

# The Story of a Troll-Hunt

Written and Drawn

by

James McBryde

Originally published (in limited edition)

1904

by Cambridge University Press

as a memorial tribute to James McBryde.

With an Introduction by M. R. James

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[Refer to PGA header at end of story]

# Introduction

The issuing of these pictures affords an opportunity—which comes also in the aspect of a duty—of writing a few prefatory lines about him who drew them. Welcome as it is, I do not think any task could be more difficult; and I ask forgiveness beforehand, if by chance I strike a jarring note. For incompleteness the reader must be prepared; these few pages make no pretence of containing a connected biographical sketch.

I speak as one who first came to know James McBryde when he entered at Cambridge eleven years ago, and who, ever since our first meeting, have found in his friendship an unfailing source of content. No one whom I have known could enlist the warmest affection more easily or retain it more surely. There was no companion who so completed a circle,—no one who, even when he supposed himself to be out of spirits, brought so much enjoyment into an expedition. A smile will never be fair off when his friends speak of him.

All this was obvious, and on the surface. At the same time I do not believe that anyone could have thought him shallow. The determination with which he accomplished his medical course, a great deal of which was at the time entirely against the grain (his progress, we shall all remember was marked throughout by loud and picturesque complaints) was enough to refute any such notion. How helpful he was in a difficulty, how unselfish and considerate always, would be realized very quickly: the depths of his affection, and the strength of his loyalty, few can have fully sounded and tested.

For a great part of his life the stress of his work kept him away from literature, and I can remember the time when a single novel of ordinary dimensions would last him through a whole summer. That, I must say, was in quite early days: as time went on, he developed a very sure taste in the matter of books, just as he did in the matter of drawing, and of art in general.

Pictorial art was, after all, his great pleasure and interest. It is idle to speculate on what he might have achieved in a long life: what I know is that the work he has left, whether it is conceived in a serious or in a humorous spirit, have qualities that never fail to attract, and always abide in the memory. Closely bound up in our minds with his drawings is his talk. His descriptions of his experiences were a perpetual delight: they were coloured by that humour and that brilliant faculty of observation which were part of him, and by a vocabulary that was all his own: they never failed nor palled.

Among lesser ingredients that lent a savour to the manner and matter of his narratives were an admirable tortuousness of expression—which defies reproduction—and an astonishing aptitude for encountering small misadventures. "This has been a bad day," he writes, "I began by missing three trains at three different changes, walked two miles in the rain, missed my train back, then caught another which took me to the wrong place, and have just spilt the entire ink-pot all over my cloth." But these occurrences, which would have reduced most of us to sulky rage, left his serenity unimpaired.

For the accident (he always described it as an accident) which enabled him to pass into King's, the College may be very grateful. The presence in it of so much affection, truth, innocence, and humour could not but make an enormous difference to the atmosphere of the place; and how much pleasure of the best kind his companionship brought into the lives of his nearer friends it is not possible for one of them, at least, to put into words.

He was at once so transparently and simply good, and so strong in varied capabilities and interests, that I cannot hope to bring out all the aspects of him upon which his friends might wish me to dwell, within the limits which I regard as fitting: and, after many efforts to fill in the picture, I have

come to think that the wisest course will be to leave it as a faint sketch. But it is with reluctance that I renounce the effort, and I hope that the renunciation may be only temporary.

As Time one day by me did pass;  
Through a large dusky glasse  
He held, I chanc'd to look,  
And spyed his curious Book  
Of past days, where sad Heav'n did shed  
A mourning light upon the dead.

Many disordered lives I saw,  
And foul records, which thaw  
My kinde eyes still; but in  
A fair white page of thin  
And ev'n, smooth lines, like the sun's rays,  
Thy name was writ, and all thy days.

O bright and happy kalendar!  
Where youth shines like a star  
All pearl'd with tears, and may  
Teach age the Holy way;  
Where through thick pangs, high agonies,  
Faith into life breaks, and death dies.

[These lines are by Henry Vaughan]

The intercourse of eleven years,—of late minutely recalled,—has left no single act or word of his which I could wish to forget.

The sheets reproduced in this book were written and drawn at various times in 1899 and 1900. They were the outcome of an expedition to Denmark which I made with James McBryde and W. J. Stone in the August of 1899. Will Stone was our companion again in Denmark and Sweden in 1900; and in February, 1901, he died. There is much that I could say in remembrance of him also: but that work is reserved for other hands.

The three travellers who appear in the pictures may be taken to represent us three; not,—one is permitted to hope,—with photographic accuracy. The idea of the Troll-hunt was perhaps suggested by myself. It was eagerly adopted, because we had all been much engrossed by the folklore of Jutland, which peoples its wide and lonely heaths with many strange beings. The working-out is entirely due to McBryde, and gives as characteristic a specimen of his particular humour, both in the pictures and in the text, as it is now possible to procure.

I think it not out of place to inscribe this book to the memory of my two fellow-travellers;

*"now no longer sojourners, but citizens."*

M. R. J.

*November, 1904.*

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## The Story of a Troll-Hunt

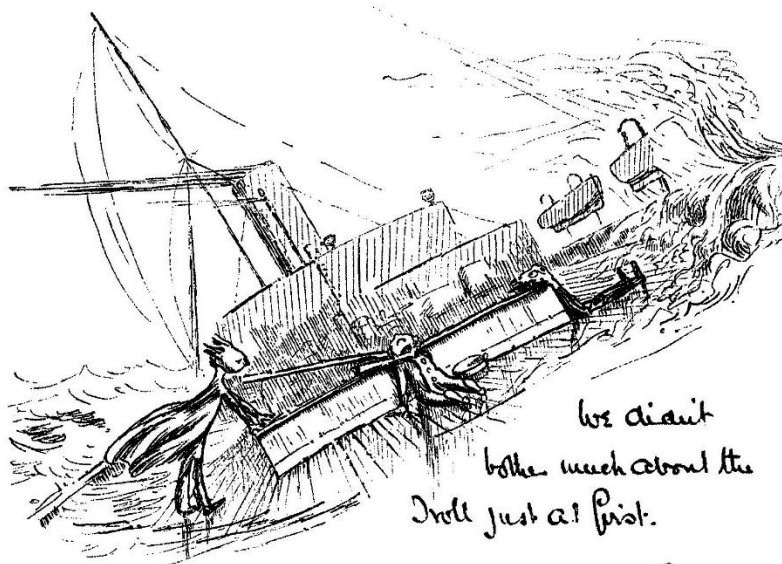
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One evening, while discussing our plans  
- for the Long Vac.



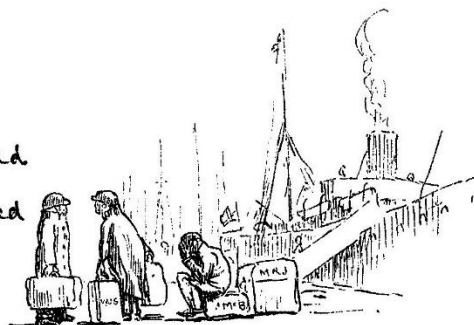
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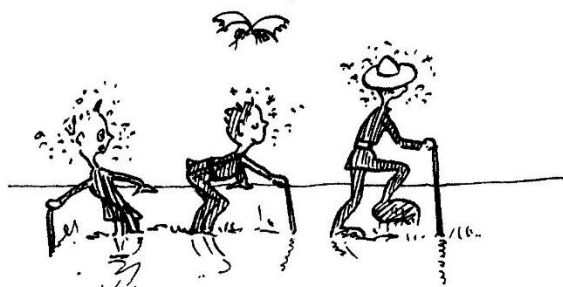


we put our  
heads together, & decided to begin our search  
on the Jutland heaths



We didn't bother much about the Troll just at first, but after we had got safely landed at Ebsjaerg we put our heads together, and decided to begin our search on the Jutland heaths.

Accordingly we started but found



that a days walking over them was  
very tiring.



Moreover there were flies



When we at length reached a barrow, things were  
much better & we determined to rest till moonrise.



As this spot might be suitable for our researches

Accordingly we started, but found that a days walking over them was very tiring. Moreover there were flies. When we, at length, reached a barrow, things were much better and we determined to rest till moonrise, as the spot might be suitable for our researches.



We woke suddenly to find that the moon had risen that a horrible transparently benign Troll was watching us. It was partly like a large bird and partly like a creature with its hands clasped behind it. The apparition remained

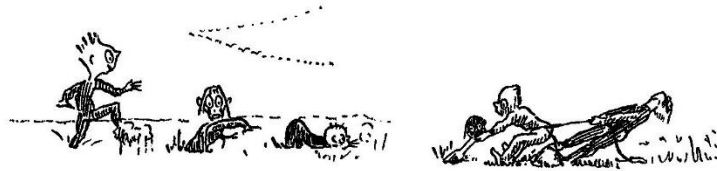


absolutely motionless.  
We didn't.

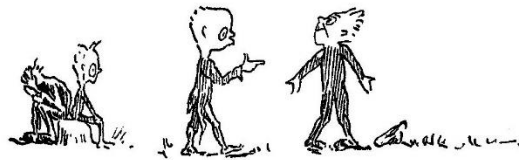


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The bogs greatly impeded our progress until sunrise, shortly after which we met a native.



He mistook our language and appearance for supernatural on our questioning him, but eventually directed us to a road.



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After this we were laid up with colds for some time, but eventually recovered and went by train to Kolding



When we recovered sufficiently to bathe with the best of them, and the Danes are keen on bathing.

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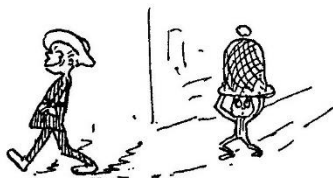
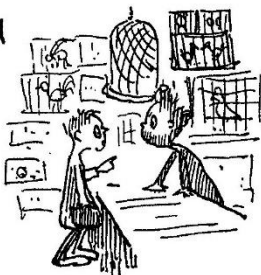


Map of Denmark showing the distribution  
of Trolls, much used by us at this juncture.  
(See Baedeker.)

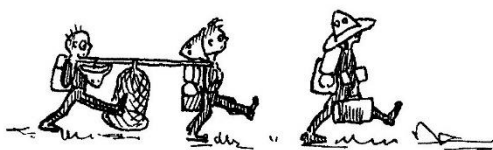
Map of Denmark showing the distribution of Trolls, much used by us at this juncture. (See Baedeker.)

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bought a large parrot's cage and after a vast amount of preparation we started again in search of Trolls.



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This time we were fortunate enough to come upon  
a small sized Troll asleep



And after a crisp struggle succeeded in overpowering  
it.



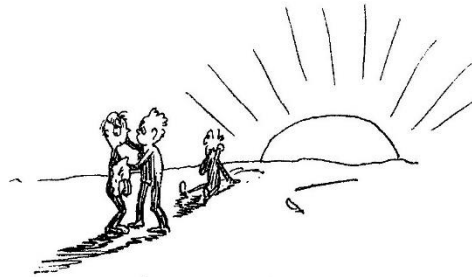
Just before daybreak we were able to start for home with  
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But our joy was short lived for we had forgotten



the peculiarities of Trolls & on the first appearance of the sun it burst.



& nothing was left of it but a few grits in our eyes.



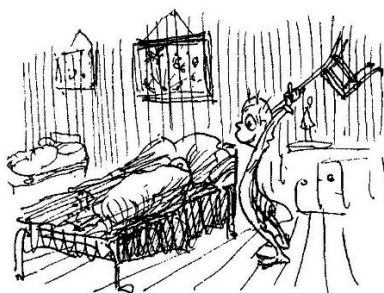
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But our joy was short lived, for we had forgotten the peculiarities of Trolls and on the first appearance of the sun it burst, and nothing was left of it but a few grits in our eyes. We were much dejected when we sat down to breakfast.



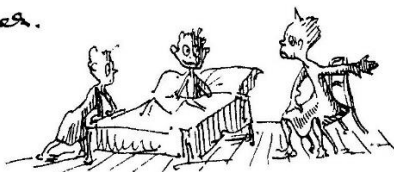
The depression consequent upon our want of success lasted for some time. But a bright idea suddenly struck one of us just as he was going to bed.

The more he thought about it the more feasible it appeared.



Accordingly he arose betimes next morning and called the other two.

And forthwith proceeded to disclose his scheme. And it was agreed unanimously to embark upon it at once.

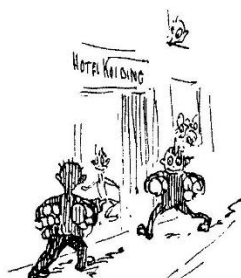


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So having ~~addressed~~ breakfast  
 one of us set off to the leading  
 wine merchant. Purchased  
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 While another bought hypo  
 from the principal photographers  
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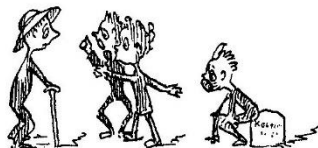
And returned with ~~the~~  
 purchases to the hotel  
 even such an ordinary  
 occurrence as this being  
 sufficient to excite the amusement  
 of the intimates. Meanwhile the third  
 perused manuscripts  
 in the museum with a view  
 to the habits & dates of  
 of the Trolls & their  
 allies.



So having [addressed?] [breakfast?] one of us set off to the leading wine merchant and purchased considerable quantities of whisky, while another bought hypo from the principle photographers shop, and we returned with our purchases to the hotel, even such an ordinary occurrence as this being sufficient to excite the amusement of the [intimates?]. Meanwhile the third perused manuscripts in the museum with a view to studying the habits and dates of assembly of the Trolls and their allies.

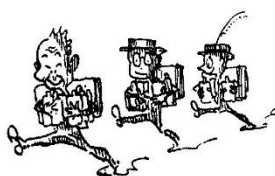


was spent just a day or two speaking



Danish to accustom  
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well in that language in case we should find  
it useful in an encounter with the Trolls



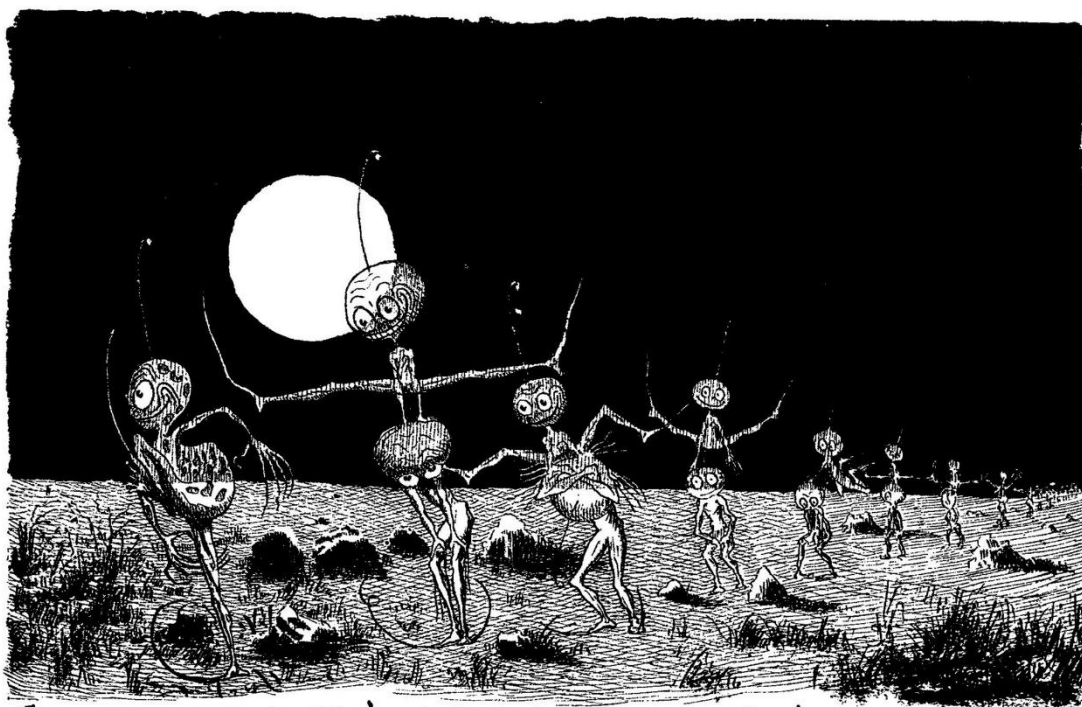
And then confident  
of success, we set out  
on our quest for the

third time, the realization of the great scheme leading  
the way. And as evening came upon us  
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and with considerable difficulty succeeded  
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We spent just a day or two speaking Danish to accustom ourselves to conversing well in that language in case we should find it useful in an encounter with the Trolls, and then, confident of success, we set out on our quest for the third time, the [?] of the great scheme leading the way. And as evening came upon us we deposited our stores and, with considerable difficulty, succeeded in lighting a camp fire.



As we searched about the heath that night we suddenly observed a large assortment of the less responsible Trolls playing leap frog as they advanced from a neighbouring barrow. And knowing from our researches that this was their method of proceeding to their more important assemblies, we lay perdu till they had passed then cautiously followed.

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We followed these beings across the heath  
 taking advantage of what cover we could.  
 It was a slow process but after a long pursuit  
 we arrived at a spot where it was evident  
 the assembly was taking place.



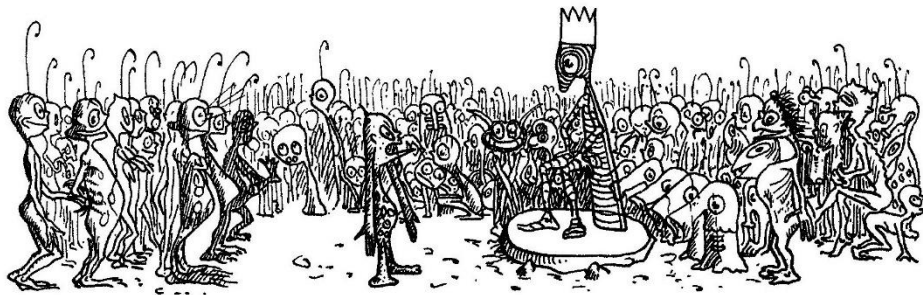
There behind a rock we sat awhile to collect  
 our thoughts & screw up our courage.  
 We tossed up who was to peep over the  
 rock & observe the Trolls.



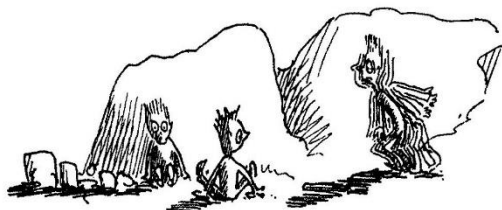
The observer observing.

We followed these beings across the heath taking advantage of what cover we could. It was a slow process but after a long pursuit we arrived at a spot where it was evident the assembly was taking place. There, behind a rock we sat awhile, to collect our thoughts and screw up our courage. We tossed up who was to peep over the rock and observe the Trolls. (The observer observing.)

What he observed



What he observed.



He was shivering considerably when he returned  
 we were afraid he had contracted a chill +  
 gave him some whiskey.



after which he became brighter



so we all took a little



and all became a little brighter.

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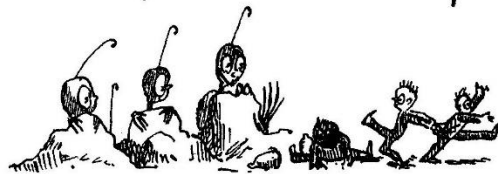
We started with our stores to the Troll's camp & meant



We discovered carousing. Unfortunately through nervousness the first sip went the wrong way & caused alarming & noisy symptoms



which led to our premature discovery,



This was as it happened all for the best as our friend in affliction being scarcely able to see on his recovery, unable to flee, was obliged to explain our sociable & friendly intentions & we bravely stood by him.



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"We placed our whiskey at their services & advanced with what cordiality we were able to assume & were received courteously by a Troll outpost



who introduced us to a few of his friends, pleasant enough fellows but not good looking.



They took to the whiskey with a will and its fame rapidly spread it soon became obvious that we should have a lively night




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We joined in their revels as politeness demanded, but found ourselves  
considerably less elastic nimble than they were.

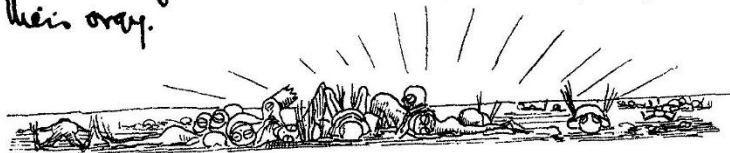
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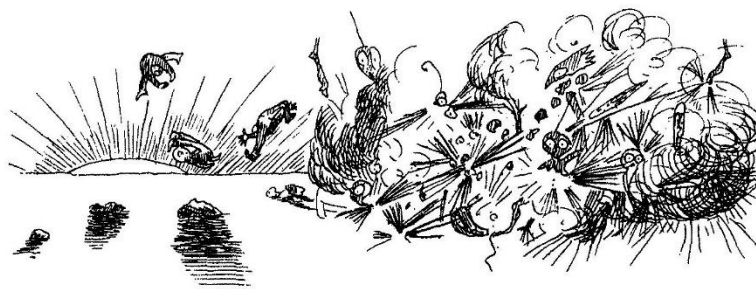
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When the night was far advanced we selected a  
small but healthy troll & craftily mixed the hypo



fixing solution with the drink we gave him.  
Then at length the whole band fell asleep after  
their orgy.

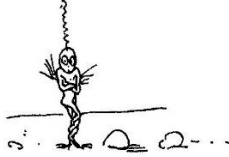


we sat & anxiously watched the East grow  
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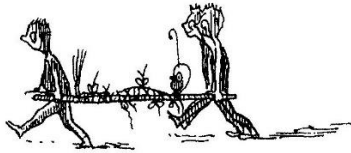


When the night was far advanced, we selected a small but healthy troll and craftily mixed the hypo fixing solution with the drink we gave him. Then, at length, the whole band fell asleep after their orgy and we sat and anxiously watched the East grow brighter, but were quite unprepared for the effect of the first glimpse of the sun.

Thanks to his drugged whiskey our little troll



Could not burst. And we secured him  
Bore him back to the town.



Where we rigged him out in a garb calculated  
to prevent sunstroke. But we encountered some  
difficulty about boots. So we left him



without them. However even when clad like  
a mortal the passengers seemed shy of him  
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England.

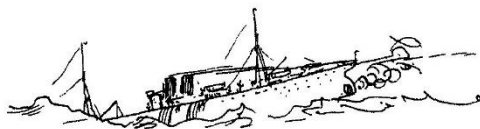


Thanks to his drugged whiskey our little troll could not burst, and we secured him and bore him back to the town, where we rigged him out in a garb calculated to prevent sunstroke. But we encountered some difficulty about boots, so we left him without them. However even when clad like a mortal the passengers seemed shy of him, just at first, when we got him on the steamer for England.

5.  
 He broke loose as we started and like the  
 rigging & we were not agile enough to overtake him.



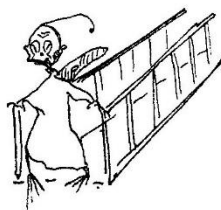
But when the motion began to make itself felt



he became more sort of subdued



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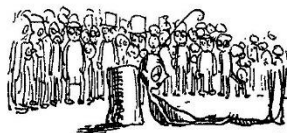


He broke loose as we started and [took?] to the rigging and we were not agile enough to overtake him, but when the motion began to make itself felt, he became more sort of subdued, and was as quiet and gentlemanly as possible, when we landed.

He remained so passively on the quay, after

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resolved to take him to the Psychological research  
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However, he woke up at the Station



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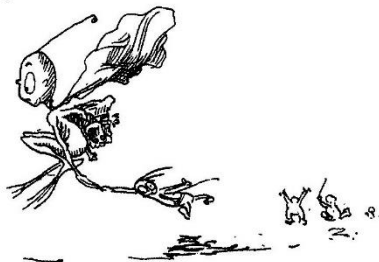
And terrified elderly & respectable gentlemen



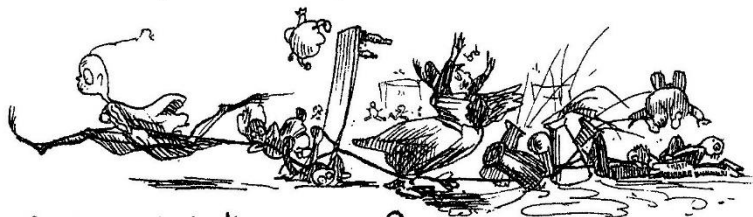
with his playful ways.

He remained so passively on the quay after the voyage and seemed so docile, that we resolved to take him to the psychological research clinic in London that evening, and wired accordingly. However, he woke up at the station and really inconvenienced the company's servants while discharging their duty, and terrified [an] elderly and respectable gentlemen with his playful ways.

His partiality too for children caused us



Considerable uneasiness. Accordingly we had  
 fastened him with a rope which unfortunately was  
 too long at first & considerable inconvenience was  
 caused by stupid people milk cans which



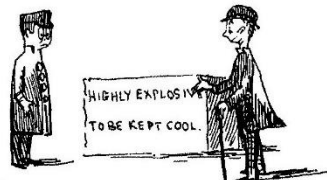
should get in the way. Luckily he wound  
 himself tightly round a lamp post with his  
 own manoeuvres; and we were enabled to  
 secure him in a basket & keep



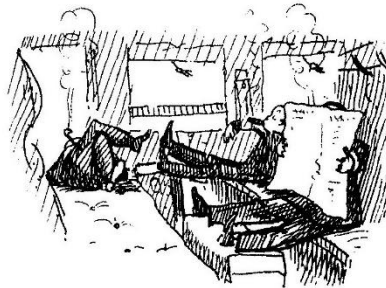
him there with the help of a friend.

His partiality, too, for children caused us considerable uneasiness. Accordingly, we had to fasten him with a rope which, unfortunately, was too long at first and considerable inconvenience was caused by stupid people and milk cans which would get in the way. Luckily he wound himself tightly round a lamp post with his own manoeuvres; and we were enabled to secure him in a basket and to keep him there with the help of a friend.

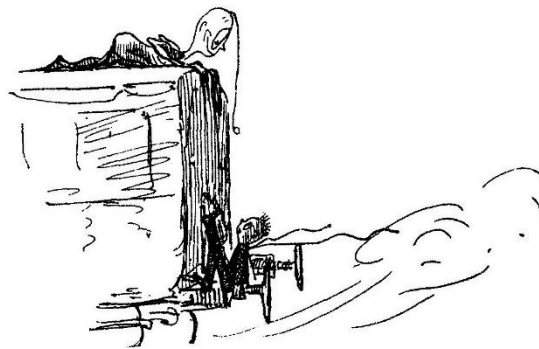
This we gave into the charge of the guard  
when the train arrived.



and freed from responsibility for the present  
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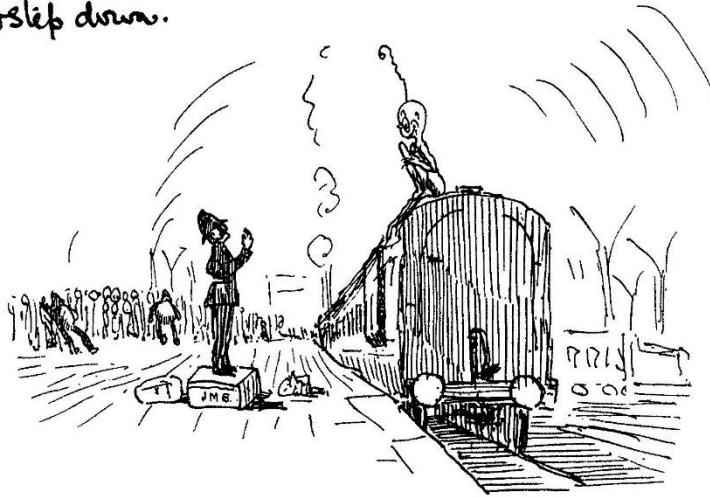


which was not the case with the unfortunate  
Guard.

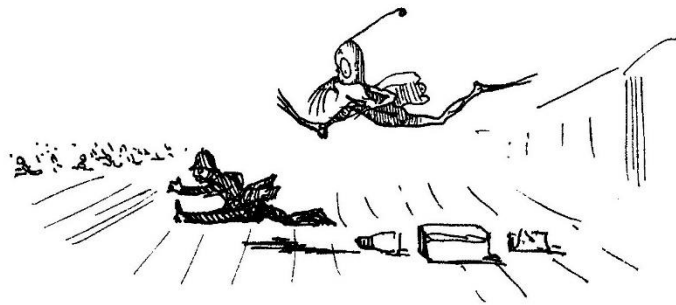


This we gave into the charge of the guard when the train arrived, and freed from responsibility for the present, we pursued our journey [by train], in luxury and comfort, which was not the case with the unfortunate guard.

Consequently when we reached the terminus  
the police interfered. the Troll was sternly ordered  
to step down.

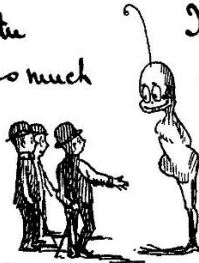


Which he did.



Consequently, when we reached the terminus, the police interfered. The Troll was sternly ordered to step down. Which he did.

After this we had the station & its vicinity to ourselves. To our relief the Troll was pleased to see us again, & was much delighted with the proposal that we should go first to a tailors dress suit for the dinner.



I was pleased to see we noticed that he was becoming more transparent, but decided to leave him as he was until the dinner was over. As we were alone but for the presence

of a derelict monkey (which was impudent!) we took the opportunity of wrapping him in overcoats & rugs so that we could take him through the streets without exciting observations.



So that we could take him through the streets without exciting observations. & got him

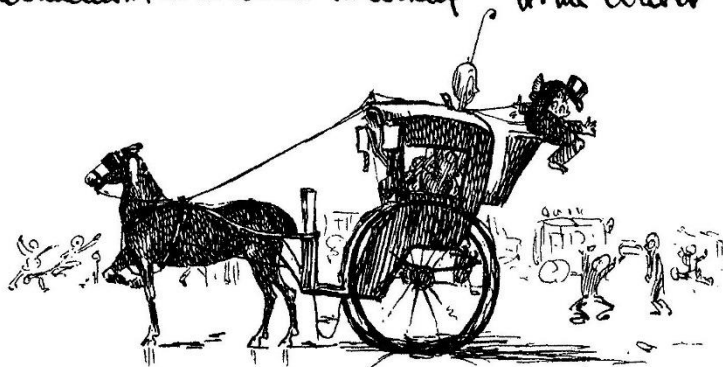


without arousing suspicion into a Hansom Cab.

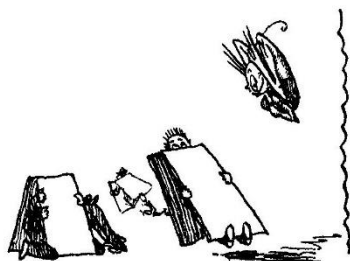
After this we had the station and its vicinity to ourselves. To our relief, the Troll was pleased to see us again, and was much delighted with the proposal that we should go first to a tailors, to get him a dress suit for the dinner. We noticed that the effect of the hypo was wearing off and he was becoming more transparent, but decided to leave him as he was, until the dinner was over. As we were alone, but for the presence of a derelict monkey (which was impudent), we took the opportunity of wrapping him in overcoats and rugs so that we could take him through the streets, without exciting observations, and got him, without arousing suspicion, into a Hansom cab.



And all went well until when near our destination, he insisted on looking for the driver



Excited by the success of his observations he insisted further on turning a few back summersaults to the intense alarm of the populace.



And all went well until, when near our destination, he insisted on looking for the driver. Excited by the success of his observations, he insisted further, on turning a few back summersaults, to the intense alarm of the populace. (Troll for the brave. [?])

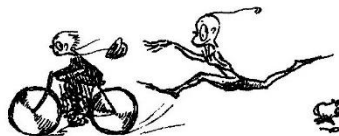
Further he boarded a bus which was very disquieting



For the passengers. The most strenuous efforts on the part of the police were insufficient to cope with the agility he displayed, and merely made the force appear ridiculous.



And it was not until he had amused himself in many other ways

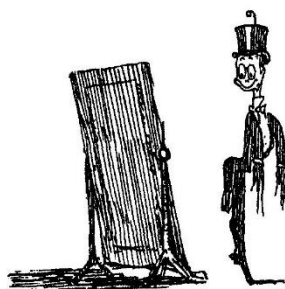


Further, he boarded a bus which was very disquieting for the passengers. The most strenuous efforts on the part of the police were insufficient to cope with the agility he displayed, and merely made the force appear ridiculous, and it was not until he had amused himself in many other ways

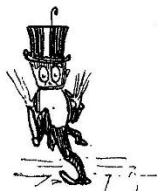
that he favoured us with his company  
 to proceed to the tailors, which  
 fortunately was quite near.  
 Being the quickest walker, he got in first  
 to give his order.



So we tidied the shop up as best we could  
 & found a suit which met with our  
 approval, as well as his own.



that he favoured us with his company to proceed to the tailors which, fortunately, was quite near. Being the quickest walker, he got in first and gave his order. So we tidied the shop up as best we could and found a suit which met with our approval, as well as his own.



It was his boots  
which seemed to  
cause him most

inconvenience when walking to dinner.  
We had also bought him a wig to improve his  
appearance



but whenever he smiled his  
mouth always caught in the parting, and we  
wished him to look pleasant so it had to be discarded.



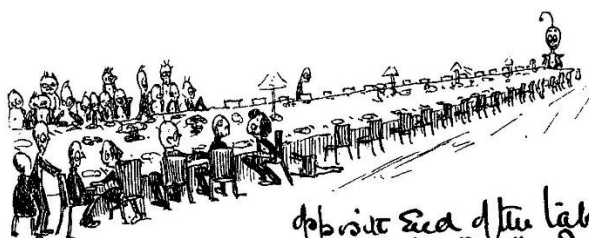
We introduced him to the president  
who being a psychologist rose to

the occasion as heartily  
as possible. But when



dinner began an  
acute observer

might have noticed that the places near the Troll  
were perhaps less well filled than those at the

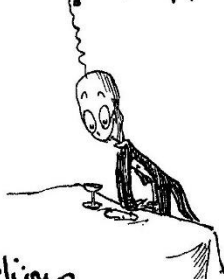


opposite end of the table.  
However, things went very smoothly till the Troll

It was his boots which seemed to cause him most inconvenience, when walking to dinner. We had also bought him a wig to improve his appearance, but whenever he smiled, his mouth always caught in the parting, and we wished him to look pleasant, so it had to be discarded. We introduced him to the president who, being a psychologist, rose to the occasion as heartily as possible. But when dinner began, an acute observer might have noticed that the places near the Troll were, perhaps, less well filled than those at the opposite end of the table. However, things went very smoothly till the Troll

was called upon to  
he did.

reply for "The Guests." which

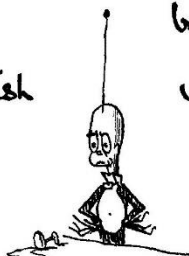


The speech was facetious

but unfortunately as

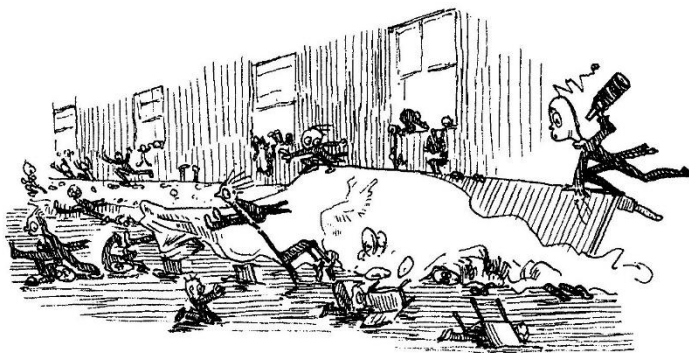
it was in old Danish  
of the points.

no one saw any

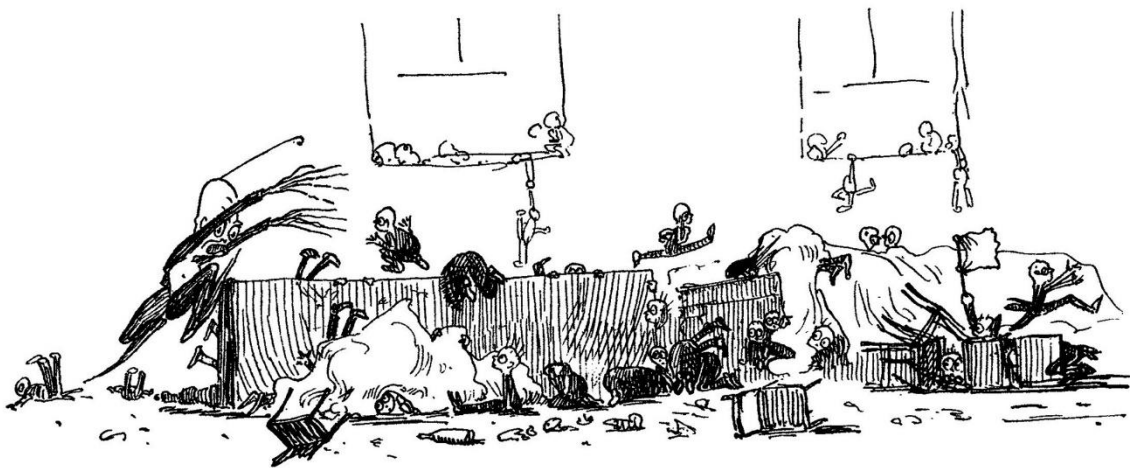


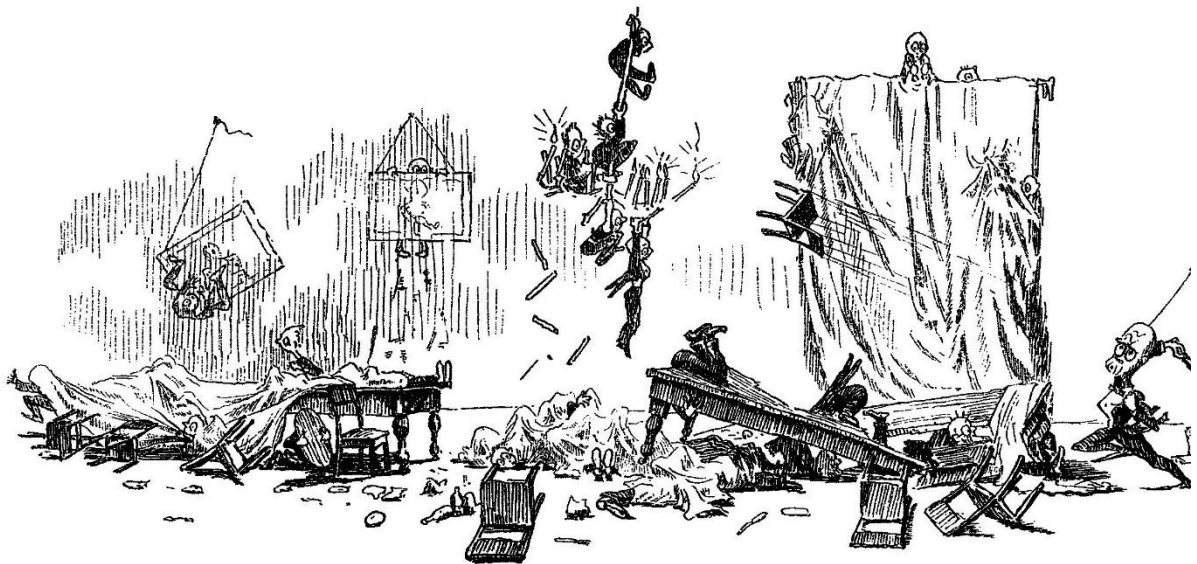
we foresaw trouble;

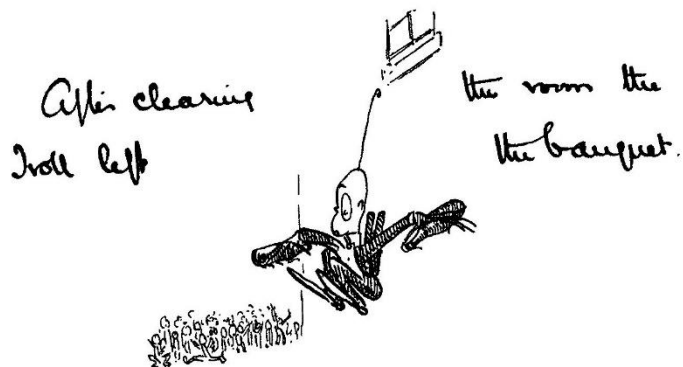
which came.



was called upon to reply for "The Guests," which he did. The speech was facetious but, unfortunately, as it was in old Danish no one saw any of the points. We foresaw trouble; which came.







with his magnums of champagne. On finding  
a crowd waiting he cheered up again with the  
pleasure of being pursued



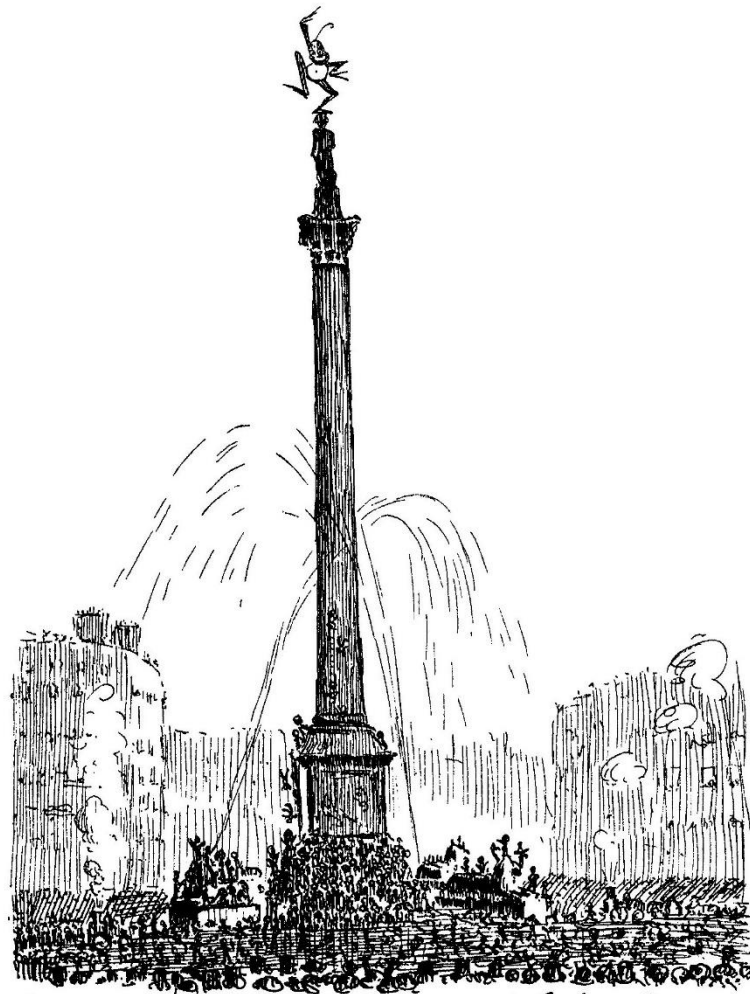
though sadly hampered by his dress clothes  
easily distanced his would-be captors



After clearing the room, the Troll left the banquet with two magnums of champagne. On finding a crowd waiting, he cheered up again with the pleasure of being pursued and, though sadly hampered by his dress clothes, easily distanced his would-be captors.



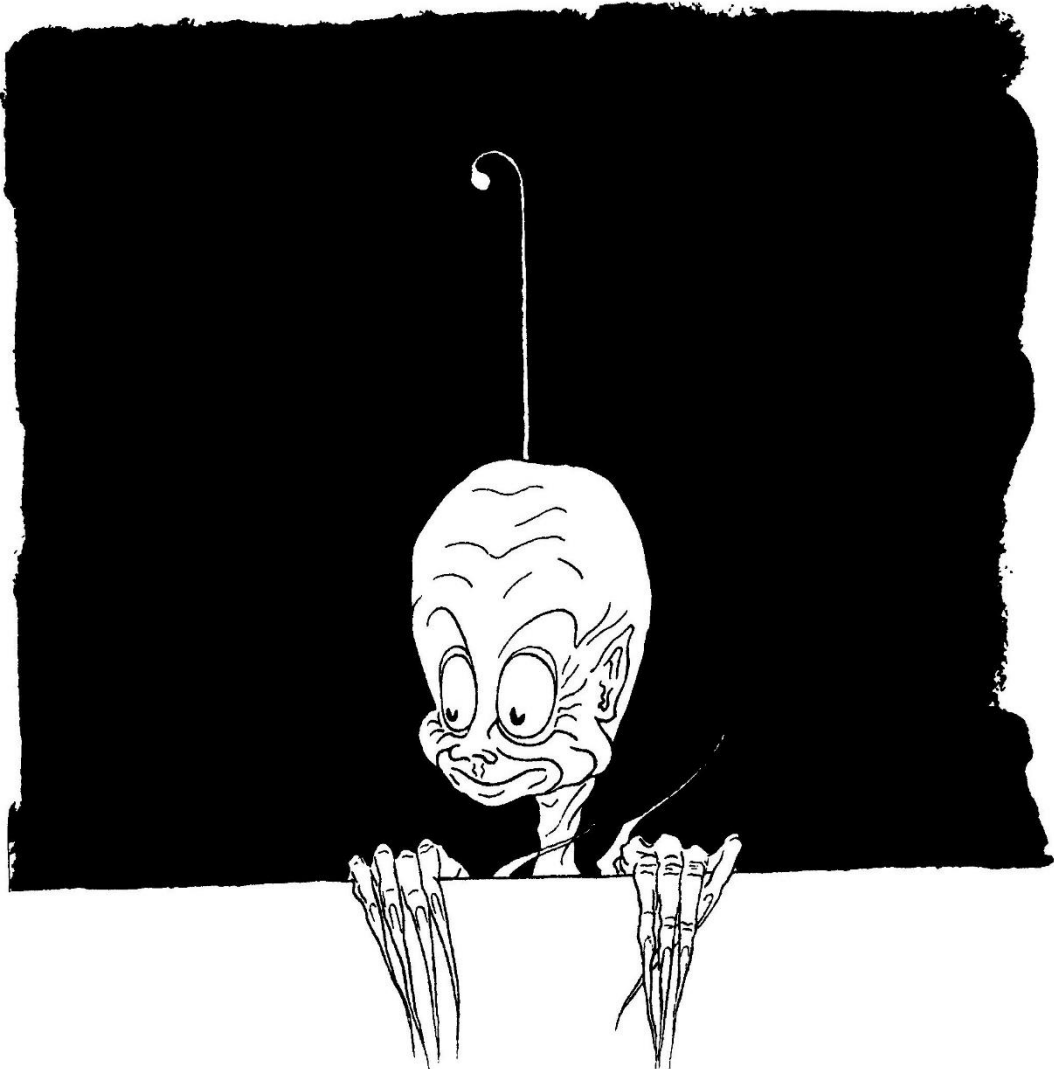
retired to a prominent position in Trafalgar



Square, whence the united efforts of the police, the  
fire brigade & the burghers of London failed to  
dislodge him.

and retired to a prominent position in Trafalgar Square, whence the united efforts of the police, the fire brigade and the burghers of London, failed to dislodge him.





The End

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