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 1 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.

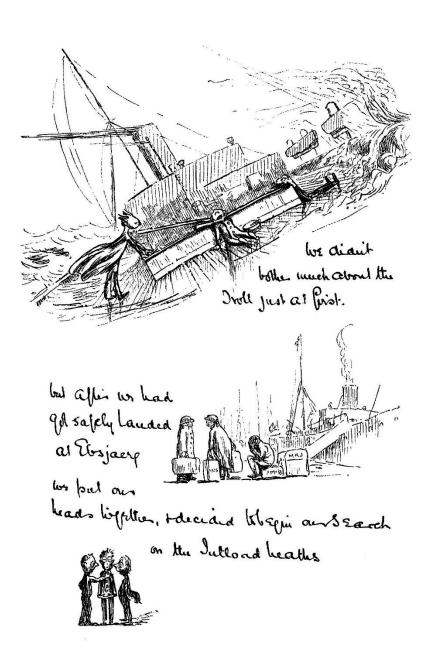
The Story of a Troll-Hunt

The Evening while descussing on plans. For the Long Nove.



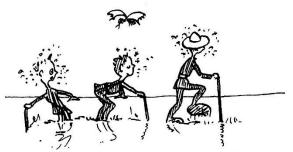
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One evening, while discussing our plans for the Long Vac. the idea occurred to us three of making an expedition to Denmark with the object of bringing back a live specimen of a Troll for the Fitzwilliam museum. And in due course of time we set out on our quest.



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.

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that a days walking over them was

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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 and 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.



The bogs greatly unipeded our progress until Smuris, Short affei which we met a hater.

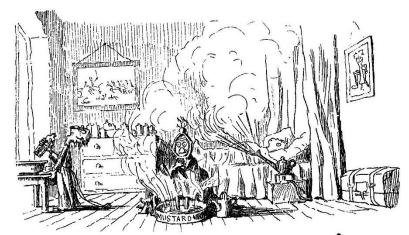


He mislook our language tappearence for Supernatural on our questioning him, but wenterally diseted us to a road



which allength had us to Ribs.

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, which at length led us to Ribe.



After this we were laid up with adds for some lines, but Eventually recovered twent by finant la Koldeing



When we recovered Sufficiently Wrathe with the best of them and the Daws arkeren on bathing.

After this we were laid up with colds for some time, but eventually recovered and went by train to Kolding, where we recovered sufficiently to bathe with the best of them, and the Danes are keen on bathing.



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lus decided to Expir our next expeditioniums

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bought a large paradis Cage tathis a vast amount of broks a ration we staked again in Search of Irolls.



We decided to equip our next expedition more thoughtfully so one of us went to a bird shop and after some bargaining bought a large parrot's cage and after a vast amount of preparation we started again in search of Trolls.



This live we were fortunate sweet to come whom asware shind I will asket



and after a crist struggle succeeded in overformer ing it.



I just before day break were all to best for home with our prize in the cape, beginning the journe, with such jubilation as our centrest demanded.

This time we were fortunate enough to come upon a small-sized Troll asleep and after a crisp struggle succeeded in overpowering it, and just before daybreak were able to start for home with our prize in the cage, beguiling the journey with such jubilation as our conquest demanded.

But our jay was short lived for we had forgotten



the pseuliardies of Irollo & on the first appsarances of the sun it burst.



+ withing was left of it had a few grits in one



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 ansqueur upon on wanty success laskaforsome line. But ahight idea suddent Struck one of us just as he was going What about it the lune frewall il appeard. accordingly he the other live. Monthswell provereded bodischors his scheme. I'd was agreed manument to subach upon'd al ones.

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.

So having arross cheatifortied one of us set of total to the leading wine when we from the principal of the principal of the principal of the second an evaluation occurrence as the being sufficient board to the americant the americant of the minutes with a the second the principal of the minutes are the being the habit to date of the best of the second the seco

d the Trollo 1 diein

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.

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bred in that language in cases we should find it useful in an Encumber with the Dolls

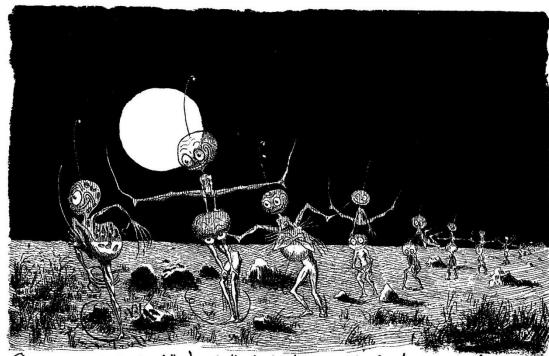
and the Confident fruccero, we sat out on our quest for the

Muind him. Uterin entir ofthe freat scheme leading there are as Evening Come upon us we deforded our shin



and work two sale afficult succeeded in highling a Comp his

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.



assortment of the less is possible Trolloplaying beapfrog as the advanced from a heighbouring barrow, and knowing from one viscanches that this was their method of proceeding to their hum was important assembles, what person life they had passed their continuely followed.

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 and then cautiously followed.



be followed these benigo across theheath laking advantage of what Cover we could It was aslow process but after a long-pursuit we arrived at a spot where it was wident the arcuel was taking place

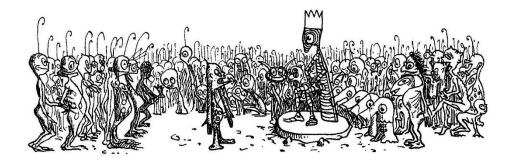


there behind a week in sal awhile to cothed our throughts is cross up on Courage. We brish up who was to peep are the work i observe the Ivolls.

Justo muscolo Al

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.)

Whathe Asserma



What he observed.



He week Shurinip Considerab poten he returned to war afraid he had Contraction Chies + guz him some whiche.



after which he became brighter



So we are liste a little



1 au became a little brighter.

He was shivering considerably when he returned. We were afraid he had contracted a chill and gave him some whiskey, after which he became brighter. So we all took a little and all became a little brighter.

62 Stated wethourslives With Irolls camp turant

Who aiscourse Caronsing. Intohumalif through howorsness the first sip word the bronger caused alaming surisy symplosius

which led to our promatine dis cover,



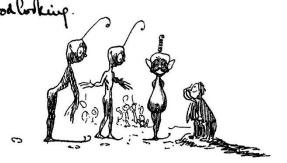
this was as it happend are for the best as our friend in affliction being scarcel able to see a his vicovery tunable to the, was obligied to skplain our sociable of their intention to travel should be their threshold intentions to bravel should be their

We started with our stores to the Troll's camp and meant to be discovered carousing. Unfortunately through nervousness that first sip went the wrong way and caused alarming and 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, and unable to flee, was obliged to explain our sociable and friendly intentions, and we bravely stood by him.

lie placed on whisky at their services & advanced buttished Cordiality on were able to assume ! were victorial Courteans by a Irole outpost



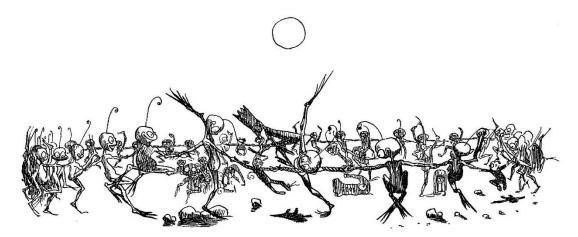
(Sho milioanced us to afew officers but us



They book to the whisky with a wie and it's fame rapials present it som became obvious that we should have a lively night



We placed our whiskey at their services and advanced with what cordiality we were able to assume and 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 and it soon became obvious that we should have a lively night.



los jonies in their rurls as politices domandes. Int found ourselves Considerably less Elastic mimble than they wire.

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

Small healt hole to raftil mysed the he

fixuipsolulin with the druik we four him. Then as length the whole band free a lent after their oray.

brighter. But were first unforpared in the Start from the speed of the first flingers of the Sun.



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.

Stanks to his drugged whishy our letteride



Could not hurst. and we seemed him Hors him back bothertown.



When we neight him out in a fact Calculated Worward Succestocke. But we Euconutered some difficulty about of bodio. So we left him



without them. However Even when clad like a mortal the paro Eugens Sermed shy of him just at frish when we get him on the Stramer for Eughand.

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.

He broke lows as westaked and link tothe neguing I we were not agile aways to overliable him.



But when the udion began towake its refell



he because more sort of Subdued



twas as quiet Heldelmanl aspossible When woolanded



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 imaured so passively on the grow, after

the royage issumed so docils, that we

noobre blake huis loke Psychologieal no search dunci in hinden that Evenip, twist accordingly. However, he wolke up at the Station



Great inconvenienced the companies sevents while discharging their and

and livified stant proportiable feullemen



within 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.

Mis partialiq los la chilana course us



Considerable uneasures. accordingly we had before him with a repre which unfortimately wan bolong at prot + considerable univarience was Caused by Shipid people mille Caus which



would get in the way. Lucking he would hurself tightly runed a lamb foot with his own manners; and we was Enabled to

Secure him in a basket & like et

him then with the belo of opine.

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 manoeuvers; and we were enabled to secure him in a basket and to keep him there with the help of a friend.

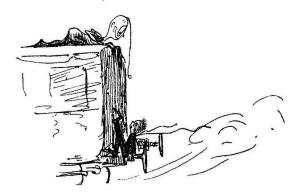
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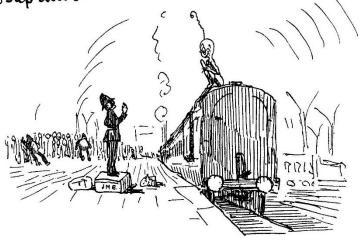


which was us the case with the unfortunate



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.

Consequent John we nached Mulimuius he fortice interfered. Att Dull was steine ordered bestep down.



Which he did.



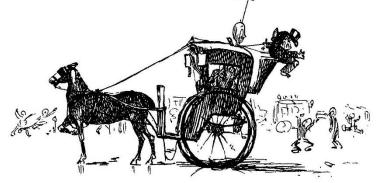
Consequently, when we reached the terminus, the police interfered. The Troll was sternly ordered to step down. Which he did.

after this we had the station & it's vicinity townsely Itoll was bleased to see To our volice the aelighted with the proposal no again, I was much 90 frist & a lailors lkatus should arms suit for the les whice a that harfisch ofhereby be was waring of and he was becoming , wors transparent, but acades to lear him as he was will the dunies was arm. as we alme but for the busence descrict worker (which was impudent) as with the ofoportunit of wrafoping him in our coals trugs So that we could take him through the shouls without Exciting observation.

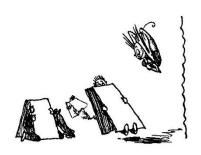
After this we had the station and its vicinity to ourselves. To our relief, the Troll was pleased to see us again, and was much delighted with the proposal that we should go first to a tailors, to get him a dress suit for the dinner. We noticed that the effect of the hypo was wearing off and he was becoming 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.

arthur Brusing Suspicion into a Houson Cab.

and are wint will when wear our destination, he misisted on looking for the driver



Excilia lythe success ofhis doswalims he misiste further on herining afen back summersaults to the interess alarm of the populaces.





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 boarded a bust which was ny disquetty



Or the passingers. The most strimuous softents on the part of the police was in sufficient to cape with the apilety he displayed, truesely made the force appear ridiculous

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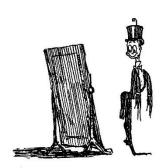
Further, he boarded a bus which was very disquieting for the passengers. The most strenuous efforts on the part of the police were insufficient to cope with the agility he displayed, and merely made the force appear ridiculous, and it was not until he had amused himself in many other ways

Most he favoured as with his Company Workers which Murales was quite hea

Bruip the puickest walker he get in Prist tops his order



so we lidied the ship up as best we could be found a suit which were writtened afformal, as were 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.

Il was his books which seemed to

be had also bought him a wif tompring his
offserance but whenever he Smiled his
wouth always Caught in Imparting, two
wished him blook pleasant So it healthe disander

Who being a psycologist rose to

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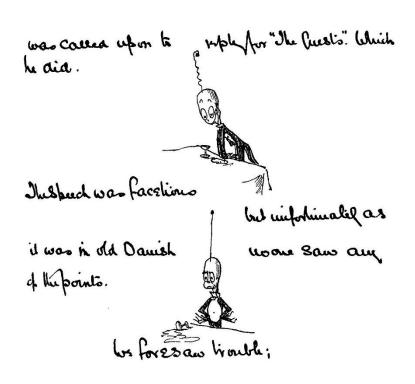
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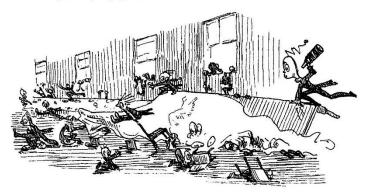
wight have whiced that the blaces near the I will.

However thing went you Smoothly live the I will

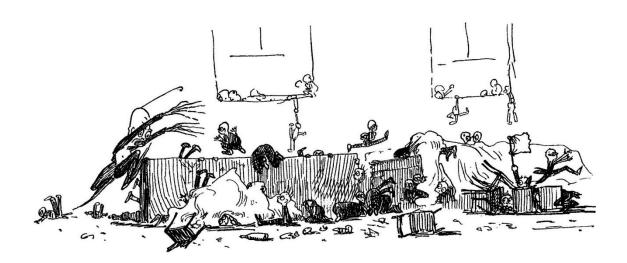
It was his boots which seemed to cause him most inconvenience, when walking to dinner. We had also bought him a wig to improve his appearance, but whenever he smiled, his mouth always caught in the parting, and we wished him to look pleasant, so it had to be discarded. We introduced him to the president 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



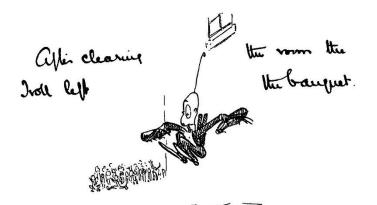
which Cause.



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.







a Crowd waiting he Cheered up again with the bleasure of being parsused

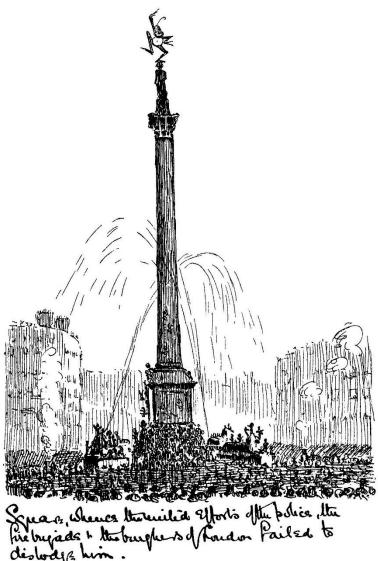


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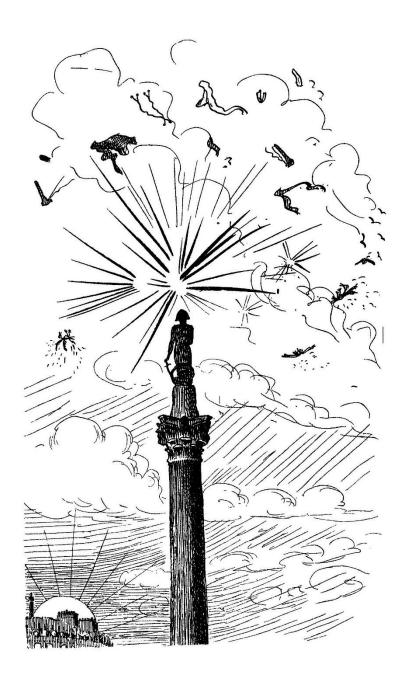


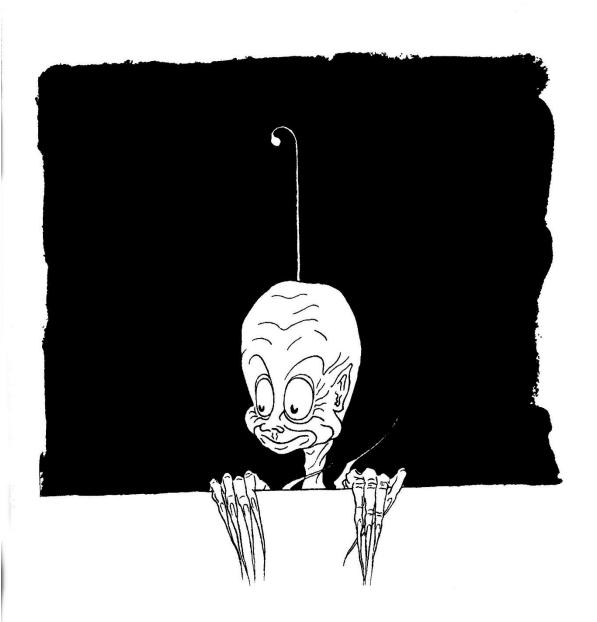
After clearing the room, the Troll left the banquet with two magnums of champagne. On finding a crowd waiting, he cheered up again with the pleasure of being pursued and, though sadly hampered by his dress clothes, easily distanced his would-be captors.

I relied to a formment position in Trafalgan



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

A Project Gutenberg Australia ebook

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Author: James McBryde

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