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DELIGHTFUL PRODUCTIONS.

Among the first, and the most welcome, heralds of approaching Christmas are the hardy annuals of the printing presses. Hardy they are, but also fresh and charming. It is surprising what progress has been made in the typographical art in the last quarter of a century. The Christmas numbers of well-known magazines are to-day, without exception, so remarkable for literary and artistic interest, and for first-rate production, that it is difficult to believe that they can be improved upon. "The Sketch" Christmas number is full of good Christmas reading and charming illustrations. The artists whose delightful works are reproduced in colours include Kenneth Forbes, Jean Ray, Suzanne Lagneau, Louis Morin, Lewis Baumer, Percy Sturdee, Miarko, E. H. Shepard (illustrating some exquisite verse from the French by Barbara Bingley), Hulme Beaman, such humorous artists as Rene Bull and Higgins, James Clark (whose striking water-colour "500 Before Jazz" occupies a double page), Gaston Bussiere, and André Lambert. Orlando Greenwood's "Venus and Cupid" is a delightful example of his method of painting still-life pictures and imbuing them with life of their own. First-rate fiction is contributed by Stacy Aumonier, Lawrence W. Meynell, and Dale Collins. A pretty study of a girl, specially painted for the "Sketch" by W. E. Webster, forms the supplement.

With an inspiring art supplement in colours entitled "The Motherland," depicting a happy little family on board a ship from India in sight of the white cliffs of Old England, from a picture specially painted by C. E. Turner, the "Illustrated London News" offers its readers a most varied and lavish assortment of beautiful reproductions from the works of famous artists, fiction, humour, fairy lore, and special articles, all profusely illustrated. The painting world is represented by G. A. Burlangué, Georges Daintu, Felix De Gray (with new decorative interpretations of the old fairy tales), Pierre Gaston Rigaud (rich reproductions of stained glass French cathedral interiors), Philip De Laszlo (a masterly study of a boy artist), S. S. Longley, E. J. Detmold, Alexandre Rzewuski, Auguste Gorguet, Kay Nielsen, Adolf Birkenruth, W. E. Webster, Percy F. S. Spence, Suzanne Lagneau, and Lawson Wood. Prominent among the story-tellers is the well-known Spanish novelist Vicente Blasco Ibanez, with a strong tale of a hot-blooded and superstitious Argentine gaucho, which is enhanced by the remarkable drawings of Warwick Reynolds.

"Holly Leaves," the Christmas number of the "Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News," is another fine production, with a photogravure supplement which deserves special attention. The subject by John A. Lomax bears the title, "For he had spoken lightly of a woman's name," and is a stirring study of eighteenth century duellists. Highly attractive are numerous other pages in colour in which we have some characteristic brushwork by Wilton Williams, D'Egville, W. H. Barribal, J. R. Skelton, Frank Dadd, Lawson Wood, A. D. McCormick, Harry Rountree, Rene Bull, Lewis Baumer (a particularly striking effect, "The Blue Kimono"), Bert Thomas, Wilmot Lunt, Heath Robinson, and Will Owen. Some of the above artists are again reproduced in photogravure and in half-tone, while the distinguished story-tellers to be found in these pages include Perceval Gibbon, Owen Oliver, Vicente Blasco Ibanez, H. de Vere Stacpoole, Baroness von Hutton, and Geoffrey Bradley.