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A SCENE FROM DICKENS.

Christmas without Dickens is like plum pudding without the sauce. The *Sphere* Christmas Number (2s.) is notable for a fine double-page colour plate by F. Matania, showing one of the most appealing incidents in the early part of *David Copperfield*—the start of David's journey from London to Yarmouth. This alone will ensure a wide demand for the *Sphere*, and there is much more work of much artistic merit. Of particularly high quality is the reproduction of the cathedral scene from "Faust," as painted by F. Cadogan Cooper, A.R.A. Simple, but rich in colouring, the figure drawing is superb. Under the heading of "When Red Rose Fought White" is given a beautiful series of illustrations of the famous Paston letters. This is the first time these fascinating documents have been pictured. Campbell Taylor, Archibald Barnes and G. E. and H. M. Brock are among the other artists who have been commissioned, and the fiction is good and seasonable.

Philip A. de Laszlo's picture, "The Inspiration," which won golden opinions at the French Gallery this year under the title of "The Drawing Lesson," is the centre-piece of "The Illustrated London News Christmas number (2s.). The spiritual quality of the youthful subject's facial expression focuses attention. Other notable pictorial works are Pierre Gaston Rgand's interiors of the cathedrals of Chartres and Bourges, under the heading, "The Glory of Stained Glass." Attention is also attracted by Felix de Grey's narration in colour of three old fairy tales, whose fantastic spirit his brush has cleverly expressed, and Georges Daintu's paintings of Japan under snow. There are many more pictures, and the array of authors includes Vicente Blasco Ibanez, who has written "The Widow's Loan." A presentation plate is given with this number: "The Motherland," by C. E. Turner.