

Christmas and the Magers.

In Days of Old.

SHAKSPERE'S earliest appearance on the stage, of which any record survives, was in two comedies acted before Queen Elizabeth at Greenwich Palace during the Christmas of 1594. In several succeeding years Boxing day was chosen the great Queen for the performance of the great plays. Christmas, however, went oned but three times by the act, and then in no special reference to play. "Is it not a Christmas gambol or a tumbling trick?" asks Christopher in *Love's Labour's Lost* appear in lines:—
"Christmas I no more desire a rose,
I wish a show in May's new-fangled shows.
The last word is not believed to have any reference to theatrical shows. A line in the "Henry Irving Shakspeare" sets out that fangled was used in the use of gaudy, so that the line suggests May's first gaudy shows (of flowers)." The first continued the Christmas performances at Hampton Court, and the *Long* is believed to have been played in 1606. In the next cen-

tion of Mr. D'Auban. He relies very much on the drollery of a wild ballet by Bluecoat boys.
As for the procession which has come to be the great feature of the Drury Lane annual, Sir Augustus Harris is resolved to make it the very biggest thing ever seen on the stage of a theatre. The idea is historical—groups which after marching on will form tableaux illustrative of memorable events; the landing of William the Conqueror, the signing of Magna Charta, and like episodes being shown. After the brilliant trains have wound their way on and round the stage they will be grouped in order to form a



MISS MARIE LLOYD.

glowing and magnificent background for a picture of our own Royal family, Victoria being represented as the central figure in a glittering array of the Kings

ballet, which includes a picturesque rendering of the attack of the fox on the wood pigeons. On awaking Cinderella finds the Prince at hand to take part with her in a love duet. He has been hunting with hounds which Mr. Barrett has obtained from the Royal kennels at Ascot. After so much that is delicate and beautiful, holiday visitors will naturally look for fun, and that will come in the third scene of the Baron's abode, and the invitation to the ball. One of the witch's gifts to Cinderella is a lucky black cat, represented by Mr. Lauri, and therefore bound to be a favourite before as well as behind the curtain. Disappointed at being left out of the invitations, Cinderella does not sit down and mope, but amuses herself by dancing with the poker and tongs. This will lead up to the magic change of the melon and the mice. Then the heroine is to be driven off in a magnificent carriage, the very wheels of which blaze with the electric light, drawn by six ponies with outriders. The diversion of the story between the natural and the fairy elements, the change from poverty to riches, led Mr. Oscar Barrett to resolve to try the experiment of a break in the Pantomime at this point.

On re-commencing with the fifth scene, the audience will behold the stage arranged very much like the top of a boulevard table. An animated bouquet will show a fairy lace in the heart of every rose; a puff-box will pour out a stream of attendants, while the little jewellers in the same way climb forth from a jewel case. Plenty of action will carry on the story, even the cat being transformed into a black attendant on Cinderella. Then is to come a gorgeous ball-room scene with what may almost be called a chronology of the dance. Specimens of every age will find a place, and the scene is to grow in splendour until it surpasses Mr. Barrett's famous picture in blue of last season. I was afforded a glimpse of the dresses, and am enabled to bear testimony to their richness and beauty. A set in white satin, embroidered with gold and raised roses, for the minuet

in a glare of fire. Two or three years later the future actor saw the wonderful pantomimist Wieland, at the same house, in his thrilling impersonation of Zamiel in *The Demon of the Hariz*. On one occasion four or five of the family were going to the Adelphi, but as Georgey had run a splinter into his foot, and could not walk, the Bigwoods agreed to postpone the visit. A dairyman, however, happened to call, and heard of the altered arrangement, which had put little Georgey in low spirits. Simpson asked if Moggy would be of any use. Moggy was the friendly animal



MR. LUPINO.

who every morning was taken from door to door of those customers who had their milk direct from the cow. Georgey had often had a ride on Moggy's back in the morning through Soho, and so it was arranged that in the even-