

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 paled.

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 spied 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

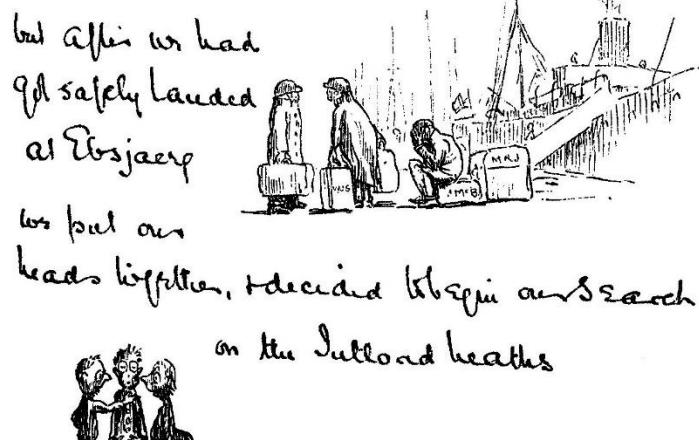
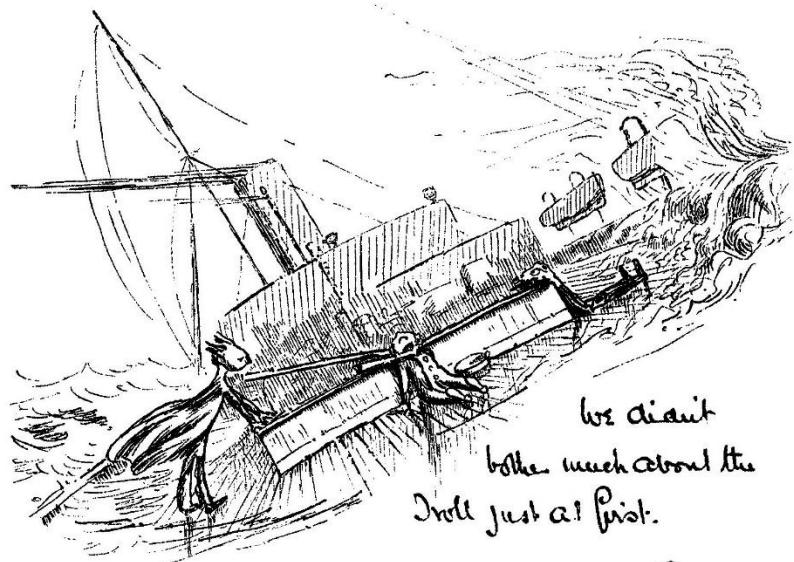
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One Evening while discussing our plans
for the Long Vac.



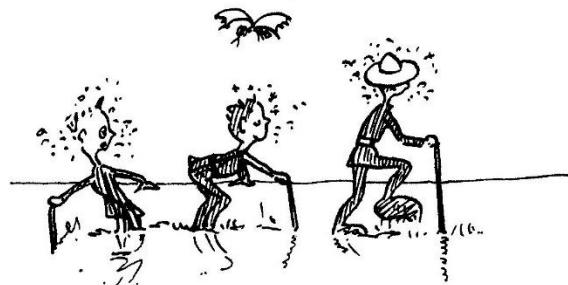
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We didn't bother much about the Troll just at first, but after we had got safely landed at Ebsjaerg we put our heads together, and decided to begin our search on the Jutland heaths.

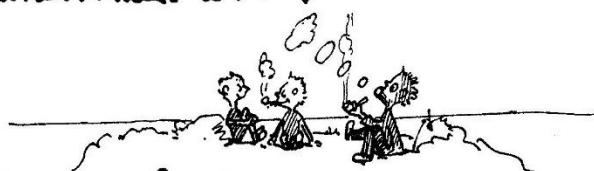
Accordingly we started but found



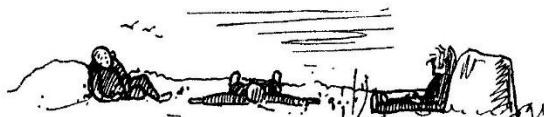
that a days walking over them was very tiring.



Moreover there were flies

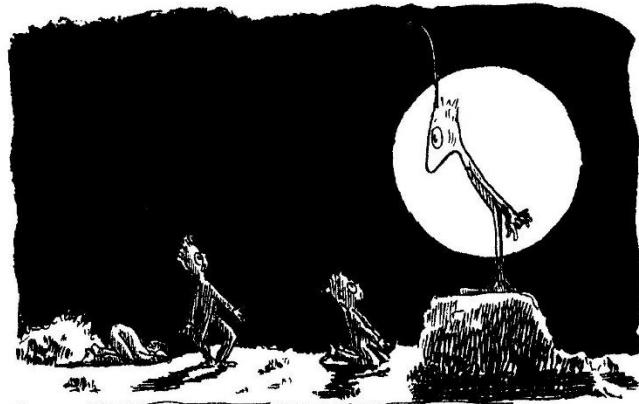


When we at length reached a barrow, things were much better & we determined to rest till moonrise.



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.



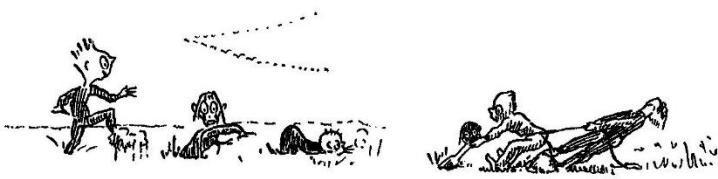
We woke suddenly to find that the moon had risen and that a horrible, transparently benign Troll was watching us. It was partly like a large bird and partly like a creature with its hands clasped behind it. The apparition remained



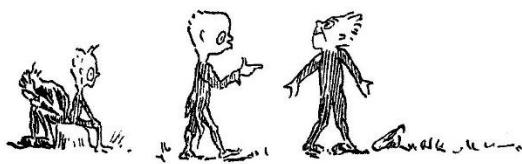
Absolutely motionless.
We didn't.



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



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



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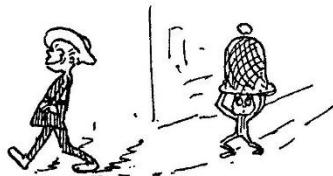
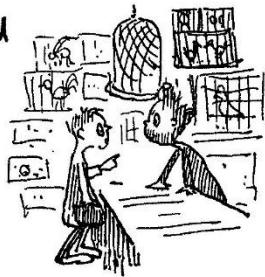


Map of Denmark showing the distribution
of Trolls, much used by us at this juncture.
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This time we were fortunate enough to come upon
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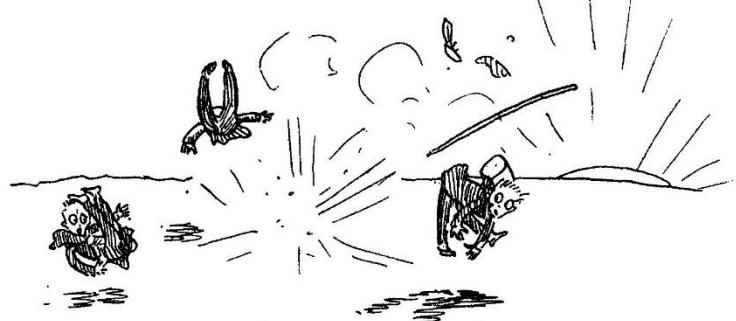
And after a crisp struggle succeeded in overpowering it.



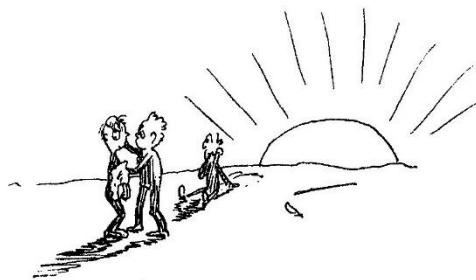
Just before daybreak were able to start for home with our prize in the cage, beguiling the journey with such jubilation as our conquest demanded.

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the peculiarities of Trolls & on the first appearance
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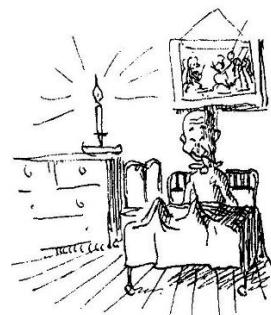


& nothing was left of it but a few grits in our
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We were much dejected when we sat down to breakfast.

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.



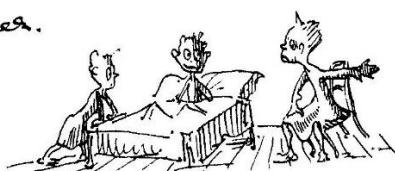
The depression consequent upon our want of success lasted for some time. But a bright idea suddenly struck one of us just as he was going to bed.

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



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

Forthwith proceeded to disclose his scheme. It was agreed unanimously to embark upon it at once.



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 [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.

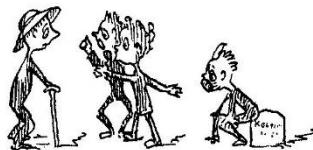



And returned with the purchases to the hotel even such an ordinary occurrence as this being sufficient to excite the amusement of the [intimates?]. Meanwhile the third perused manuscripts in the museum with a view to studying the habits and dates of the Trolls and their allies.



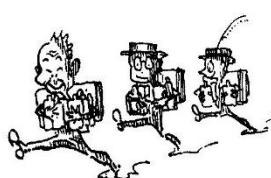

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We spent just a day or two speaking



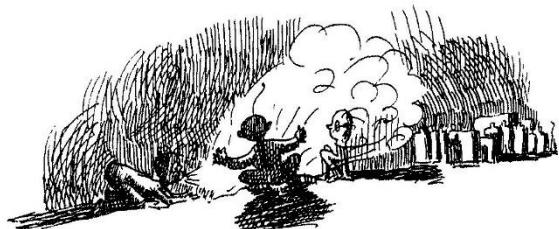
Danish to accustom
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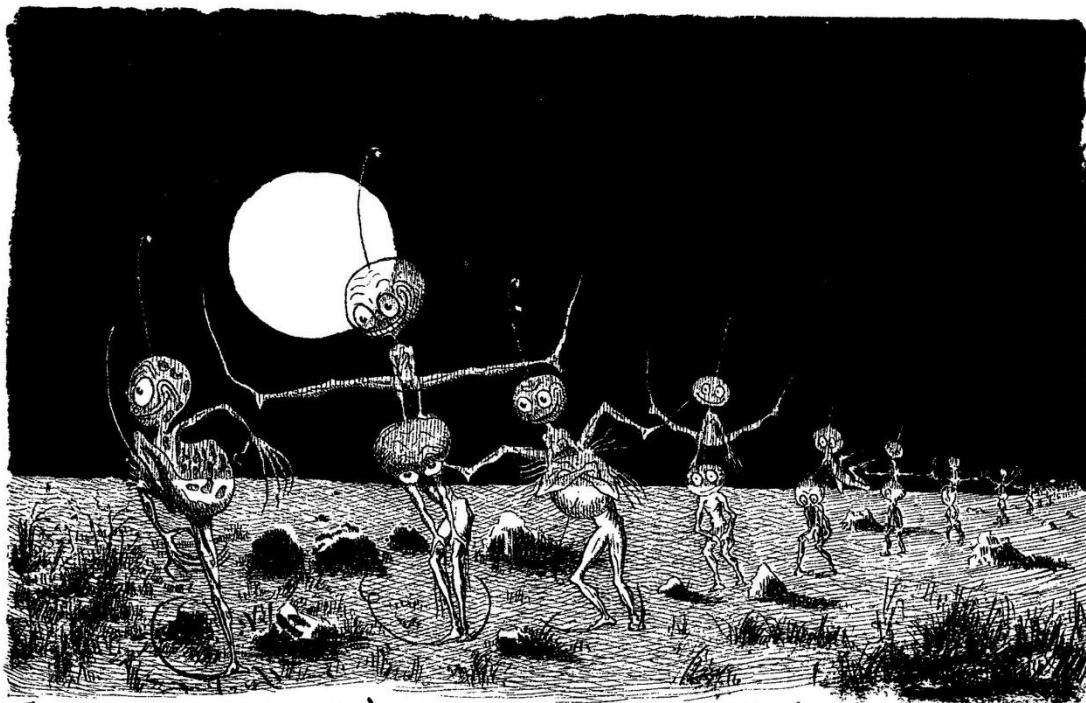
And then confident
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on our quest for the

third time, the [?] of the great scheme leading
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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 and 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.



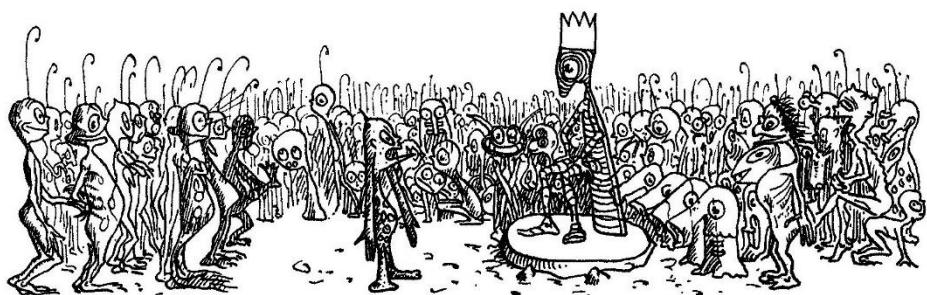
There behind a rock we sat awhile to collect our thoughts & screw up our courage. We tossed up who was to peep over the rock & observe the Trolls.



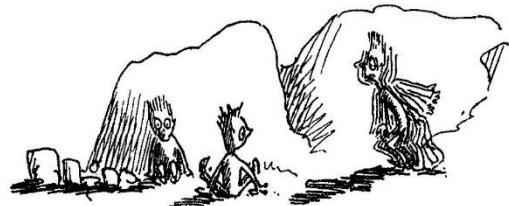
The observer observing.

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 &
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after which he became brighter



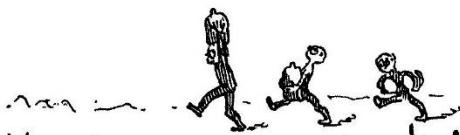
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We started with our stores to the Troll's camp and meant



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, and we bravely stood by him

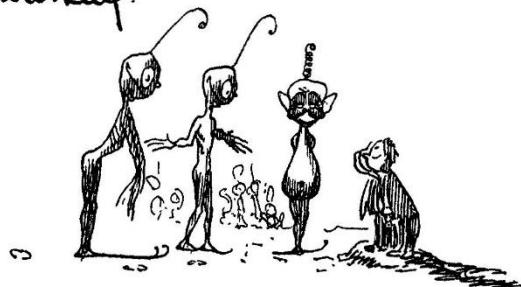


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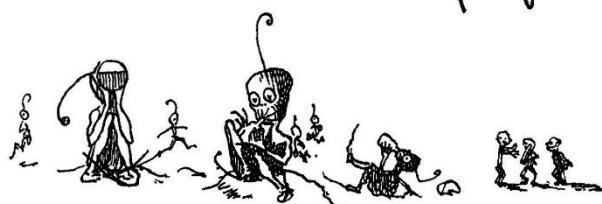
"We placed our whiskey at their services & advanced with what cordiality we were able to assume & were received courteously by a Troll outpost



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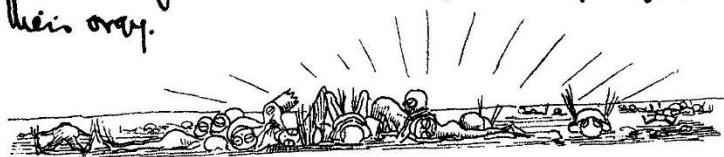
We joined in their revels as politeness demanded, but found ourselves considerably less elastic nimble than they were.

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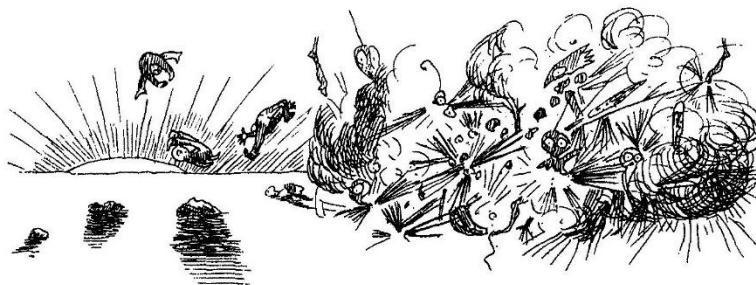
^{3.}
When the night was far advanced we selected a small but healthy troll to craftily mix the hypo.



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

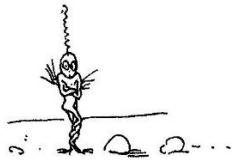


We sat and anxiously watched the East grow brighter. But were quite unprepared for the effect of the first glimpse of the sun.

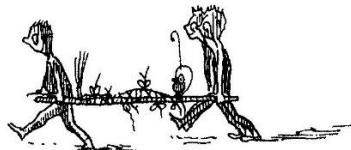


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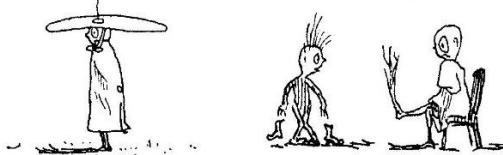
Thanks to his drugged whisky our little troll



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

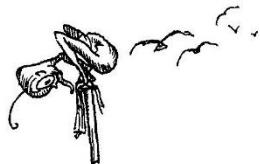


Without them. However even when clad like
a mortal the passengers seemed shy of him
Just at first when we got him on the steamer for
England.

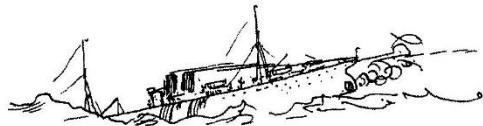


Thanks to his drugged whiskey our little troll could not burst, and we secured him and bore him back to the town, where we rigged him out in a garb calculated to prevent sunstroke. But we encountered some difficulty about boots, so we left him without them. However even when clad like a mortal the passengers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

^{8.}
He broke loose as we started and took to the
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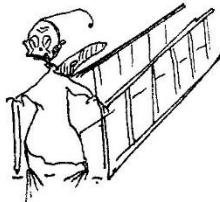
But when the motion began to make itself felt



he became more sort of subdued



he was as quiet & gentlemanly
as possible when we landed



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

the voyage seemed
so docile, that we



resolved to take him to the Psychological research
clinic in London that evening, wired accordingly.
However, he woke up at the station



greatly inconvenienced the company's servants
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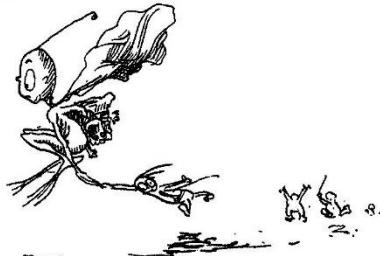
and terrified elderly & respectable gentlemen



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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



would get in the way. Luckily he wound himself tightly round a lamp post with his own manoeuvres; and we were enabled to

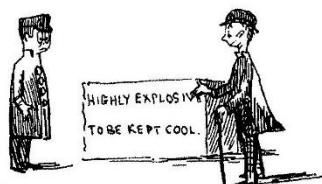
Secure him in a basket & keep



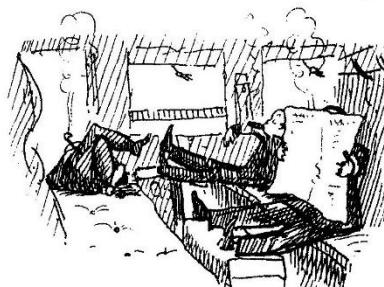
him there with the help of a friend.

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.

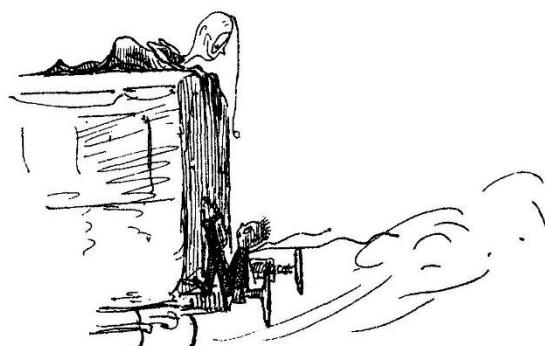
This we gave into the charge of the guard
when the train arrived.



and freed from responsibility for the present,
we pursued our journey to him in luxury & comfort.

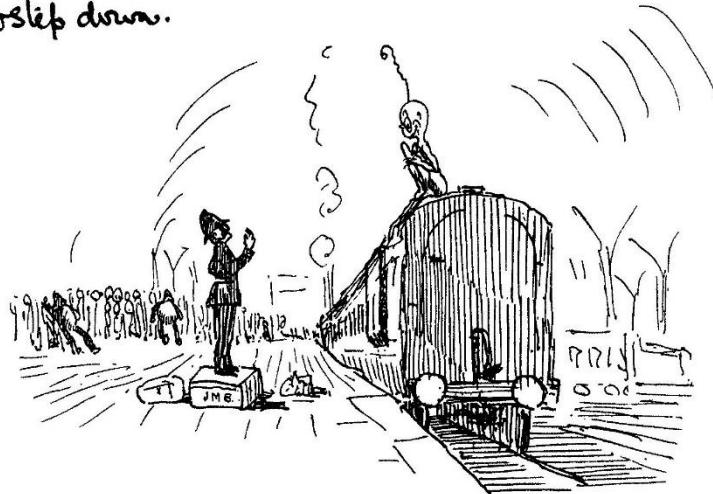


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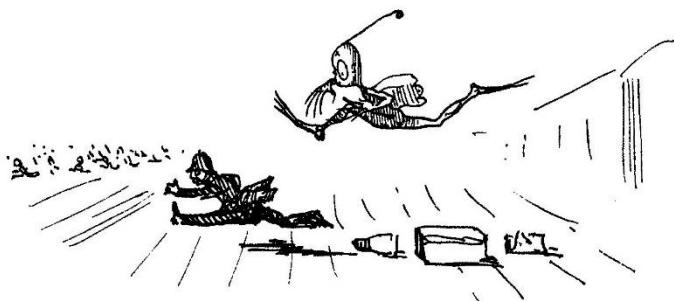


This we gave into the charge of the guard when the train arrived, and freed from responsibility for the present, we pursued our journey [by train], in luxury and comfort, which was not the case with the unfortunate guard.

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

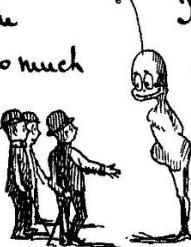


which he did.

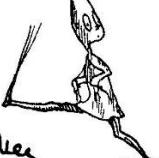


Consequently, when we reached the terminus, the police interfered. The Troll was sternly ordered to step down. Which he did.

After this we had the station & its vicinity to ourselves.
To our relief the
us again, & was much
that we should
get him a
dinner.



I troll was pleased to see
delighted with the proposal
go first to a tailors
dress suit for the
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



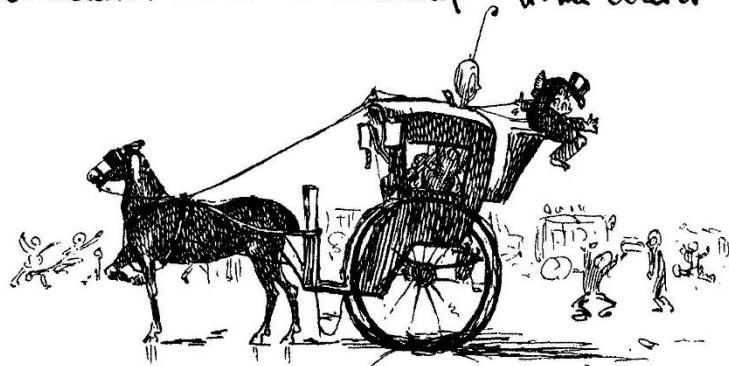

(which was impudent!) we took the opportunity
of wrapping him in overcoats & rugs
so that we could take him through the streets
without exciting
observations.
+ got him



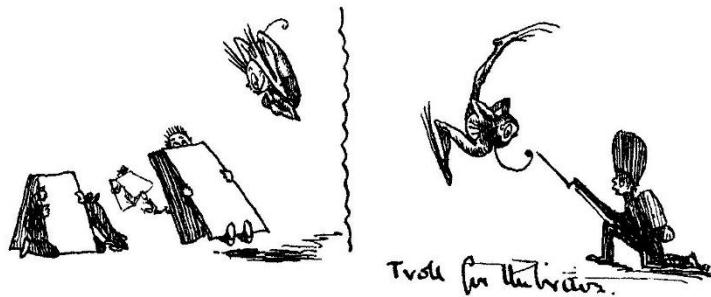
Without arousing suspicion into a Hansom Cab.

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.



Troll for the brave.

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. [?])

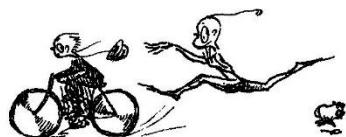
Further he boarded a bus which was very disquieting



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

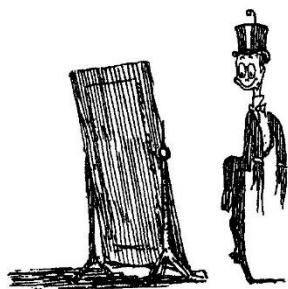


Further, he boarded a bus which was very disquieting for the passengers. The most strenuous efforts on the part of the police were insufficient to cope with the agility he displayed, and merely made the force appear ridiculous, and it was not until he had amused himself in many other ways

that he favoured us with his Company
to proceed to the Tailors, which
I hurriedly 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
I 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, & 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





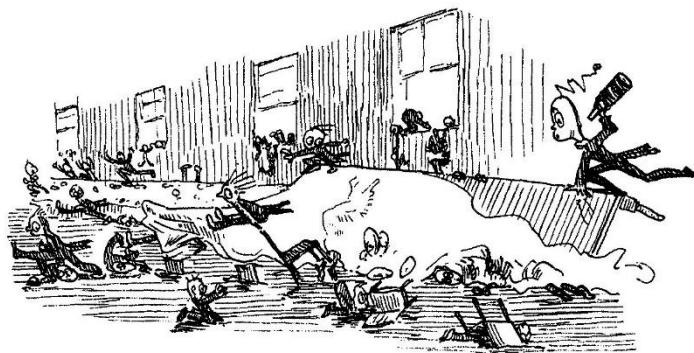

It was his boots which seemed to cause him most inconvenience, when walking to dinner. We had also bought him a wig to improve his appearance, but whenever he smiled, his mouth always caught in the parting, and we wished him to look pleasant, so it had to be discarded. We introduced him to the president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

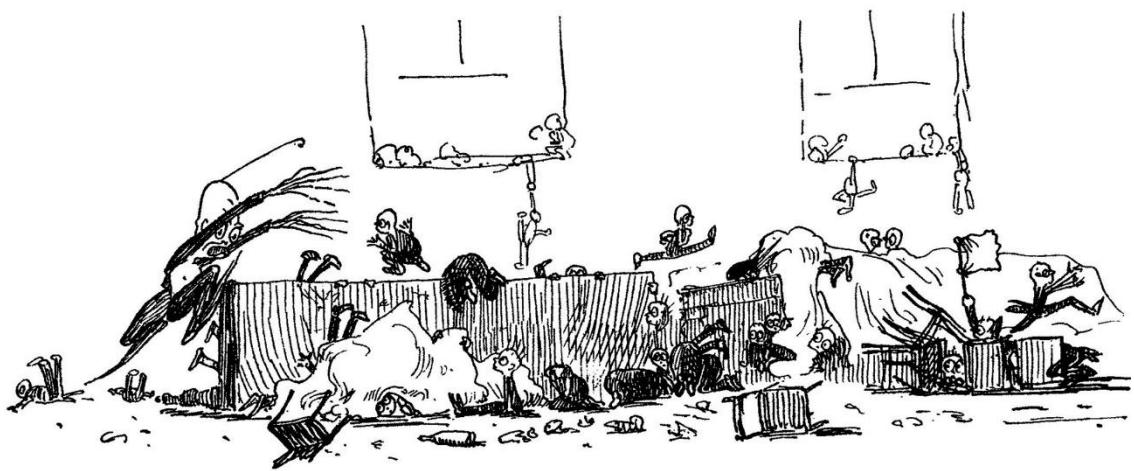
The speech was facetious
but unfortunately no one saw any
of the points.

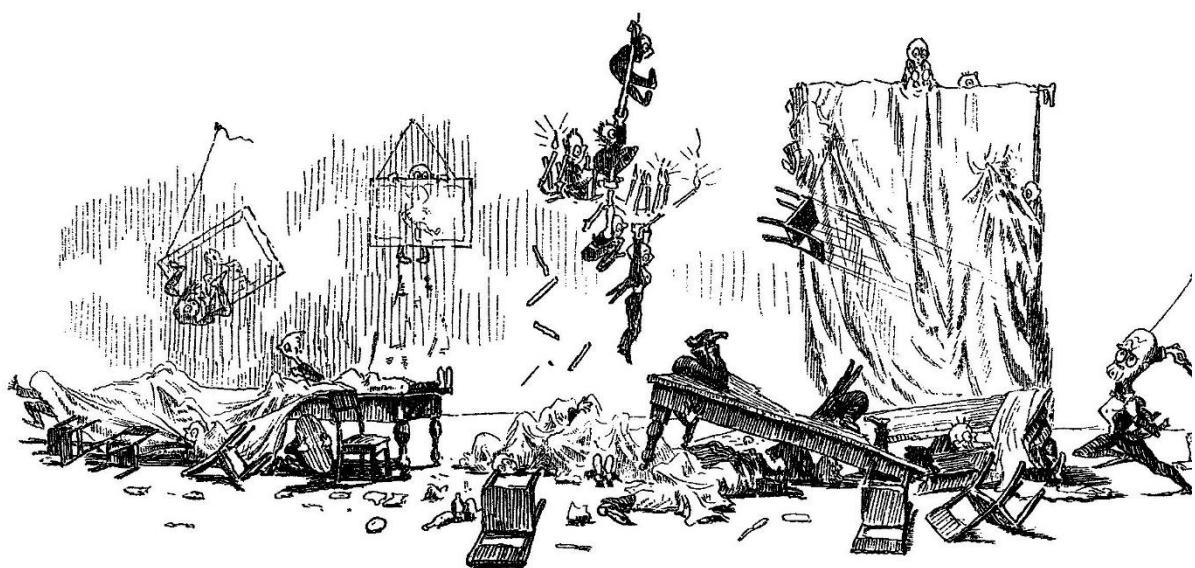
We foresaw trouble;
which came.

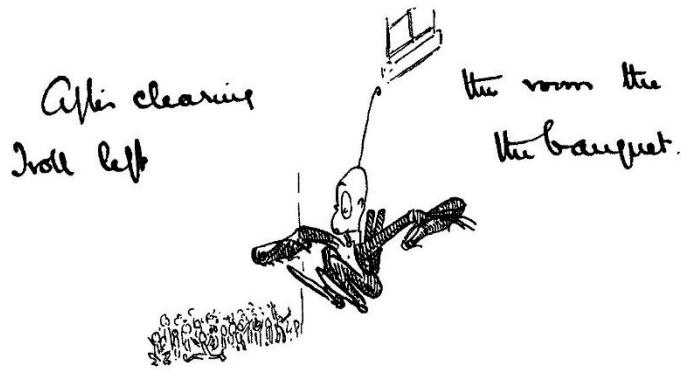
which came.



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 two 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.

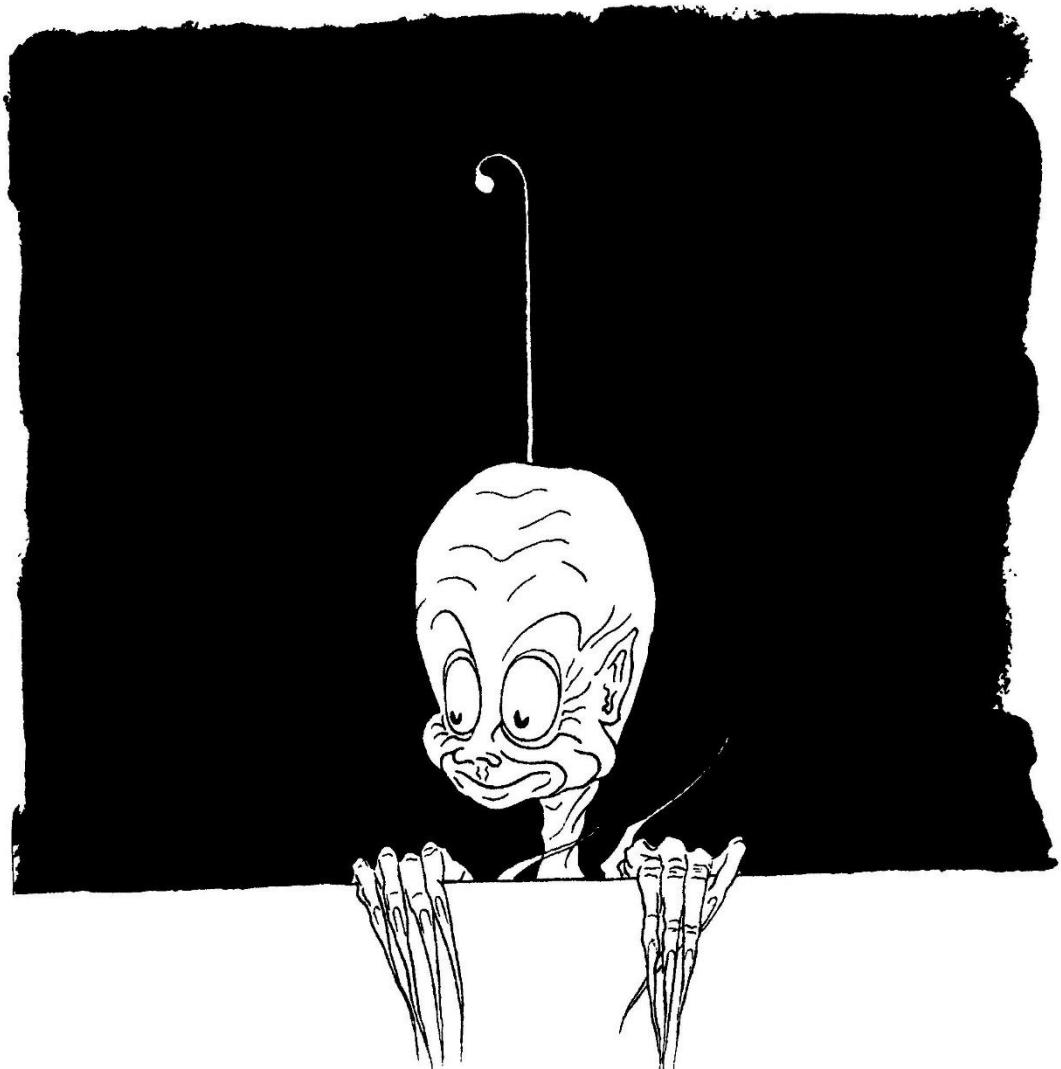
and retired to a prominent position in Trafalgar



Square, whence the united efforts of the police, the fire brigades & 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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