

"Don't mention it, Miss," replied the policeman. They stepped out together. "Oh," said Christina, "are you going this way?" "I am," he answered, "why, Miss?" "I know of a much shorter way," she said. "Up Sarsfield-road." "I shouldn't think," said the policeman sternly, "of taking a young lady through such low purities as them." Christina paused. "I see," she said, "you are very considerate, Sergeant." The constable drew himself up again, and coughed importantly. "I feel sure ye are a Sergeant," Christina said, "by the knowledge of the law you show." "Pooh, Miss," said the constable, "that's a trifle to what I do know." "Oh, indeed," said Christina humbly. She added, "It must make the world seem a very wicked place, Sergeant, to know so much about thieves and drunken men, and such as them." "Ay, Miss," returned the constable, his sense of protection causing him to keep very close to her, "but a tender young lady like yourself would have no notion of the crime we—ahem, sergeants of the force control." Christina sighed. "There's a terrible amount o' wrong-doin' in the world," said the big policeman, and at that moment Christina felt a strong support creep round her waist. She started. "Sergeant," she exclaimed, "isn't that your ain?" "Yea, miss," replied the constable. He coughed. "Ye may not be aware that in the exercise of me duty, it is incumbent on me to place the arm round any young lady who has put herself into me guardianship." "Oh, I see," exclaimed Christina. "I beg your pardon, Sergeant." "Not at all, Miss," he replied. "The laws of the force, ye know, are very binding." "So I suppose," she murmured. "Any infringement o' the regulations," continued the policeman, "is visited by a heavy fine, Miss."

"Is that so?" exclaimed Christina. "I would not like to get you fined, Sergeant. Were you ever fined yet?" "No, Miss, never," he replied. "How silly of me to ask," said Christina, "policemen, an' more especially a Sergeant, never can do wrong, of course." "Ye are right, Miss," said the constable, "they can't." "So don't be thinkin'," Christina murmured reassuringly, "that the exercise of your duty is at all unpleasant to me." "I am greatly gratified to hear ye say so, Miss," said the constable, "it makes the performance of it a pleasure." "You're very kind to say so," returned Christina, bowing her head. They proceeded thus in silence for a little time. Suddenly the policeman stooped towards the pavement. "What are ye doin'?" she asked. "Quenchin' a lighted match," said the constable, "they're a menace to the safety of the public." "The public owes you a great deal!" said Christina, sighing. "A fair share, Miss," the constable admitted. "I am afraid," said Christina, "that I am takin' up too much of your time, Sergeant. Should you not be at your post?" "My post, Miss," returned the constable, "is wherever female beauty is in distress." Christina inclined her head again. "You are very good to say so, but are ye sure, Sergeant, that I'm not takin' you off your don't they call it—beat?" "No, Miss," he answered, "this is within me beat." "Indeed," said Christina, "what a nice long one you have!" "It is considered, Miss, I believe," he answered, "though I say it that shouldn't, to be the most important beat in the force." "Really?" said Christina. She looked up at him suddenly. "I used to be afraid of policemen—but I don't think I am—now." "An' what made ye afraid of them, Miss?" he asked. "They seemed so big," returned Christina, "and so cold-hearted."

"Ay," said the constable, "it's a trade that blunts the feelings, Miss—marchin' prisoners to gaol, an' puttin' the handcuffs on 'em, and knockin' a few men senseless with your baton, an' little things like that; some o' the men in the force, they gets so hard-hearted, they'd han'cuff their own mother without shedding a tear." Christina shuddered. "The wretches!" she said. "But you're not like that, Sergeant?" "No, Miss," he answered, "it went the other way with me. It's just like bein' a doctor belongin' to the force; it makes your heart as savage as a mad bull, or as gentle as a new-born lamb." "I'm sure your heart," said Christina, "isn't savage, Sergeant." The constable sighed very deeply. "You're right, Miss," he answered, "but sometimes I wish it was." "Why," said Christina. "Here is Mrs Magee's house! Dear me!—it didn't seem such a long way after all." The constable looked up at the door. He was registering the number in his head. Christina glanced down suddenly. "One of the tails of my fur has come off," she exclaimed. "I must have dropped it in the street; it was always loose." The Sergeant bent, and felt about on the doorstep. "Was it a valuable tail, Miss?" he asked very seriously. "Not very, only imitation squirrel," said Christina. "Tis of no consequence, only the fur was given me by my—"

"Then, supposin' I was to require your protection again, Sergeant—"

"Ask for Constable—er—ask for Hannan at the George Street Barracks, Miss," he said. He looked up at the fanlight over the door. "In the prosecution of my duty I am frequently stationed outside your aunt's house, Miss," said Constable Hannan.

"Are you?" said Christina. "Dear me—how safe we shall feel!" she held out her hand. "Good-night, Sergeant, you have given me very exalted notions of the force."

"Your notions, Miss," said Constable Hannan, "could scarcely be too exalted."

"That's true," murmured Christina, "don't they call you a Preserver of the Peace?"

"Yea, Miss," said the Constable, "that is the humble place I occupy in the world's history."—Christina thought she heard him chuckle faintly—"an' I shall be happy to prove to ye, Miss, at no very distant date, that my title describes me with accuracy."

Constable Hannan, saluting and disappearing round the corner, became aware of the figure of a small man gliding silently before him. It turned suddenly beneath a lamp post, and stared the constable in the face.

"Good evening, Constable," said the man. "Could ye tell me if that is the residence of Mrs. Magee?"

"An' what might ye be wantin'," said the Constable, "with Mrs. Magee?"

"Nothin'—er—nothin'," said the man. The Constable whipped out his notebook.

"Name an' address!" he roared.

"Michael Hogan, 32 Tanner's-lane—what harm was I doin' an' what business is it of yours" the man half-whispered in a breath.

"In pursuance of the Law, an' in the interests of the Preservation o' the Public Peace," said the Constable, "it is me duty to discover the intention of all persons found lingering near any house or houses, without any apparent business with the said house, or visible reason for delay on the part of such persons." He laid his hand on Mr. Hogan's

HONESTLY WORTH A GUINEA.

# Pears' Annual

CHRISTMAS, 1907.

READY NOVEMBER 25th.

(Published by the Proprietors A. & F. PEARS, LTD., 71-73 New Oxford Street, London, W.C.)

The Literary and Artistic Programme includes:

## Seven Great Tales

BY

## Seven Great Authors

GEO. R. SIMS, BARRY PAIN, THE BARONESS ORCZY, JOHN STRANGE WINTER, W. LE QUEUX, FRANK RICHARDSON, CUTCLIFFE HYNÉ.

Illustrated in Black and White and in Tints, by—

## Seven Great Artists

FRANK DADD, R.I., J. C. DOLMAN, A.R.W.S., TOM BROWNE, R.I., A. FORESTIER, MAURICE GREIFFENHAGEN, GORDON BROWNE, R.I., and WILL OWEN.

In Handsome Coloured Cover, and accompanied by—

## Four Presentation Plates,

Each in about 13 Colours, viz:—

"A Chip of the Old Block,"

By FRANK EVANS. Dedicated by special permission to Lord Roberts, V.C., etc.

"A Merry 'Xmas,"

By FRANK DADD, R.I. An Old English Skating Scene.

"Dessert,"

By E. LADELL. A beautiful Study of Fruit.

"A Quiet Pipe,"

By the late SIR EDWIN LANDSEER, R.A.

SOLD BY ALL BOOKSELLERS. Wholesale Agents for Australasia, GORDON & GOTCH.