mr. Sime looks like being one. His work goes to prove that the supposition is not groundless. He is a genuine artist. What for illustrated paper work is equally



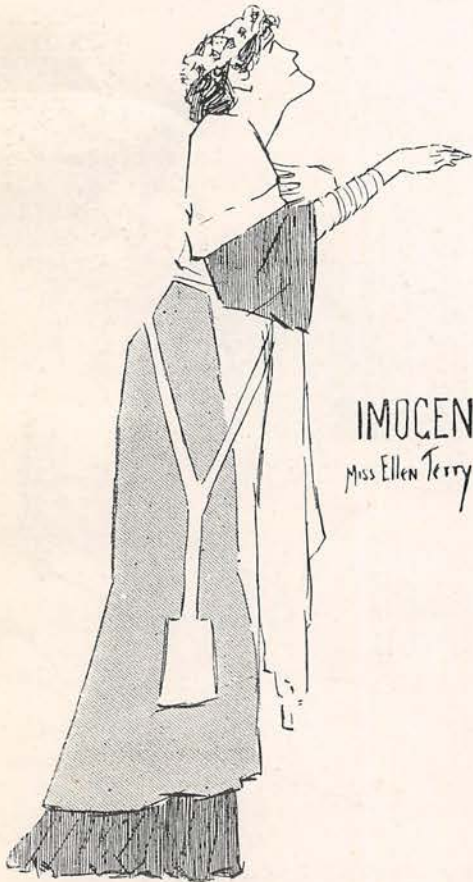
S. H. Sime

*Mother Britannia:* BLESS THE BOY! HOW HE DO EAT; THERE'LL BE NOTHING LEFT FOR TOMMY.

A cartoon by S. H. Sime.

(Reproduced, by kind permission, from "Pick-me-up.")

important, he has ideas. But in one particular section of the drawings he has done there is something more than the result of those important qualifications. Always humorous, he has shown himself in the series of drawings dealing with the "Shades" and other supernatural subjects, a satirist of a grim, but very remarkable order. The drawings themselves are excellent—as drawings. They are executed with extraordinary care—not a detail is missing. On the other hand, the details do not insist; they seem to add to, not detract from, the general extraordinary effect of weird power. Most of them—I think all of them—appeared in the same paper. After a time the series was suddenly discontinued; it was understood that the proprietors of the paper were of opinion that the drawings were calculated to wound the religious susceptibilities of the public. Herein the proprietors, I think, were wrong. I have



MISS ELLEN TERRY AS IMOGEN.

By S. H. Sime.

(Reproduced, by kind permission, from "Pick-me-up.")



IACHIMO

IRVING

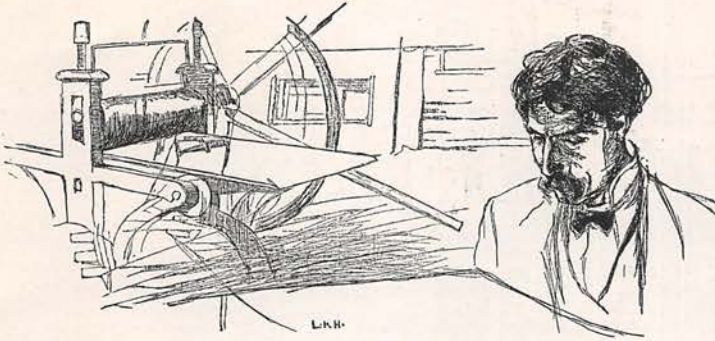
SIR HENRY IRVING AS IACHIMO.

By S. H. Sime.

(Reproduced, by kind permission, from "Pick-me-up.")

even had conversations with a most important dignitary of the Church, who would have been the first to resent any attempt to cast ridicule on sacred subjects. He told me that he found the drawings astonishingly amusing, and as to the suggestions that had been made of some disrespect implied in them to the national religion, such suggestions were in his opinion absurd. My own opinion coincides with the Churchman's. However, be this as it may, the series was discontinued, and thereby black-and-white lost some unique work.

But I need, perhaps, hardly say that Mr. Sime's talent is not confined to the depicting of scenes such as these. In caricature of all kinds he is extremely strong. Some specimens of his work in the theatrical



EDGAR WILSON.  
 Drawn by L. Raven Hill.

caricature line are given here. He is a satirist rather than a humorist, and if there is a grim side to a thing he always manages to see it. Leaving aside his colour work—portrait painting—of which he has already given some most promising examples, he is undoubtedly a very strong man, of whom we shall hear more.

Mr. Sime hails from the North. His experiences in search of occupation have been many and varied, and his "roughing it" has been of a bitterly realistic order. But in face of every difficulty the artistic instinct has refused to be stifled, and at length he joined the Liverpool Art School. Thence in due course, and by dint of sheer merit, he has forced his way into the black-and-white field.

These notes may be fittingly concluded by a reference, which I would fain make a great deal longer, to Mr. Edgar Wilson, whose black-and-white work is the complement of that of the four others. Save amongst artists, editors of illustrated papers, and the like, Mr. Edgar Wilson (who must be distinguished from two other black-and-white men of the same surname) is, I believe, but little known. Yet he has done a great, if unassuming work. The decora-

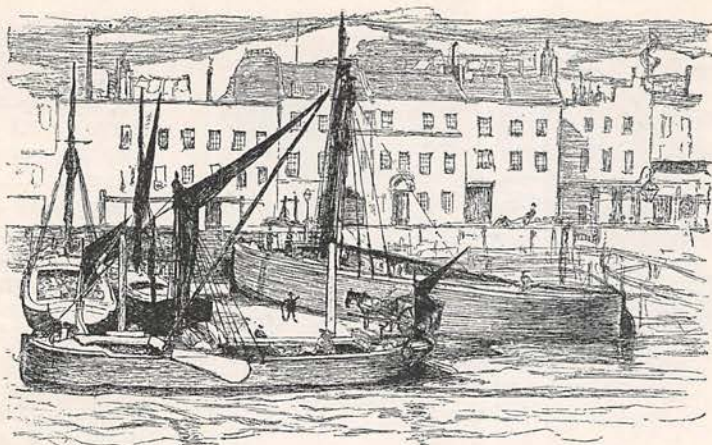
tive letters and head and tailpieces, without which no illustrated paper of to-day is complete, and which serve to set off the other drawings, and enormously enhance the general appearance of an illustrated page, are in every case either achieved by Mr. Wilson's own hand, or the result, by imitation, of his influence. It is not too much to say that Edgar Wilson has changed the entire appearance of the illustrated press, and a

reference to the back files of that press will supply an immediate proof. To have done this is to have done something of which an artist might well be proud. But this is



THE GREAT PAVEMENT: FIRST CONSIGNMENT OF GOOD INTENTIONS FOR 1897.

An allegorical New Year's cartoon by S. H. Sime.  
 (Reproduced, by kind permission, from "Pick-me-up.")

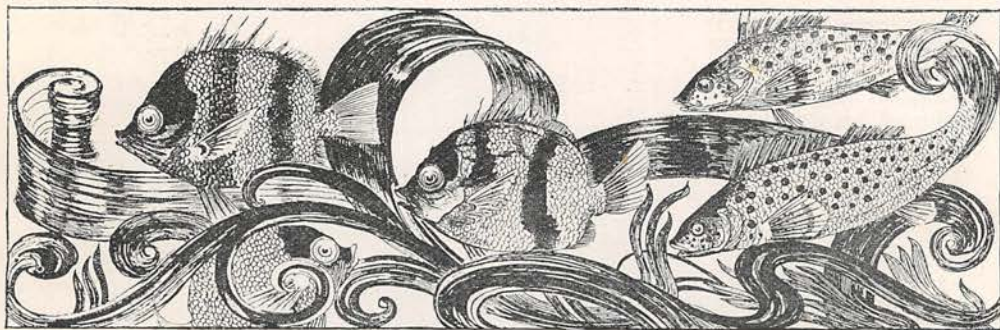


MILLBANK.

(An etching by Edgar Wilson.)

not the extent of Edgar Wilson's talent. His lithographs, which, by the way, he prints himself—the sketch of him by his friend Raven Hill shows him at the press—represent excellent work of another kind. An etching from his pen is reproduced here. He cares

little for the public verdict, only satisfied when he has done something which he believes to be really good, using his every endeavour always to do it, contented among his Japanese prints, his old engravings and curios, a sovereign example of the absolutely artistic mind.



A TAILPIECE BY EDGAR WILSON.

(Reproduced from the "Unicorn.")