the appearance of a Negro in tow-cloth jacket and trousers, a round-crowned fragment of a hat, like the cap of Mercury, and mounted on the back of a ragged, wild, half-broken colt, which he managed with the rope by way of halter. He came clattering up to the school door with an invitation to Ichabod to attend a merry-making, or "quitting frolic", to be held that evening at Mynheer Van Tassel’s; and having delivered his message with that air of importance and effort at fine language which a Negro is apt to display on petty embassies of the kind, he dashed over the brook, and was seen scampering away up the hollow, full of the importance and hurry of his mission.

All was now bustle and hubbub in the late quiet schoolroom. The scholars were hurried through their lessons without stopping at trifles; those who were nimble skipped over half with impunity, and those who were tardy had a smart application now and then in the rear, to quicken their speed or help them over a tall word. Books were flung aside without being put away on the shelves; inkstands were overturned, benches thrown down, and the whole school was turned loose an hour before the usual time, bursting forth like a legion of young imps, yelping and racketing about the green in joy at their early emancipation.

The gallant Ichabod now spent at least an extra half hour at his toilet, brushing and furbishing up his best, and indeed his only, suit of rusty black, and arranging his locks by a bit of broken looking-glass that hung up in the schoolhouse. That he might make his appearance before his mistress in the true style of a cavalier, he borrowed a horse from the farmer with whom he was domiciliated, a choleric old Dutchman, of the name of Hans Van Ripper, and, thus gallantly mounted, issued forth like a knight-errant in quest of adventures. But it is meet I should, in the true spirit of romantic story, give some account of the looks and equipments of my hero and his steed. The animal he bestrode was a broken-down plough-horse that had outlived almost everything but his viciousness. He was gaunt and shagged, with a ewe neck and a head like a hammer; his rusty main and tail were tangled and knotted with burrs; one eye had lost its pupil, and was glaring and spectral; but the other had the gleam of a genuine devil in it. Still, he must have had fire and mettle in his day, if we may judge from the name he bore of Gunpowder. He had, in fact, been a favourite steed of his master’s, the choleric
Van Ripper, who was a furious rider, and had infused, very probably, some of his own spirit into the animal; for, old and broken-down as he looked, there was more of the lurking devil in him than in any young filly in the country.

Ichabod was a suitable figure for such a steed. He rode with short stirrups, which brought his knees nearly up to the pommel of the saddle; his sharp elbows stuck out like grasshoppers; he carried his whip perpendicularly in his hand, like a sceptre; and, as his horse jogged on, the motion of his arms was not unlike the flapping of a pair of wings. A small wool hat rested on the top of his nose, for so his scanty strip of forehead might be called; and the skirts of his black coat fluttered out almost to the horse’s tail. Such was the appearance of Ichabod and his steed, as they shambled out of the gate of Hans Van Ripper, and it was altogether such an apparition as is seldom to be met with in broad daylight.

It was, as I have said, a fine autumnal day, the sky was clear and serene, and nature wore that rich and golden livery which we always associate with the idea of abundance. The forests had put on their sober brown and yellow, while some trees of the tenderer kind had been nipped by the frosts into brilliant dyes of orange, purple, and scarlet. Streaming fles of wild ducks began to make their appearance high in the air; the bark of the squirrel might be heard from the groves of beech and hickory nuts, and the pensive whistle of the quail at intervals from the neighbouring stubble field.

The small birds were taking their farewell banquets. In the fullness of their revelry they fluttered, chirping and frolicking, from bush to bush and tree to tree, capricious from the very profusion and variety around them. There was the honest cock-robin, the favourite game of stripling sportsmen, with its loud, querulous note; and the twittering blackbirds flying in sable clouds; and the golden-winged woodpecker, with his crimson crest, his broad black gorget, and splendid plumage; and the cedar-bird, with its red-tipped wings and yellow-tipped tail, and its little monteiro cap of feathers; and the blue jay, that noisy coxcomb, in his gay light-blue coat and white underclothes; screaming and chattering, nodding and bobbing and bowing, and pretending to be on good terms with every songster of the grove.

As Ichabod jogged slowly on his way, his eye, ever open to every symptom of culinary abundance, ranged with delight
over the treasures of jolly autumn. On all sides he beheld vast stores of apples; some hanging in oppressive opulence on the trees; some gathered into baskets and barrels for the market; others heaped up in rich piles for the cider-press. Further on he beheld great fields of Indian corn, with its golden ears peeping from their leafy coverts, and holding out the promise of cakes and hasty-pudding; and the yellow pumpkins lying beneath them, turning up their fair round bellies to the sun, and giving ample prospects of the most luxurious of pies; and anon he passed the fragrant buckwheat fields breathing the odour of the beehive, and as he beheld them, soft anticipations stole over his mind of dainty slapjacks, well buttered, and garnished with honey or treacle, by the delicate little dimpled hand of Katrina Van Tassel.

Thus feeding his mind with many sweet thoughts and "sugared suppositions", he journeyed along the sides of a range of hills which look out upon some of the goodliest scenes of the mighty Hudson. The sun gradually wheeled his broad disc down into the west. The wide bosom of the Tappan Zee lay motionless and glassy, except that here and there a gentle undulation waved and prolonged the blue shadow of the distant mountain. A few amber clouds floated in the sky, without a breath of air to move them. The horizon was of a fine golden tint, changing gradually into a pure apple-green, and from that into the deep blue of the midheaven. A slanting ray lingered on the woody crests of the precipices that overhung some parts of the river, giving greater depth to the dark-grey and purple of their rocky sides. A sloop was loitering in the distance, dropping slowly down with the tide, her sail hanging uselessly against the mast; and as the reflection of the sky gleamed along the still water, it seemed as if the vessel was suspended in the air.

It was toward evening that Ichabod arrived at the castle of the Herr Van Tassel, which he found thronged with the pride and flower of the adjacent country. Old farmers, a spare, leathern-faced race, in homespun coats and breeches, blue stockings, huge shoes, and magnificent pewter buckles. Their brisk withered little dames, in close crimped caps, longwaisted short gowns, homespun petticoats, with scissors and pin-cushions, and gay calico pockets hanging on the outside. Buxom lasses, almost as antiquated as their mothers, excepting where a straw hat, a fine riband, or perhaps a white frock gave
symptoms of city innovation. The sons, in short square skirted coats with rows of stupendous brass buttons, and their hair generally queued in the fashion of the times, especially if they could procure an eel-skin for the purpose, it being esteemed throughout the country as a potent nourisher and strengthener of the hair.

Brom Bones, however, was the hero of the scene, having come to the gathering on his favourite steed Daredevil, a creature like himself, full of mettle and mischief, and which no one but himself could manage. He was, in fact, noted for preferring vicious animals, given to all kinds of tricks, which kept the rider in constant risk of his neck, for he held a tractable, well-broken horse as unworthy of a lad of spirit.

Fain would I pause to dwell upon the world of charms that burst upon the enraptured gaze of my hero, as he entered the state parlour of Van Tassel’s mansion. Not those of the bevy of buxom lasses, with their luxurious display of red and white; but the ample charms of a genuine Dutch country tea-table in the sumptuous time of autumn. Such heaped-up platters of cakes of various and almost indescribable kinds, known only to experienced Dutch housewives! There was the doughy dough-nut, the tenderer oly koek, and the crisp and crumbling cruller; sweet-cakes and short-cakes, gingers-cakes and honey-cakes, and the whole family of cakes. And then there were apple-pies and peach-pies and pumpkin-pies; besides slices of ham and smoked beef; and, moreover, delectable dishes of preserved plums, and peaches, and pears, and quinces; not to mention broiled shad and roasted chickens together with bowls of milk and cream, all mingled higgledy-piggledy, pretty much as I have enumerated them, with the motherly tea-pot sending up its clouds of vapour from the midst—Heaven bless the mark! I want breath and time to discuss this banquet as it deserves, and am too eager to get on with my story. Happily, Ichabod Crane was not in so great a hurry as his historian, but did ample justice to every dainty.

He was a kind and thankful creature, whose heart dilated in proportion as his skin was filled with good cheer; and whose spirits rose with eating as some men’s do with drink. He could not help, too, rolling his large eyes round him as he ate, and chuckling with the possibility that he might one day be lord of all this scene of almost unimaginable luxury and splendour. Then he thought how soon he’d turn his back
upon the old schoolhouse, snap his fingers in the face of Hans Van Ripper and every other niggardly patron, and kick any itinerant pedagogue out of doors that should dare to call him comrade!

Old Baltus Van Tassel moved about among his guests with a face dilated with content and good humour, round and jolly as the harvest moon. His hospitable attentions were brief, but expressive, being confined to a shake of the hand, a slap on the shoulder, a loud laugh, and a pressing invitation to “fall to, and help themselves”.

And now the sound of the music from the common-room or hall summoned to the dance. The musician was an old grey-headed Negro, who had been the itinerant orchestra of the neighbourhood for more than half a century. His instrument was as old and battered as himself. The greater part of the time he scraped on two or three strings, accompanying every movement of the bow with a motion of the head; bowing almost to the ground, and stamping with his foot whenever a fresh couple were to start.

Ichabod prided himself upon his dancing as much as upon his vocal powers. Not a limb, not a fibre about him was idle; and to have seen his loosely-hung frame in full motion, and clattering about the room, you would have thought Saint Vitus himself, that blessed patron of the dance, was figuring before you in person. He was the admiration of all the Negroes; who, having gathered, of all ages and sizes, from the farm and the neighbourhood, stood, forming a pyramid of shining black faces, at every door and window, gazing with delight at the scene, rolling their white eye-balls, and showing grinning rows of ivory from ear to ear. How could the flogger of urchins be otherwise than animated and joyous? The lady of his heart was his partner in the dance, and smiling graciously in reply to all his amorous oglings; while Brom Bones, sorely smitten with love and jealousy, sat brooding by himself in one corner.

When the dance was at an end, Ichabod was attracted to a knot of the sager folks, who, with old Van Tassel, sat smoking at one end of the piazza, gossiping over former times, and drawing out long stories about the war.

This neighbourhood, at the time of which I am speaking, was one of those highly-favoured places which abound with chronic and great men. The British and American line had
run near it during the war; it had, therefore, been the scene of marauding, and infested with refugees, cowboys, and all kinds of border chivalry. Just sufficient time had elapsed to enable each story-teller to dress up his tale with a little becoming fiction, and, in the indistinctness of his recollection, to make himself the hero of every exploit.

There was the story of Doffue Martling, a large blue-bearded Dutchman, who had nearly taken a British frigate with an old iron nine-pounder from a mud breastwork, only that his gun had burst at the sixth discharge. And there was an old gentleman who shall be nameless, being too rich a mynheer to be lightly mentioned, who, in the battle of Whiteplains, being an excellent master of defence, parried a musket-ball with a small sword, insomuch that he absolutely felt it whiz round the blade and glance off at the hilt; in proof of which he was ready at any time to show the sword, with the hilt a little bent. There were several more that had been equally great in the field, not one of whom but was persuaded that he had a considerable hand in bringing the war to a happy termination.

But all these were nothing to the tales of ghosts and apparitions that succeeded. The neighbourhood is rich in legendary treasures of the kind. Local tales and superstitions thrive best in these sheltered long-settled retreats; but are trampled under foot by the shifting throng that forms the population of most of our country places. Besides, there is no encouragement for ghosts in most of our villages, for they have scarcely had time to finish their first nap, and turn themselves in their graves, before their surviving friends have travelled away from the neighbourhood; so that when they turn out at night to walk their rounds, they have no acquaintance left to call upon. This is perhaps the reason why we so seldom hear of ghosts except in our long-established Dutch communities.

The immediate cause, however, of the prevalence of supernatural stories in these parts was doubtless owing to the vicinity of Sleepy Hollow. There was a contagion in the very air that blew from that haunted region; it breathed forth an atmosphere of dreams and fancies infecting all the land. Several of the Sleepy Hollow people were present at Van Tassel's, and, as usual, were doling out their wild and wonderful legends. Many dismal tales were told about funeral trains, and mourning cries and wailings heard and seen about the
great tree where the unfortunate Major André was taken, and
which stood in the neighbourhood. Some mention was made
also of the woman in white, that haunted the dark glen at
Raven Rock, and was often heard to shriek on winter nights
before a storm, having perished there in the snow. The
chief part of the stories, however, turned upon the favourite
spectre of Sleepy Hollow, the headless horseman, who had
been heard several times of late, patrolling the country; and,
it was said, tethered his horse nightly among the graves in
the churchyard.

The sequestered situation of this church seems always to
have made it a favourite haunt of troubled spirits. It stands
on a knoll surrounded by locust trees and lofty elms, from
among which its decent whitewashed walls shine modestly
forth, like Christian purity, beaming through the shades of
retirement. A gentle slope descends from it to a silver sheet
of water, bordered by high trees, between which peeps may
be caught at the blue hills of the Hudson. To look upon its
glass-grown yard, where the sunbeams seem to sleep so quietly,
one would think that there at least the dead might rest in peace.
On one side of the church extends a wide woody dell, along
which raves a large brook among broken rocks and trunks of
fallen trees. Over a deep black part of the stream, not far
from the church, was formerly thrown a wooden bridge; the
road that led to it, and the bridge itself, were thickly shaded
by overhanging trees, which cast a gloom about it, even in
the daytime; but occasioned a fearful darkness at night.
Such was one of the favourite haunts of the headless horseman,
and the place where he was most frequently encountered. The
tale was told of old Brouwer, a most heretical disbeliever in
ghosts, how he met the horseman returning from his foray
into Sleepy Hollow, and was obliged to get up behind him;
how they galloped over bush and brake, over hill and swamp,
until they reached the bridge; when the horseman suddenly
turned into a skeleton, threw old Brouwer into the brook, and
sprang away over the tree-tops with a clap of thunder.

This story was immediately matched by a thrice marvellous
adventure of Brom Jones, who made light of the Galloping
Hessian as an arrant jockey. He affirmed that, on returning
one night from the neighbouring village of Sing-Sing, he had
been overtaken by this midnight trooper; that he had offered
to race with him for a bowl of punch, and should have won it
too, for Daredevil beat the goblin horse all hollow, but, just as they came to the church bridge, the Hessian bolted, and vanished in a flash of fire.

All these tales, told in that drowsy undertone with which men talk in the dark, the countenances of the listeners only now and then receiving a casual gleam from the glare of a pipe, sank deep in the mind of Ichabod. He repaid them in kind, with large extracts from his invaluable author, Cotton Mather, and added many marvellous events that had taken place in his native state of Connecticut, and fearful sights which he had seen in his nightly walks about Sleepy Hollow.

The revel now gradually broke up. The old farmers gathered together their families in their waggons, and were heard for some time rattling along the hollow roads, and over the distant hills. Some of the damsels mounted on pillions behind their favourite swains, and their light-hearted laughter, mingling with the clatter of hoofs, echoed along the silent woodlands, sounding fainter and fainter until they gradually died away—and the late scene of noise and frolic was all silent and deserted. Ichabod only lingered behind, according to the custom of country lovers, to have a tête-à-tête with the heiress, fully convinced that he was now on the high road to success.

What passed at this interview I will not pretend to say, for in fact I do not know. Something, however, I fear me, must have gone wrong, for he certainly sallied forth, after no very great interval, with an air quite desolate and chop-fallen. Oh these women! These women! Could that girl have been playing off any of her coquettish tricks? Was her encouragement of the poor pedagogue all a mere sham to secure her conquest of his rival? Heaven only knows, not I!

Let it suffice to say, Ichabod stole forth with the air of one who had been sacking a hen-roost, rather than a fair lady's heart. Without looking to the right or left to notice the scene of rural wealth on which he had so often gloated, he went straight to the stable, and with several hearty cuffs and kicks roused his steed most uncourteously from the comfortable quarters in which he was soundly sleeping, dreaming of mountains of corn and oats, and whole valleys of timothy and clover.

It was the very witching time of night that Ichabod, heavy-hearted and crestfallen, pursued his travels homewards, along the sides of the lofty hills which rise above Tarry Town, and
which he had traversed so cheerily in the afternoon. The hour was as dismal as himself. Far below him the Tappan Zee spread its dusky and indistinct waste of waters, with here and there the tall mast of a sloop riding quietly at anchor under the land. In the dead hush of midnight he could even hear the barking of the watch-dog from the opposite shore of the Hudson; but it was so vague and faint as only to give an idea of his distance from this faithful companion of man. Now and then, too, the long-drawn crowing of a cock, accidentally awakened, would sound far, far off, from some farmhouse away among the hills—but it was like a dreaming sound in his ear. No signs of life occurred near him, but occasionally the melancholy chirp of a cricket, or perhaps the guttural twang of a bull-frog, from a neighbouring marsh, as if sleeping uncomfortably, and turning suddenly in his bed.

All the stories of ghosts and goblins that he had heard in the afternoon now came crowding upon his recollection. The night grew darker and darker; the stars seemed to sink deeper in the sky, and driving clouds occasionally hid them from his sight. He had never felt so lonely and dismal. He was, moreover, approaching the very place where many of the scenes of the ghost stories had been laid. In the centre of the road stood an enormous tulip tree, which towered like a giant above all the other trees of the neighbourhood, and formed a kind of landmark. Its limbs were gnarled and fantastic, large enough to form trunks for ordinary trees, twisting down almost to the earth, and rising again into the air. It was connected with the tragical story of the unfortunate André, who had been taken prisoner hard by; and was universally known by the name of Major André's tree. The common people regarded it with a mixture of respect and superstition, partly out of sympathy for the fate of its ill-starred namesake and partly from the tales of strange sights and doleful lamentations told concerning it.

As Ichabod approached this fearful tree, he began to whistle; he thought his whistle was answered; it was but a blast sweeping through the dry branches. As he approached a little nearer, he thought he saw something white hanging in the midst of the tree—he paused and ceased whistling; but, on looking more narrowly, perceived that it was a place where the tree had been scathed by lightning and the white wood laid bare. Suddenly he heard a groan—his teeth chattered,
and his knees smote against the saddle; it was but the rubbing
of one huge bough upon another as they were swayed about
by the breeze. He passed the tree in safety, but new perils lay
before him.

About two hundred yards from the tree a small brook
crossed the road, and ran into a marshy and thickly wooded
glen known by the name of Wiley’s Swamp. A few rough
logs, laid side by side, served for a bridge over this stream.
On that side of the road where the brook entered the wood,
a group of oaks and chestnuts, matted thick with wild grape-
vines, threw a cavernous gloom over it. To pass this bridge
was the severest trial. It was at this identical spot that the
unfortunate André was captured, and under the covert of those
chestnuts and vines were the sturdy yeomen concealed who
surprised him. This has ever since been considered a haunted
stream, and fearful are the feelings of the schoolboy who has
to pass it alone after dark.

As he approached the stream his heart began to thump;
he summoned up, however, all his resolution, gave his horse
half a score of kicks in the ribs, and attempted to dash briskly
across the bridge; but instead of starting forward, the perverse
old animal made a lateral movement, and ran broadside against
the fence. Ichabod, whose fears increased with the delay,
jerked the reins on the other side, and kicked lustily with the
contrary foot. It was all in vain; his steed started, it is true,
but it was only to plunge to the opposite side of the road into
a thicket of brambles and alder-bushes. The schoolmaster
now bestowed both whip and heel upon the starveling ribs
of old Gunpowder, who dashed forward, snuffling and
snorting, but came to a stand just by the bridge with a
suddeness that had nearly sent his rider sprawling over his
head. Just at this moment a plashy tramp by the side of the
bridge caught the sensitive ear of Ichabod. In the dark
shadow of the grove, on the margin of the brook, he beheld
something huge, misshapen, black and towering. It stirred
not, but seemed gathered up in the gloom, like some gigantic
monster ready to spring upon the traveller.

The hair of the affrighted pedagogue rose upon his head
with terror. What was to be done? To turn and fly was now
too late; and besides, what chance was there of escaping ghost
or goblin, if such it was, which could ride upon the wings of
the wind? Summoning up, therefore, a show of courage, he
demanded in stammering accents, "Who are you?" He received no reply. He repeated his demand in a still more agitated voice. Still there was no answer. Once more he cudgelled the sides of the inflexible Gunpowder, and shutting his eyes broke forth with involuntary fervour into a psalm tune. Just then the shadowy object of alarm put itself in motion, and with a scramble and a bound, stood at once in the middle of the road. Though the night was dark and dismal, yet the form of the unknown might now in some degree be ascertained. He appeared to be a horseman of large dimensions, and mounted on a black horse of powerful frame. He made no offer of molestation or sociability, but kept aloof on one side of the road, jogging along on the blind side of old Gunpowder, who had now got over his fright and waywardness.

Ichabod, who had no relish for this strange midnight companion, and bethought himself of the adventure of Brom Bones with the Galloping Hessian, now quickened his steed, in hopes of leaving him behind. The stranger, however, quickened his horse to an equal pace. Ichabod pulled up, and fell into a walk, thinking to lag behind—the other did the same. His heart began to sink within him; he endeavoured to resume his psalm tune, but his parched tongue clove to the roof of his mouth, and he could not utter a stave. There was something in the moody and dogged silence of this pertinacious companion that was mysterious and appalling. It was soon fearfully accounted for. On mounting a rising ground, which brought the figure of his fellow-traveller in relief against the sky, gigantic in height, and muffled in a cloak, Ichabod was horror-struck on perceiving that he was headless! But his horror was still more increased on observing that the head, which should have rested on his shoulders, was carried before him on the pommel of the saddle. His terror rose to desperation; he rained a shower of kicks and blows upon Gunpowder, hoping, by a sudden movement, to give his companion the slip—but the spectre started full jump with him. Away then they dashed through thick and thin; stones flying and sparks flashing at every bound. Ichabod's flimsy garments fluttered in the air as he stretched his long lank body away over his horse's head in the eagerness of his flight.

They had now reached the road which turns off to Sleepy Hollow; but Gunpowder, who seemed possessed with a
demon, instead of keeping up it, made an opposite turn, and plunged headlong down the hill to the left. This road leads through a sandy hollow shaded by trees for about a quarter of a mile, where it crosses the bridge famous in goblin story, and just beyond swells the green knoll on which stands the whitewashed church.

As yet the panic of the steed had given his unskilful rider an apparent advantage in the chase; but just as he had got half-way through the hollow, the girths of the saddle gave way, and he felt it slipping from under him. He seized it by the pommel, and endeavoured to hold it firm, but in vain; and had just time to save himself by clasping old Gunpowder round the neck when the saddle fell to the earth, and he heard it trampled under-foot by his pursuer. For a moment the terror of Hans Van Ripper’s wrath passed across his mind—for it was his Sunday saddle. But this was no time for petty fears; the goblin was hard on his haunches; and (unskilful rider that he was!) he had much ado to maintain his seat; sometimes slipping on one side, sometimes on the other, and sometimes jolted on the high ridge of his horse’s back-bone, with a violence that he verily feared would cleave him asunder.

An opening in the trees now cheered him with the hopes that the church bridge was at hand. The wavering reflection of a silver star in the bosom of the brook told him that he was not mistaken. He saw the walls of the church dimly glaring under the trees beyond. He recollected the place where Brom Bones’ ghostly competitor had disappeared. “If I can but reach that bridge,” thought Ichabod, “I am safe.” Just then he heard the black steed panting and blowing close behind him; he even fancied that he felt his hot breath. Another convulsive kick in the ribs, and old Gunpowder sprang upon the bridge; he thundered over the resounding planks; he gained the opposite side; and now Ichabod cast a look behind to see if his pursuer should vanish, according to rule, in a flash of fire and brimstone. Just then he saw the goblin rising in his stirrups, and in the very act of hurling his head at him. Ichabod endeavoured to dodge the horrible missile, but too late. It encountered his cranium with a tremendous crash—he was tumbled headlong into the dust, and Gunpowder, the black steed, and the goblin rider passed by like a whirlwind.

The next morning the old horse was found without his saddle, and with the bridle under his feet, soberly cropping
the grass at his master’s gate. Ichabod did not make his appearance at breakfast—dinner-hour came, but no Ichabod. The boys assembled at the schoolhouse, and strolled idly about the banks of the brook; but no schoolmaster. Hans Van Ripper now began to feel some uneasiness about the fate of poor Ichabod and his saddle. An inquiry was set on foot, and after diligent investigation they came upon his traces. In one part of the road leading to the church was found the saddle trampled in the dirt; the tracks of horses’ hoofs deeply dented in the road, and evidently at furious speed, were traced to the bridge, beyond which, on the bank of a broad part of the brook, where the water ran deep and black, was found the hat of the unfortunate Ichabod, and close beside it a shattered pumpkin.

The brook was searched, but the body of the schoolmaster was not to be discovered. Hans Van Ripper, as executor of his estate, examined the bundle, which contained all his worldly effects. They consisted of two shirts and a half; two stocks for the neck; a pair or two of worsted stockings; an old pair of corduroy small-clothes; a rusty razor; a book of psalm tunes, full of dog’s ears; and a broken pitch-pipe. As to the books and furniture of the schoolhouse, they belonged to the community, excepting Cotton Mather’s History of Witchcraft, a New England Almanac, and a book of dreams and fortune-telling; in which last was a sheet of foolscap much scribbled and blotted in several fruitless attempts to make a copy of verses in honour of the heiress of Van Tassel. These magic books and the poetic scrawl were forthwith consigned to the flames by Hans Van Ripper; who from that time forward determined to send his children no more to school, observing that he never knew any good come of this same reading and writing. Whatever money the schoolmaster possessed, and he had received his quarter’s pay but a day or two before, he must have had about his person at the time of his disappearance.

The mysterious event caused much speculation at the church on the following Sunday. Knots of gazers and gossips were collected in the churchyard, at the bridge, and at the spot where the hat and pumpkin had been found. The stories of Brouwer, of Bones, and a whole budget of others, were called to mind; and when they had diligently considered them all, and compared them with the symptoms of the present case, they shook their heads, and came to the conclusion that Ichabod
had been carried off by the Galloping Hessian. As he was a bachelor, and in nobody's debt, nobody troubled his head any more about him. The school was removed to a different quarter of the Hollow, and another pedagogue reigned in his stead.

It is true, an old farmer, who had been down to New York on a visit several years after, and from whom this account of the ghostly adventure was received, brought home the intelligence that Ichabod Crane was still alive; that he had left the neighbourhood, partly through fear of the goblin and Hans Van Ripper, and partly in mortification at having been suddenly dismissed by the heiress; that he had changed his quarters to a distant part of the country; had kept school and studied law at the same time; had been admitted to the bar, turned politician, electioneered, written for the newspapers, and finally had been made a justice of the Ten-pound Court. Brom Bones, too, who shortly after his rival's disappearance conducted the blooming Katrina in triumph to the altar, was observed to look exceedingly knowing whenever the story of Ichabod was related, and always burst into a hearty laugh at the mention of the pumpkin; which led some to suspect that he knew more about the matter than he chose to tell.

The old country wives, however, who are the best judges of these matters, maintain to this day that Ichabod was spirited away by supernatural means; and it is a favourite story often told about the neighbourhood round the winter evening fire. The bridge became more than ever an object of superstitious awe, and that may be the reason why the road has been altered of late years, so as to approach the church by the border of the millpond. The schoolhouse being deserted, soon fell to decay, and was reported to be haunted by the ghost of the unfortunate pedagogue; and the plough-boy, loitering homeward of a still summer evening, has often fancied his voice at a distance, chanting a melancholy psalm tune among the tranquil solitudes of Sleepy Hollow.
Margery Sharp was educated at Bedford College and while there went to the United States as member of an English debating team. She has published several novels and her latest, Four Gardens, has been recommended by the Book Society. She has also written a play entitled Meeting at Night, and is a well-known writer of short stories.
THE BETTER TURN

NOT all clubs are in Piccadilly; nor do all clubmen, despite a widespread tradition to the contrary, spend their days at the bridge table and their nights in silk pyjamas. Mr. Hickey, for example, drove a No. 31 bus and wore natural wool underwear; and in certain by no means in-exclusive circles—particularly in the neighbourhood of the Chelsea Football Ground—Mr. Hickey was a very well-known clubman indeed.

In the upstairs room at the King’s Head, at the weekly meetings of the Friendly Badgers, Mr. Hickey reigned supreme. He had a turn, a flair, for the punctilio of social intercourse; nor did his appearance belie his parts. He was something like a whale and something like Queen Victoria—the very pink and pattern, in fact, of irresistible authority; and in one particular at least he also resembled the Great Macduff. However humbly placed, however near the foot of the table, Mr. Hickey’s seat, by the end of a convivial evening, had always become the Chair.

He was not really the Chairman. The real Chairman was Mr. Bray, a very old ex-grocer who had been properly elected in the year 1890; only the Badgers kept no minute-books, Mr. Bray never spoke, and in the course of a decade or two the appointment had been forgotten. Too modest to blame, he was also too modest to remind, but he sometimes brooded a little. He brooded chiefly about the Treasurer, who, in 1890, had been a freshly elected stripling with a presumably good memory; but even Mr. Beagle, though still so set in his ways as to call himself a Radical, seemed to have forgotten too. This one bitterness apart, however, Mr. Bray’s lot was not too unhappy, for his sheer powers of survival had at last procured him a certain respect. He commanded a seat by the fire-place, a tribute of free drinks; and Mr. Hickey, on entering, never failed to nod.

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On a certain evening in July, however, the nod was so perfunctory that Mr. Bray almost took umbrage. He bridled, coughed, and cleared his throat. But Mr. Hickey did not notice, for Mr. Hickey had had an adventure.

“It was in the King’s Road,” began Mr. Hickey methodically, “and about the first hold-up since we left the Depot; we’d a lorry on one side and an island on the other, and a bobby in front that had fair taken root. Nice an’ peaceful it was, too, if you hadn’t been going anywhere; only I happened to want to go to Camden Town. Well, just as we’d all got settled down like, I heard someone call out, and there on the island was a feller with a beard.”

“A beard!” repeated Mr. Bray superciliously. “He must ha’ been getting on.”

“That’s the funny part,” said Mr. Hickey. “’E was quite young. Not more’n twenty or so. But ’e had a fair beard, an’ a shabby old jacket, an’ grey flannel bags; and, as it turned out afterwards, ’e was a lunatic!”

Mr. Hickey paused, and under cover of the ensuing sensation stole a swift and secret glance in the direction of Mr. Pye. For it was by the demeanour of Mr. Pye—a vast and somnolent Yorkshireman—that he was accustomed to measure his hold over an audience. If Pye were awake, all was well; if Pye were yawning, the story would hang fire. (When any ordinary Badger held forth, Pye simply slept.) On this particular occasion, however, Pye was not only awake, but seemed to be deliberately lending an ear.

“Jumping up and down, ’e was,” continued Mr. Hickey, “like a cat on ’ot bricks. Well, I didn’t take any notice, for he was just moving off again, but at the next hold-up we get stuck in, round comes my conductor to say there’s a feller with a beard keeps wanting to know my name. ’E’d nipped on to the bus, d’you see, at that stop in the King’s Road, and whenever my conductor tried to turn him off (for I said straight out I didn’t want nothing to do with him) ’e just kept taking another pennyworth. Sevenpence ’e paid in all, which took him right to Camden Town, and the minute we got to the Depot round he comes runnin’, an’ my conductor after him, and shoves his foot on the stop as though ’e wanted to climb into my lap. Give me a fair turn, it did, I can tell you.”

“Why, whatever did he want?” asked Mr. Bray.
With all the deliberation of one who hardly hopes to be believed, the Chairman told them.

"'E wanted," said Mr. Hickey slowly, "'e said 'e wanted to paint my picture."

From all round the table, with one spontaneous movement, a dozen heads craned suddenly forward; for even Badgers of ten years' standing, it seemed, felt an overpowering need to refresh their memories. But all was just as they remembered; the nose irregular yet commanding, the eyes small yet majestic, the mulberry of the complexion and the iron of the drooping moustache, all was familiar; and when at last the Treasurer spoke, it was for every Badger present.

"He's mad all right," said Mr. Beagle.

"That's just what my conductor said," agreed Mr. Hickey triumphantly. "'You're mad all right,' 'e said; and I said so, too. But did the young feller care? Not 'e. 'E stood there bold as an inspector and asked when was my next time off."

"Mad," said Mr. Beagle again. "They got no fear of God nor man. What did you say to that?"

The Chairman hesitated.

"Well, as a matter o' fact," he admitted at last, "I was so took aback that I went an' told him. 'Sunday afternoon,' I said. 'Splendid,' says 'e, 'there's the address. Come as early as you can and it'll be 'arf a crown an' hour.' And with that 'e shoves a paper into me hand and scoots down the street."

"'I be blewed!" said Mr. Bray.

It was the general opinion. Amid a sudden shuffling of beer-mugs, conversation broke loose, and for once the audacity of youth, usually the Badgers' favourite topic, received no more than passing attention. The wider field of the lunacy laws stretched temptingly before them.

"He can't be certified," laid down Mr. Bray, "or he wouldn't be out. Unless he has to report himself somewhere, o' course, the same as an alien."

"That's right," agreed the Treasurer, "or same as a ticket-o'-leave man. What did he talk like, Hickey?"

"Lahdidah, but quite civil. 'The privilege o' paintin' your portrait'—that's how 'e put it."

"You won't go, o' course," said Mr. Beagle.

Mr. Hickey stiffened. He had never, until that moment, had any intention of going; but neither had he any intention of being dictated to by his Treasurer.
"An' why not?" asked Mr. Hickey.

There was a moment's astounded silence; then with a perceptible effort the taciturn Mr. Pye suddenly found his tongue.

"They got t'strength o' ten," he proclaimed gravely. "Don't you be deceived, Hickey; whatever t'lad may look like, he'll be more'n your match."

At once other Badgers joined in, some with appropriate anecdotes, some quarrelling with Mr. Pye's figures, but all urging caution. They cast no slur, they explained, upon their Chairman's courage; they rather deplored it. They freely admitted his stamina, and paid generous tribute to his exceptional build. But the fact remained beyond all denial, that even at five to one the odds were too great to risk.

"Pack o' nonsense," said Mr. Hickey.

He emptied his mug, and, like a lion-surrounded explorer, let his indomitable gaze travel slowly over his opponents. Nor did the well-tried expedient fail of its effect; the Badgers were subdued. They recognized, by the very recklessness they sought to restrain, their natural superior. Only the Treasurer, by shifting his ground, was still able to protest.

"Anyway, you didn't ought to go alone," said Mr. Beagle.

And now with rebuke hovering on his lips, the Chairman paused. Having just demonstrated his authority, he could afford to unbend; and there was, moreover, and much as one disliked to admit it, something in what Beagle said. The strength of ten, had they? Mr. Hickey pondered the question, and came to a rapid decision.

"Well, if you want to come, o' course," said Mr. Hickey mildly, "I dare say 'e'd be quite willin'. 'N' what about Pye? If Pye came as well, you'd have someone to talk to."

They were caught, and they knew it. They had either to follow his insane lead or stand publicly convicted of cowardice; and with the eyes of the assembly so earnestly upon them, it was scarcely a choice at all.

And so it came about that on the Sunday afternoon following, Mr. Hickey and his two chaperons stood shifting their feet outside 10 Runford Studios, in a thoroughfare off the King's Road. They had knocked once and got no answer, but at the second attempt a voice called from within demanding who they were.

"Me, Hickey," boomed back Mr. Hickey majestically.
If he had said "The Law!" it could hardly have sounded better.

"Come in, bless you!" responded the voice affably; and with some trepidation the three adventurers turned the knob, found the door opening before them, and filed cautiously through. Nor was trepidation misplaced. In the centre of the floor, prone and naked in a patch of sun, the owner of the studio lay rapidly gyrating his legs.

["What, like on bicycle?" asked Mr. Bray the next evening.
"That's it," said Mr. Hickey. "Only there wasn't a bicycle there. And if there had been, 'e'd ha' been upside down on it."

The Badgers gaped. . . .]

For an appalling instant the group in the doorway stood mute and motionless. It was as though they had been suddenly deprived, by some supernatural agency, of every sense but sight. Mr. Pye, indeed, by firmly screwing up his lids, negatived even that; but the eyes of Mr. Beagle, like the eyes of a prawn, seemed not only to stare, but actually to reach out beyond the limits of his head. Only in the gaze of Mr. Hickey was reason still active. He stared, indeed, but he could still observe. And his observations were of the highest importance, for they showed that the young man on the parquet, though undoubtedly insane, was also completely and patently unarmed.

The instant passed. Confidence, flowing back through Mr. Hickey's frame, communicated itself even to his companions. They breathed, they revived; and in the same moment the artist had leapt to his feet, thrown on a dressing-gown, and now presented an almost normal appearance:

"Caught in the act, what?" he exclaimed lightly. "I'll have to put the clock right."

They were not deceived. They still kept their opinion. But because a man with his boots on must always feel superior to a man in bare feet, they were a little reassured. Mr. Pye opened his eyes again, Mr. Beagle shut his, while as for Mr. Hickey, he stepped firmly forward and in unwavering tones announced that he had come.

"Grand," replied the artist cordially. "Dead on time, and the light's good. Sit anywhere you like, and I'll circle round a bit."

Glancing swiftly about the studio (to which he had hitherto paid no attention), Mr. Hickey now saw that it
was furnished, apart from artistic paraphernalia, solely with cushions. They lay heaped along the wall in a wide divan-like mass; there was another heap by the stove and a third by the window; but for anything at all comfortable, for anything solid even, his eye sought in vain.

"You haven't such a thing as a chair, have you?" he asked.
The artist tore his hair.

"Now you mention it," he said, "I haven't. I never use 'em myself, and most of the models prefer cushions. Not so hard, you see. But I tell you what I have got—I've got a very comfortable trunk."

"Ah," said Mr. Hickey non-committally; and the three visitors watched with interest while their host dived behind a dark-blue curtain that cut off one end of the room. It swung voluminously aside, so that they could see the further white wall and a low divan bed. A few clothes hung on pegs, one or two cushions had strayed in from the studio, but the only other furniture visible was the large leather trunk which the artist now dragged forth.

"There!" he said triumphantly. "Sit yourself down on that and you'll be right as rain."

With heroic recklessness, Mr. Hickey would at once have advanced; but not so Mr. Beagle. He was there to protect, and he knew his duty.

"Skit!" hissed Mr. Beagle. "Ask to see what's inside."

A little superfluously—since the Treasurer hissed louder than he knew—Mr. Hickey did so. He said afterwards he felt rather a fool. What the artist felt was not observable, both surprise and chagrin (if any) being artfully concealed. With ready candour he at once threw back the lid and revealed a useful body of gentleman's underwear.

"Ah!" said Mr. Hickey again; and this time lowered himself into position. With Mr. Pye and Mr. Beagle standing stiffly behind him he looked partly like a Lord Mayor and partly like the prisoner in the dock; and now it was the artist's turn to ask a question.

"Will your friends be staying long?" he inquired.

"All the time," said Mr. Hickey, motioning them forward.
"Mr. Beagle, Mr. Pye."
The Treasurer shuffled, the Yorkshireman ducked his head; and then all three waited expectantly.

"Delighted," said the artist. "Er—my name's Léennec."
Mr. Pye looked at him.
"Laennec?" said Mr. Pye. "That's a name from my part o' t'world. L-a-e-n-n-e-c, is it?"
"That's right," said the young man hastily. "It's French, or something. Got over with the Normans. You comfortable there, Mr. Hickey?"
Mr. Pye looked again.
"Not a common name neither," he said. "There's Laennec Castle, and there's a dozen o' 'Laennec Arms'; but t'only other Laennec we know of is t'Duke's son."
The artist seemed to hesitate.
"Well, as a matter of fact," he said at last, "I am Lord Laennec. Now let's get on with it..."
And it was at that precise moment, while their brains still reeled from the shock, that they all three noticed the painting. It was a large painting, nicely framed, of two black shapes and one blue shape on a light fawn ground; and on the frame beneath, alongside the show-ticket, it said: "Moustache, sea-shell, and Marche Funèbre."
"The pore young feller!" sighed Mr. Bray compassionately, that evening.
"And him stark naked," finished Mr. Hickey, "in a pink silk dressing-gown." And the pause having been timed not only with a nice sense of climax, but also to allow for refreshment, he raised his mug and took a long, thoughtful pull.
All round the table Badgers followed his example. Their Chairman's skill as a raconteur, together with the intrinsic merit of his story, had kept them all uncommonly dry. In silence, therefore, they wetted their whistles, and only when the same again had been supplied to all was the first voice upraised in wonder.
"An' you mean to say you stayed there?" marvelled a Badger from Paddington.
"Stayed? O' course we stayed," said Mr. Hickey. He did not add, and neither Mr. Pye nor the Treasurer saw fit to add for him, that they had been far too much overcome to do anything else. Their knees had turned to water, and they stayed for two hours, if not exactly trembling, at least rigid in every limb; and at the end of the session, feeling as though they had done a very hard day's work, had been forced to call at the nearest public and spend most of the five shillings
on Scotch and soda. The artist, to be sure, had offered them beer, but they felt it safer to refuse.

"And what kind of a likeness did 'e get?" asked Mr. Bray curiously.

"Rotten," said the Treasurer.

From the head of the table an eye reproved him.

"'Tisn't finished, o' course," said Mr. Hickey. "'Tisn't barely started. A portrait like that takes a lot o' doing."

"You mean to say you got to go again?" protested Mr. Bray.

"I'm considerin' it," said Mr. Hickey. "He's mad, o' course—mad as a hatter—but from what we saw o' him today, I wouldn't say 'e was actually harmful. What d'you think, Beagle?"

Thus appealed to from the chair, the Treasurer paused. But the familiar and eminently safe surroundings, to say nothing of the many drinks he had been stood, were having their effect; and as once before that day, Mr. Hickey's courage proved capable of transmission.

"Well, if you want to go again, I'll go with you," said Mr. Beagle.

"One thing I will say for t'lad," added Mr. Pye; "while he was choosing a name, he had sense to pick a good 'un."

And then, from the bottom of the table, came a most extraordinary suggestion.

"I s'pose," hazarded a Badger timidly—a quite recently elected Badger, whom no one thought much of—"I s'pose there's no chance he is Lord Laennec?"

Mr. Pye snorted.

"About just as much chance as he's King of England. Why, who'd live in a barn when they could live in Laennec Castle? Next time you're up north, lad, you go and take a look at it. If you happen on a Thursday, it'll be open to t'public. That's the sort o' place Laennec is."

"I don't say he's not mad, Mr. Pye," protested the Badger, "but he might be a lord for all that. Lords go barmy same as you or me."

"Same as you, p'r'aps," corrected Mr. Pye. "I'm not going daft, so don't you think it. And suppose Lord Laennec did go mad—d'you think they'd have no spare room at t'Castle for him, nor a few old cushions to chuck down on t'floor?"

Amid general scorn the heretic subsided, and as the hour
was growing late the Chairman, from sheer force of habit, and in a few well-chosen words, wound up the debate with an expression of personal opinion.

"Apart from the fact that 'e's mad," he pronounced gravely, "and apart from the way 'e paints—which is all, of course, on account of being mad—apart from all that, 'e's quite a nice young feller."

And in this opinion, during the next few months, both Mr. Hickey and Mr. Beagle were gradually and rather surprisingly confirmed. For the second visit—undertaken about a week later—proved so little alarming as to draw them on again; and after a third and fourth had found the artist still clothed and unmenacing, they gave rein to their natural courage and went quite often.

Their visits, moreover, were purely social, for the portrait, a failure even in the eyes of the artist, had turned into three red shapes on a plum-and-ochre ground. It was that which so upset Mr. Pye, and which eventually drove him from the studio; but Mr. Hickey and Mr. Beagle, on whom art made less impression, soon found themselves not only at ease but almost at home. They liked, without quite realizing why, the studio's empty roominess; they liked, as autumn drew on, the generous heat of the stove. Mr. Beagle in particular (his landlady being less thoroughly tamed than Mr. Hickey's) enjoyed the novel sensation of knocking out his pipe all over the floor. That they supplied their own beer was a proof no longer of suspicion, but rather of kindly thought for their host's finances.

"For if 'e's got thirty bob a week," said Mr. Hickey, "that's the last penny. 'E hasn't an overcoat, even—least, I've never seen him in one."

Mr. Beagle nodded.

"I met him t'other day in the King's Road, proper nip in the air there was. 'E'd nothing but flannels an' a jacket an' a big woolly muffler twisted round his neck."

"Here, what about bringin' in a few sausages?" suggested Mr. Hickey.

So they brought sausages along with the beer and spread many a supper on the model's throne. At first the artist demurred, but by simply ignoring his protests and getting on with the cooking Mr. Hickey and Mr. Beagle soon established their ascendancy. He fried to their orders and ate as directed.
Soon the only bar to perfect ease was the ticklish question of address, for pamper him in his follies they neither could nor would. He had, however, a Christian name as well, and by eliminating the vocative altogether and by generally referring to him as Young Arthur, they presently discovered a modus vivendi.

Thus things went on until the beginning of winter, when arriving one afternoon at the studio they found the throne spread with tea-things and a strange young woman manipulating the pot.

She wasn’t a stranger for long. At the end of a day or two she practically lived there.

In person she was extremely attractive, having cheeks like roses, eyes like saucers, and curly butter-coloured hair; but it somehow came as a surprise when one learnt that her name was Godolphin. Possibly on that account Young Arthur addressed her as Bubbles; and after the works on which he was daily engaged, her appearance was no doubt a relief. As for Mr. Hickey, he was completely bowled over.

He did not show it, of course. He remained as aloof, majestic, and taciturn as ever. But under that calm exterior a heart began to beat, and Miss Godolphin (who could have detected a heart-beat under Mont Blanc itself) was not deceived. Almost without thinking, certainly without effort, she simply collected his scalp (and Mr. Beagle’s along with it) and turned her attention back to the artist himself.

For on Young Arthur, for some inexplicable female reason, her attention seemed actually fixed. She darned his socks for him; she brought flowers for the studio. She curled on a cushion and hemmed him a tablecloth. She behaved, in short, like the traditional ray of sunlight, and in every attitude, every employment, presented such a picture of domestic bliss as would turn any man’s thoughts towards matrimony.

“If I was a youngster again,” remarked Mr. Beagle one day, “blowed if I wouldn’t risk it.”

Mr. Hickey looked at him.

“Well, and why not?” countered Mr. Beagle.

“Because she wouldn’t have you, that’s why not,” said Mr. Hickey. “She’s a lady.”

Radical that he was, the Treasurer had no answer. For a lady she was indeed, and such as these degenerate times can rarely have produced. She never said “damn”, but always “bother”; she never drank beer, but only tea. And she never,
except in moments of extreme emotion, employed any cosmetic in the presence of a gentleman. As far as possible, she never even mentioned them. What she did sometimes mention was the agreeable effect of brown soap and cold water; but then they were never seen in use either.

To the charm of refinement, moreover, was added the charm of misfortune. The more she told of her history, the more touching it became. Orphaned at ten, practically destitute at sixteen, she had been forced by circumstance, and despite a strong predilection for a nursery-governess-ship, to make a career on the stage. There for two years her beauty and talent enjoyed a deserved success—and would have been enjoying it still but for the persistent malignity of a certain leading lady. Miss Godolphin named no names—she had too nice a sense of honour—but she mentioned it as a fact, and straight from the horse’s mouth, that the lady in question had refused to go on unless she, Bubbles, were dismissed from the company.

“A wicked shame, that’s what I call it,” said Mr. Hickey. “If she hadn’t had her savings, what’d have become of her then?”

And Mr. Beagle, to whom this question was frequently addressed, could only shake his head. What would become of her, indeed, when her savings were spent? She did not, it was true, seem to be in any immediate want, and was always dressed in the latest fashion; but her succession of new hats merely added to Mr. Hickey’s anxieties. Like many another man, he could be sentimental in particular while remaining shrewd in general; and he had, moreover, on two separate occasions, observed Miss Godolphin alighting from an unusually large car. It dropped her in the King’s Road, so that she arrived at the studio on foot; but the car was there, nevertheless, and it did not drive off unoccupied.

“She’s being led astray,” thought Mr. Hickey gravely.

But how far, and how irrevocably astray, he did not realize until a week or two later, when in the course of a conversation on pinning Mr. Beagle said suddenly:

“I tell you who you will have her marrying, lady or no lady. You’ll have her marrying Young Arthur.”

Mr. Hickey looked at him contemptuously.

“Young Arthur? Not she. She’s got too much sense. Besides—the lad’s barmy.”
"She doesn’t think so. She’s never seen him at his worst—at least I do hope she hasn’t," said Mr. Beagle, remembering his own first encounter. "Besides, look at the way she mends his clothes for him! That’s one o’ the surest signs there is."

"Not in this case, it isn’t," said Mr. Hickey stoutly. "It’s just pure kindness of heart. If I thought there was anything else in it, why, I’d explain things myself; only it happens there isn’t, see? Darn his socks, yes; but marry him—no."

The event, however, proved him mistaken. The very next day, over an unusually floral tea-table, Miss Godolphin and Young Arthur announced their engagement.

"Now what you going to do about it?" asked Mr. Beagle triumphantly.

Mr. Hickey pondered. He had no conscious desire to interfere with anybody. Had the Badgers ever plucked up courage to complain of his tyranny, no one would have been more surprised than the tyrant himself. And the present instance was on a different plane. It was a piece of such voluntary, such flagrant interference as even Mr. Hickey could not fail to recognize. He would be taking a liberty. He would be changing the course of events.

"Blowed if I know," said Mr. Hickey to himself.

It was fortunate that he did not say it aloud; for a moment later he would have had to eat his words. Summoned by the appealing image of Miss Godolphin, resolution returned. What, leave her to marry a lunatic—a lunatic, indeed, of the most inoffensive kind—but who at any moment might turn raving? Leave her to be murdered, perhaps, in a fit of frenzy, or deserted, perhaps, in a fit of absence? Or, at the very best, and supposing his wits returned, to eke out a lifetime at the side of an incompetent pavement artist? So ran Mr. Hickey’s thoughts, almost faster than he could follow them; till at last, with a strong sensation of relief, he determined to think no more, but simply to take action.

"Do? There’s only one thing to do," said Mr. Hickey. "Soon as I get a chance, I shall tell her the whole truth."

It was easier said than done. Bubbles still practically lived at the studio, and Mr. Hickey (thus showing a certain imperviousness to hints) spent every moment of his spare time there; but the chance of a private interview seemed to grow daily more remote. Young Arthur was always there too. When Mr. Beagle, descending to ruse, invited Young
Arthur to come out and have one, Young Arthur refused. And since the whole but undivulged truth makes an uneasy burden, Mr. Hickey’s temper, during the next six days, began to verge on the fretty.

“Better give it up, Hickey,” advised Mr. Beagle. “You’re gettin’ touchy as a cab-horse.”

“You hold your noise,” said Mr. Hickey.

It was decidedly fortunate, therefore, that about twenty minutes after the above conversation, and just as the defeated conspirators were taking their leave, Young Arthur should have suddenly run out for matches while Miss Godolphin remained behind.

The moment—the long-awaited moment—had at last come. Replacing his cap on the peg, Mr. Hickey advanced back into the room.

“Excuse me, miss,” said Mr. Hickey.

Bubbles snapped to her bag and smiled invitingly. She didn’t particularly want to talk to him, but habit was strong.

“Why, what can be the matter?” she cried. “You look quite upset!”

Involuntarily Mr. Beagle turned round and scrutinized his chief. It was quite true. For the first time within memory those features were disturbed.

“If you’d got a father,” began Mr. Hickey obliquely, “things ’ud be different. But there it is: you can’t alter Nature.” He paused rhetorically, as though before a full audience of Badgers; then with practised agility dropped from abstract to concrete. “Take this young feller here,” said Mr. Hickey. “If your Dad was alive, ’e’d have to deal with him. ’E’s quite a nice young feller in a way—-”

All at once, without even waiting for a pause, Miss Godolphin had interrupted.

“If you’re speaking of my fiancé,” she said stiffly, “you’ll please refer to him as Lord Laennec.”

Involuntarily they sighed. But whereas the sigh of Mr. Beagle no more than stirred the air, the sigh of Mr. Hickey, produced as it was from the very bottom of his register, made a sound so sudden and sepulchral that Miss Godolphin jumped.

“Lord!” repeated Mr. Hickey sadly. “’E’s no lord.”

“No more lord than I am,” corroborated Mr. Beagle.

For a long moment, in the utter silence that followed, not
one of them moved. Then Miss Godolphin opened her bag again and took out a mirror.

"You must be off your nuts," she said calmly.

It was too much. They had meant to break it gently, but that was too much.

"Off our nuts!" cried the outraged Mr. Hickey. "It's not us that's off our nuts, it's him. 'Lord Laennec, you'll please call him!' Lord Laennec o' Colney Hatch!"

Surprised, but not intimidated, by the vigour of his outburst, the lady sprang to her feet.

"When Lord Laennec comes back, I'll make him send for the police!" she countered. "People've been had up in court, so they have, for saying a lot less than that!"

"Don't you be in such a hurry," interposed Mr. Beagle. "There's more things than libel you can be had up for: there's false pretences. Now, how did you come to know he was a lord?"

"Because he said so, of course."

"Said so!" repeated Mr. Hickey scornfully. "Naturally 'e said so. Some of 'em says they're Napoleon."

"And he told me who his father was," continued Miss Godolphin. "He's the Duke of Grisedale, and lives in Laennec Castle. I've got a photo of it."

"Photo!" said Mr. Hickey. "They sell 'em in the shops."

"Not like this, they don't. Besides, I've seen the negative."

"Then 'e collected coupons for a camera," said Mr. Hickey.

"And his mother's the Duchess and his sisters are Lady Mary and Lady Ann. And that's as true as I stand here, because I looked it all up in the Free Library."

"Yes, that's all right," agreed Mr. Beagle; "old Pye, he looked it up, too. I s'pose you've seen 'em all?"

For the first time she hesitated.

"Well, no, I haven't yet, because they live right up in Yorkshire. And his mother's ever so funny, he says—she thinks no one's good enough for him. But I've seen their photos, too, in one of the weeklies."

"Ah!" said Mr. Hickey. "You've never seen his picture, have you?"

"That's because he doesn't care for society. He says he just hates balls and things. All he wants, he says, is just to be let paint pictures and left in peace."
"An' I s'pose he doesn't care for decent food neither?" purred Mr. Beagle with irony. "Nor a proper bedroom, nor an overcoat in winter?"

"No, he doesn't. He—he's not like most young men."

"That 'e isn't," said Mr. Hickey. "Now tell me, my dear, where did you first meet him? On a bus, was it?"

"As a matter of fact—it was."

"Ah!" said Mr. Hickey. "And I s'pose he asked if he could paint your picture?"

She stared at him.

"However did you know?"

"Never mind how I know. I know a lot of things. A lot more'n you'd suppose."

She stared again. Then a thought seemed to strike her, and for one brief troubled second her glance dropped from their faces to their feet.

"You're not—you're not detectives?"

"Not exactly," said Mr. Hickey. "Not police detectives. But you can take it from me, my dear, that we know what we're talkin' about. And what we're tryin' to tell you is that this young feller here, instead o' being a lord, is just a pore fortunate loony."

"Then why isn't he shut up? If he's raving mad, why isn't he in an asylum?"

"Not mad, 'e isn't," explained Mr. Hickey, "not raving. Just a little touched like. What you might call loopy. But no fit husband, my dear, for a nice young gel like you."

And then as her glance wavered, as doubt at last gained ground, he had a sudden inspiration. "Facts," he thought, "facts are the thing. . . ." And from a long way off, as though he were listening to a stranger, he heard himself speak.

"As for his real name, my dear," said the stranger, "it's Arthur Henry Williams, and his mother was in service all the days of her life. She was parlourmaid at Laennec Castle, and that's how he come to hear of it. . . ."

The voice ceased. There was a queer stifled gasp, proceeding probably from Mr. Beagle, then a shrill torrent of words from which Mr. Hickey's ear, still buzzing with his own audacity, caught but one recurrent phrase.

"I know there was something fishy!" wailed Miss
Godolphin. "I knew there was! I always thought so! Something fishy I always thought there was!"

And at that moment, like Mr. Hickey's so many months earlier, her eye was caught by Young Arthur's masterpiece. It was still there on its easel, though the one blue shape (representing the seashell) had turned, through some flaw of paint or technique, to a dirty grey. The sight seemed to pull her together. Her eyes narrowed, her lips compressed: when she spoke again it was in a tone of frozen calm.

"T' must ha' been green!" said Miss Godolphin.

The next instant she spun round and held out her hand. With intuitive sympathy, Mr. Hickey offered his handkerchief. But for once intuition let him down; he had underestimated the lady's fibre. She did not want a handkerchief, she wanted tuppence.

"I'll show him!" cried Miss Godolphin.

She flew to the old-fashioned telephone, jammed in the coins, agitated the hook. Her haste was infectious; within two moments she was through.

"Mr. McBean, please, and don't keep me waiting," snapped Miss Godolphin.

They did not. Before Mr. Hickey had time to wonder, she was plunged into conversation.

"That you, Solly dear? This is Bubbles. Listen, Solly. Are you still running round with that licence in your pocket? Because if you are, sweetie, we'll just pop out and use it. Darling, you've got it in one. I said we'd pop straight out—no, that's not me breathing, it's someone else here." She cast a swift glance over her shoulder, and Mr. Hickey closed his mouth. "Yes, that's why I can't explain: I'll say it all when I see you. And, Solly—don't wait to bring the car round. I'm going to take a taxi."

She slammed down the receiver, snatched up her hat, and darted to the door. But even at that tremendous moment, habit prevailed. On the very threshold, as though jerked by an invisible string, Miss Godolphin turned. There were two men in the room. So she flitted back, and kissed them soundly.

They did not, on the way home, directly mention Mr. Hickey's lie. It was a subject too tremendous for any passing discussion. But Mr. Beagle approved: by some tacit, wild-animal method Mr. Beagle conveyed a thorough approval.
At the door of the “King’s Head”, however, their tongues were loosened, and in two brief phrases Mr. Hickey defined his position.

“You ought,” said Mr. Hickey, “to do a good turn when you can...”

He paused, turned the matter in his mind, and added a rider.

“'E’s very young,” said Mr. Hickey; “'e’ll soon get over it.”

And that, oddly enough, was just how the Duchess felt. “My dear,” she said to the Duke, “so long as Arthur comes home, I don’t care what has happened. It’s probably some love affair, poor boy, or he can’t sell those awful pictures; but what does that matter? He’s very young, he’ll soon get over it.”
MISS MIX BY CH-L-TTE BR-NTE
THE NINETY-NINE GUARDSMEN BY AL-X-D-R
D-M-S
THE HAUNTED MAN BY CH-R-S D-C-Q-NS

BRET HARTE
Bret Harte had an adventurous career, wandering over the United States as schoolmaster, printer, and miner, and it was by his brilliant sketches of mining life in California that he built up his literary reputation. The Heathen Chinee and other verses won him a high place as a humorous poet.
MISS MIX

I

My earliest impressions are of a huge, mis-shapen rock, against which the hoarse waves beat unceasingly. On this rock three pelicans are standing in a defiant attitude. A dark sky lowers in the background, while two sea-gulls and a gigantic cormorant eye with extreme disfavour the floating corpse of a drowned woman in the foreground. A few bracelets, coral necklaces, and other articles of jewelry, scattered around loosely, complete this remarkable picture.

It is one which, in some vague, unconscious way, symbolizes, to my fancy, the character of a man. I have never been able to explain exactly why. I think I must have seen the picture in some illustrated volume when a baby, or my mother may have dreamed it before I was born.

As a child I was not handsome. When I consulted the triangular bit of looking-glass which I always carried with me, it showed a pale, sandy, and freckled face, shaded by locks like the colour of sea-weed when the sun strikes it in deep water. My eyes were said to be indistinctive; they were a faint ashen grey; but above them rose—my only beauty—a high, massive, domelike forehead, with polished temples, like door-knobs of the purest porcelain.

Our family was a family of governesses. My mother had been one, and my sisters had the same occupation. Consequently, when at the age of thirteen, my eldest sister handed me the advertisement of Mr. Rawjester, clipped from that day's Times, I accepted it as my destiny. Nevertheless, a mysterious presentiment of an indefinite future haunted me in my dreams that night, as I lay upon my little snow-white bed. The next morning, with two band-boxes tied up in silk handkerchiefs, and a hair trunk, I turned my back upon Minerva Cottage for ever.
Blunderbore Hall, the seat of James Rawjester, Esq., was encompassed by dark pines and funereal hemlocks on all sides. The wind sang weirdly in the turrets and moaned through the long-drawn avenues of the park. As I approached the house I saw several mysterious figures flit before the windows, and a yell of demoniac laughter answered my summons at the bell. While I strove to repress my gloomy forebodings, the housekeeper, a timid, scared-looking old woman, showed me into the library.

I entered, overcome with conflicting emotions. I was dressed in a narrow gown of dark serge, trimmed with black bugles. A thick green shawl was pinned across my breast. My hands were encased with black half-mittens worked with steel beads; on my feet were large pattens, originally the property of my deceased grandmother. I carried a blue cotton umbrella. As I passed before a mirror, I could not help glancing at it, nor could I disguise from myself the fact that I was not handsome.

Drawing a chair into a recess, I sat down with folded hands, calmly awaiting the arrival of my master. Once or twice a fearful yell rang through the house, or the rattling of chains, and curses uttered in a deep, manly voice, broke upon the oppressive stillness. I began to feel my soul rising with the emergency of the moment.

"You look alarmed, miss. You don't hear anything, my dear, do you?" asked the housekeeper nervously.

"Nothing whatever," I remarked calmly, as a terrific scream, followed by the dragging of chairs and tables in the room above, drowned for a moment my reply. "It is the silence, on the contrary, which has made me foolishly nervous."

The housekeeper looked at me approvingly, and instantly made some tea for me.

I drank seven cups; as I was beginning the eighth, I heard a crash, and the next moment a man leaped into the room through the broken window.

The crash startled me from my self-control. The housekeeper bent towards me and whispered:
“Don’t be excited. It’s Mr. Rawjester—he prefers to come in sometimes in this way. It’s his playfulness, ha, ha, ha!”

“I perceive,” I said calmly. “It’s the unfettered impulse of a lofty soul breaking the tyrannizing bonds of custom,” and I turned towards him.

He had never once looked at me. He stood with his back to the fire, which set off the Herculean breadth of his shoulders. His face was dark and expressive; his underjaw square formed, and remarkably heavy. I was struck with his remarkable likeness to a gorilla.

As he absently tied the poker into hard knots with his nervous fingers, I watched him with some interest. Suddenly he turned towards me.

“Do you think I’m handsome, young woman?”

“Not classically beautiful,” I returned calmly; “but you have, if I may so express myself, an abstract manliness—a sincere and wholesome barbarity which, involving as it does the naturalness”—but I stopped, for he yawned at that moment—an action which singularly developed the immense breadth of his lower jaw—and I saw he had forgotten me. Presently he turned to the housekeeper:

“Leave us.”

The old woman withdrew with a curtsey.

Mr. Rawjester deliberately turned his back upon me and remained silent for twenty minutes. I drew my shawl the more closely around my shoulders and closed my eyes.

“You are the governess?” at length he said.

“I am, sir.”

“A creature who teaches geography, arithmetic, and the use of the globes—ha!—a wretched remnant of femininity—a skimp pattern of girlhood with a premature flavour of tea-leaves and morality. Ugh!”

I bowed my head silently.

“Listen to me, girl!” he said sternly; “this child you have come to teach—my ward—is not legitimate. She is the offspring of my mistress—a common harlot. Ah! Miss Mix, what do you think of me now?”

“I admire,” I replied calmly, “your sincerity. A mawkish regard for delicacy might have kept this disclosure to

I only recognize in your frankness that perfect
community of thought and sentiment which should exist between original natures."

I looked up; he had already forgotten my presence, and was engaged in pulling off his boots and coat. This done, he sank down in an arm-chair before the fire, and ran the poker wearily through his hair. I could not help pitying him.

The wind howled fearfully without, and the rain beat furiously against the windows. I crept towards him and seated myself on a low stool beside his chair.

Presently he turned, without seeing me, and placed his foot absently in my lap. I affected not to notice it. But he started and looked down.

"You here yet, Carrothead! Ah, I forgot. Do you speak French?"

"Oui, monsieur."

"Taisez-vous!" he said sharply, with singular purity of accent. I complied. The wind moaned fearfully in the chimney, and the light burned dim. I shuddered in spite of myself. "Ah, you tremble, girl!"

"It is a fearful night."

"Fearful! Call you this fearful—ha! ha! ha! Look! you wretched little atom, look!" and he dashed forward, and, leaping out of the window, stood like a statue in the pelting storm, with folded arms. He did not stay long, but in a few minutes he returned by way of the hall chimney. I saw from the way that he wiped his feet on my dress that he had again forgotten my presence.

"You are a governess. What can you teach?" he asked, suddenly and fiercely thrusting his face in mine.

"Manners!" I replied calmly.

"Ha! teach me!"

"You mistake yourself," I said, adjusting my mittens. "Your manners require not the artificial restraint of society. You are radically polite; this impetuosity and ferociousness is simply the sincerity which is the basis of a proper deportment. Your instincts are moral; your better nature, I see, is religious. As St. Paul justly remarks—see chap. 6, 8, 9, and 10—"

He seized a heavy candlestick and threw it at me. I dodged it submissively, but firmly.

"Excuse me," he remarked, as his under-jaw slowly
relaxed. "Excuse me, Miss Mix—but I can’t stand St. Paul. Enough—you are engaged."

IV

I followed the housekeeper as she led the way timidly to my room. As we passed into the dark hall in the wing, I noticed that it was closed by an iron gate with a grating. Three of the doors on the corridor were likewise grated. A strange noise, as of shuffling feet, and the howling of infuriated animals, rang through the hall. Bidding the housekeeper good night, and taking the candle, I entered my bedroom.

I took off my dress, and putting on a yellow flannel nightgown, which I could not help feeling did not agree with my complexion, I composed myself to rest by reading Blair’s Rhetoric and Paley’s Moral Philosophy. I had just put out the light, when I heard voices in the corridor. I listened attentively. I recognized Mr. Rawjester’s stern tones.

"Have you fed No. 1?" he asked.
"Yes, sir," said a gruff voice, apparently belonging to a domestic.
"How’s No. 2?"
"She’s a little off her feed just now, but will pick up in a day or two."
"And No. 3?"
"Perfectly furious, sir. Her tantrums are un governable."
"Hush!"

The voices died away, and I sank into a fitful slumber.

I dreamed that I was wandering through a tropical forest. Suddenly I saw the figure of a gorilla approaching me. As it neared me, I recognized the features of Mr. Rawjester. He held his hand to his side as if in pain. I saw that he had been wounded. He recognized me and called me by name, but at the same moment the vision changed to an Ashantee village, where, around the fire, a group of negroes were dancing and participating in some wild Obi festival. I awoke with the strain still surging in my ears.

"Hokee-pokee wokiee fum!"

Good heavens! Could I be dreaming? I heard the voice distinctly on the floor below, and smelt something burning
I arose, with an indistinct presentiment of evil, and hastily putting some cotton in my ears and tying a towel about my head, I wrapped myself in a shawl and rushed downstairs. The door of Mr. Rawjester’s room was open. I entered.

Mr. Rawjester lay apparently in a deep slumber, from which even the clouds of smoke that came from the burning curtains of his bed could not rouse him. Around the room a large and powerful negress, scantily attired, with her head adorned with feathers, was dancing wildly, accompanying herself with bone castanets. It looked like some terrible fetich.

I did not lose my calmness. After firmly emptying the pitcher, basin, and slop-jar on the burning bed, I proceeded cautiously to the garden, and, returning with the garden-engine, I directed a small stream at Mr. Rawjester.

At my entrance the gigantic negress fled. Mr. Rawjester yawned and woke. I explained to him, as he rose dripping from the bed, the reason of my presence. He did not seem to be excited, alarmed, or discomposed. He gazed at me curiously.

“So you risked your life to save mine, eh! you canary-coloured teacher of infants?”

I blushed modestly, and drew my shawl tightly over my yellow flannel nightgown.

“You love me, Mary Jane—don’t deny it! This trembling shows it!” He drew me closely towards him, and said with his deep voice tenderly modulated:

“How’s her pooty tootens—did she get her ’ittle tootens wet—b’ess her?”

I understood his allusion to my feet. I glanced down and saw that in my hurry I had put on a pair of his old India-rubbers. My feet were not small or pretty, and the addition did not add to their beauty.

“Let me go, sir,” I remarked quietly. “This is all improper; it sets a bad example for your child”; and I firmly but gently extricated myself from his grasp. I approached the door. He seemed for a moment buried in deep thought.

“You say this was a negress?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Humph; No. 1, I suppose!”

“Who’s No. 1, sir?”

“My first,” he remarked, with a significant and sarcastic smile. Then, relapsing into his old manner, he threw his boots at my head, and bade me begone. I withdrew calmly.
My pupil was a bright little girl, who spoke French with a
perfect accent. Her mother had been a French ballet-dancer,
which probably accounted for it. Although she was only
six years old, it was easy to perceive that she had been several
times in love. She once said to me:

"Miss Mix, did you ever have the grands passion? Did
you ever feel a fluttering here?" and she placed her hand
upon her small chest, and sighed quaintly, "A kind of distaste
for bonbons and caromels, when the world seemed as tasteless
and hollow as a broken cordial drop."

"Then you have felt it, Nina?" I said quietly.

"Oh dear, yes. There was Buttons—that was our page,
you know—I loved him dearly, but Papa sent him away.
Then there was Dick, the groom, but he laughed at me, and
I suffered misery!" and she struck a tragic French attitude.
"There is to be company here tomorrow," she added, rattling
on with childish naïveté," and Papa's sweetheart—Blanche
Marabout—is to be here. You know they say she is to be
my mamma."

What thrill was this shot through me? But I rose
calmly, and administering a slight correction to the child,
left the apartment.

Blunderbore House, for the next week, was the scene of
gaiety and merriment. That portion of the mansion closed
with a grating was walled up, and the midnight shrieks no
longer troubled me.

But I felt more keenly the degradation of my situation.
I was obliged to help Lady Blanche at her toilette and help
her to look beautiful. For what? To captivate him? Oh
—no, no—but why this sudden thrill and faintness? Did
he really love her? I had seen him pinch and swear at her.
But I reflected that he had thrown a candlestick at my head,
and my foolish heart was reassured.

It was a night of festivity, when a sudden message obliged
Mr. Rawjester to leave his guests for a few hours. "Make
yourselves merry, idiots," he added, under his breath, as he
passed me. The door was closed and he was gone.

A half-hour passed. In the midst of the dancing a shriek
was heard, and out of the swaying crowd of fainting women
and excited men, a wild figure strode into the room. One glance showed it to be a highwayman, heavily armed, holding a pistol in each hand.

"Let no one pass out of this room!" he said on a voice of thunder. "The house is surrounded and you cannot escape. The first one who crosses yonder threshold will be shot like a dog. Gentlemen, I'll trouble you to approach in single file, and hand me your purses and watches."

Finding resistance useless, the order was ungraciously obeyed.

"Now, ladies, please to pass up your jewelry and trinkets."

This order was still more ungraciously complied with. As Blanche handed to the bandit captain her bracelet, she endeavoured to conceal a diamond necklace, the gift of Mr. Rawjester, in her bosom. But, with a demoniac grin, the powerful brute tore it from its concealment and.administering a hearty box on the ear of the young girl, flung her aside.

It was now my turn. With a beating heart, I made my way to the robber chieftain, and sank at his feet. "Oh, sir, I am nothing but a poor governess, pray let me go."

"Oh, ho! A governess? Give me your last month's wages, then. Give me what you have stolen from your master!" and he laughed fiendishly.

I gazed at him quietly, and said in a low voice: "I have stolen nothing from you, Mr. Rawjester!"

"Ah, discovered? Hush! Listen, girl!" he hissed, in a fierce whisper, "utter a syllable to frustrate my plans and you die—aid me, and—-" but he was gone.

In a few moments the party, with the exception of myself, were gagged and locked in the cellar. The next moment torches were applied to the rich hangings, and the house was in flames. I felt a strong hand seize me, and bear me out on the open air and place me upon the hillside, where I could overlook the burning mansion. It was Mr. Rawjester.

"Burn!" he said, as he shook his fist at the flames. Then sinking on his knees before me, he said hurriedly:

"Mary Jane, I love you; the obstacles to our union are or will soon be removed. In yonder mansion were confined my three crazy wives. One of them, as you know, attempted to kill me! Ha! this is vengeance! But will you be mine?"

I fell, without a word, upon his neck.
THE NINETY-NINE GUARDSMEN

I

TWENTY years after, the gigantic innkeeper of Provins stood looking at a cloud of dust on the highway.

This cloud of dust betokened the approach of a traveller. Travellers had been rare that season on the highway between Paris and Provins.

The heart of the innkeeper rejoiced. Turning to Dame Perigord, his wife, he said, stroking his white apron:

"St. Denis! make haste and spread the cloth! Add a bottle of Charlevoix to the table. This traveller, who rides so fast, by his pace must be a Monseigneur."

Truly the traveller, clad in the uniform of a musketeer, as he drew up to the door of the hostelry, did not seem to have spared his horse. Throwing his reins to the landlord, he leaped lightly to the ground. He was a young man of forty and twenty, and spoke with a slight Gascon accent.

"I am hungry. Morbleu! I wish to dine!"

The gigantic innkeeper bowed and led the way to a neat apartment, where a table stood covered with tempting viands. The musketeer at once set to work. Fowls, fish, and patés disappeared before him. Perigord sighed as he witnessed the devastation. Only once the stranger paused.

"Wine!"

Perigord brought wine. The stranger drank a dozen bottles. Finally he rose to depart. Turning to the expectant landlord, he said:

"Charge it."

"To whom, your highness?" said Perigord anxiously.

"To his Eminence!"

"Mazarin!" ejaculated the innkeeper.

"The same. Bring me my horse," and the musketeer, remounting his favourite animal, rode away.

765
The innkeeper slowly turned back into the inn. Scarcely had he reached the courtyard, before the clatter of hoofs again called him to the doorway. A musketeer of a light and graceful figure rode up.
"Parbleu, my dear Perigord, I am famishing. What have you got for dinner?"
"Venison, capons, larks, and pigeons, your excellency," replied the obsequious landlord, bowing to the ground.
"Enough!" The young musketeer dismounted and entered the inn. Seating himself at the table replenished by the careful Perigord, he speedily swept it as clean as the first comer.
"Some wine, my brave Perigord," said the graceful young musketeer, as soon as he could find utterance.
Perigord brought three dozen of Charlevoix. The young man emptied them almost at a draught.
"By-by, Perigord," he said lightly, waving his hand, as, preceding the astonished landlord, he slowly withdrew.
"But, your highness—the bill," said the astounded Perigord.
"Ah, the bill. Charge it!"
"To whom?"
"The Queen!"
"What, Madam?"
"The same. Adieu, my good Perigord," and the graceful stranger rode away. An interval of quiet succeeded, in which the innkeeper gazed woefully at his wife. Suddenly he was startled by a clatter of hoofs, and an aristocratic figure stood in the doorway.
"Ah," said the courtier good-naturedly. "What, do my eyes deceive me? No, it is the festive and luxurious Perigord. Perigord, listen. I am famishing. I would dine."
The innkeeper again covered the table with viands. Again it was swept clean as if the fields of Egypt before the miraculous swarm of locusts. The stranger looked up.
"Bring me another fowl, my Perigord."
"Impossible, your excellency, the larder is stripped clean."
"Another slice of bacon, then."
"Impossible, your highness—there is no more."
"Well, then, wine!"
The landlord brought one hundred and forty-four bottles. The courtier drank them all.
“One may drink if one cannot eat,” said the aristocratic stranger good-humouredly.

The innkeeper shuddered.

The guest rose to depart. The innkeeper came slowly forward with his bill, to which he had covertly added the losses which he had suffered from the previous strangers.

“Ah, the bill—charge it!”
“Charge it! To whom?”
“To the King,” said the guest.
“What! His Majesty?”
“Certainly. Farewell, Perigord.”

The innkeeper groaned. Then he went out and took down his sign. Then remarked to his wife:

“I am a plain man, and don’t understand politics. It seems, however, that the country is in a troubled state. Between his Eminence the Cardinal, his Majesty the King, and her Majesty the Queen, I am a ruined man.”

“Stay,” said Dame Perigord. “I have an idea.”

“And that is——”

“Become yourself a musketeer.”

II

On leaving Provins the first musketeer proceeded to Nangis, where he was reinforced by thirty-three followers. The second musketeer, arriving at Nangis at the same moment, placed himself at the head of thirty-three more. The third guest of the Landlord of Provins arrived at Nangis in time to assemble together thirty-three other musketeers.

The first stranger led the troops of his Eminence.
The second led the troops of the Queen.
The third led the troops of the King.
The fight commenced. It raged terribly for seven hours.
The first musketeer killed thirty of the Queen’s troops. The second musketeer killed thirty of the King’s troops. The third musketeer killed thirty of his Eminence’s troops.

By this time it will be perceived the number of musketeers had been narrowed down to four on each side.

Naturally the three principal warriors approached each other.

They simultaneously uttered a cry:
“Aramis!”
“Athos!”
“D’Artagnan!”
They fell into each other’s arms.
“And it seems that we are fighting against each other, my children,” said the Count de la Fere mournfully.
“How singular!” exclaimed Aramis and D’Artagnan.
“Let us stop this fratricidal warfare,” said Athos.
“We will!” they exclaimed together.
“But how to disband our followers?” queried D’Artagnan.
Aramis winked. They understood each other. “Let us cut ’em down!”
They cut ’em down. Aramis killed three. D’Artagnan three. Athos three.
The galloping of hoofs caused them to withdraw from each other’s embraces. A gigantic figure rapidly approached.
“The innkeeper of Provins!” they cried, drawing their swords.
“Perigord, down with him!” shouted D’Artagnan.
“Stay,” said Athos.
The gigantic figure was beside them. He uttered a cry.
“Athos, Aramis, D’Artagnan!”
“Porthos!” exclaimed the astonished trio.
“The same.” They all fell in each other’s arms.
The Count de la Fere slowly raised his hand to heaven.
“Bless you! Bless you, my children! However different our opinions may be in regard to politics, we have but one opinion in regard to our own merits. Where can you find a better man than Aramis?”
“Than Porthos?” said Aramis.
“Than D’Artagnan?” said Porthos.
“Than Athos?” said D’Artagnan.

III

The King descended into the garden. Proceeding cautiously along the terraced walk, he came to the wall immediately below the windows of Madame. To the left were two windows
concealed by vines. They opened into the apartments of La Valliere.

The King sighed.

"It is about nineteen feet to that window," said the King. "If I had a ladder about nineteen feet long, it would reach to that window. This is logic."

Suddenly the King stumbled over something. "St. Denis!" he exclaimed, looking down. It was a ladder, just nineteen feet long.

The King placed it against the wall. In so doing, he fixed the lower end upon the abdomen of a man who lay concealed by the wall. The man did not utter a cry or wince. The King suspected nothing. He ascended the ladder.

The ladder was too short. Louis the Grand was not a tall man. He was still two feet below the window.

"Dear me!" said the King.

Suddenly the ladder was lifted two feet from below. This enabled the King to leap in the window. At the further end of the apartment stood a young girl, with red hair and a lame leg. She was trembling with emotion.

"Louise!"

"The King!"

"Ah, my God, mademoiselle!"

"Ah, my God, sire!"

But a low knock at the door interrupted the lovers. The King uttered a cry of rage; Louise one of despair.

The door opened and D'Artagnan entered.

"Good evening, sire," said the musketeer.

The King touched a bell. Porthos appeared in the doorway.

"Good evening, sire."

"Arrest M. D'Artagnan."

Porthos looked at D'Artagnan, and did not move.

The King almost turned purple with rage. He again touched the bell. Athos entered.

"Count, arrest Porthos and D'Artagnan."

The Count de la Fere glanced at Porthos and D'Artagnan, and smiled sweetly.

"Sacre! Where is Aramis?" said the King violently.

"Here, sire," and Aramis entered.

"Arrest Athos, Porthos, and D'Artagnan."

Aramis bowed, and folded his arms.

S.C.H.
"Arrest yourself!"
Aramis did not move.
The King shuddered and turned pale. "Am I not King of France?"
"Assuredly, sire, but we are also severally Porthos, Aramis, D'Artagnan, and Athos."
"Ah!" said the King.
"Yes, sire."
"What does this mean?"
"It means, your majesty," said Aramis, stepping forward, "that your conduct as a married man is highly improper. I am an Abbé, and I object to these improprieties. My friends here, D'Artagnan, Athos, and Porthos, pure-minded young men, are also terribly shocked. Observe, sire, how they blush!"

Athos, Porthos, and D'Artagnan blushed.
"Ah," said the King thoughtfully. "You teach me a lesson. You are devoted and noble young gentlemen, but your only weakness is your excessive modesty. From this moment I make you all Marshals and Dukes, with the exception of Aramis."
"And me, sire?" said Aramis.
"You shall be an Archbishop!"

The four friends looked up and then rushed into each other's arms. The King embraced Louise de la Valliere, by way of keeping them company. A pause ensued. At last Athos spoke:
"Swear, my children, that next to yourselves, you will respect—the King of France; and remember that 'Forty years after' we will meet again."
THE HAUNTED MAN

I

DON'T tell me that it wasn't a knocker. I had seen it often enough, and I ought to know. So ought the three o'clock beer, in dirty highlows, swinging himself over the railing, or executing a demoniacal jig upon the doorstep; so ought the butcher, although butchers as a general thing are scornful of such trifles; so ought the postman, to whom knockers of the most extravagant description were merely human weaknesses, that were to be pitied and used. And so ought, for the matter of that, etc., etc., etc.

But then it was such a knocker. A wild, extravagant, and utterly incomprehensible knocker. A knocker so mysterious and suspicious that Policeman X37, first coming upon it, felt inclined to take it instantly in custody, but compromised with his professional instincts by sharply and sternly noting it with an eye that admitted of no nonsense, but confidently expected to detect its secret yet. An ugly knocker; a knocker with a hard, human face, that was a type of the harder human face within. A human face that held between its teeth a brazen rod. So hereafter in the mysterious future should be held, etc., etc.

But if the knocker had a fierce human aspect in the glare of day, you should have seen it at night, when it peered out of the gathering shadows and suggested an ambushed figure; when the light of the street lamps fell upon it, and wrought a play of sinister expression in its hard outlines; when it seemed to wink meaningly at a shrouded figure who, as the night fell darkly, crept up the steps and passed into the mysterious house; when the swinging door disclosed a black passage into which the figure seemed to lose itself and become a part of the mysterious gloom; when the night grew boisterous and the fierce wind made furious charges at the knocker, as if to
wrench it off and carry it away in triumph. Such a night as this.

It was a wild and pitiless wind. A wind that had commenced life as a gentle country zephyr, but wandering through manufacturing towns had become demoralized, and reaching the city had plunged into extravagant dissipation and wild excesses. A roystering wind that indulged in Bacchanalian shouts on the street corners, that knocked off the hats from the heads of helpless passengers, and then fulfilled its duties by speeding away, like all young prodigals—to sea.

He sat alone in a gloomy library listening to the wind that roared in the chimney. Around him novels and story-books were strewn thickly; in his lap he held one with its pages freshly cut, and turned the leaves wearily until his eyes rested upon a portrait in its frontispiece. And as the wind howled the more fiercely, and the darkness without fell blacker, a strange and fateful likeness to that portrait appeared above his chair and leaned upon his shoulder. The Haunted Man gazed at the portrait and sighed. The figure gazed at the portrait and sighed too.

"Here again?" said the Haunted Man.

"Here again," it repeated in a low voice.

"Another novel?"

"Another novel."

"The old story?"

"The old story."

"I see a child," said the Haunted Man, gazing from the pages of the book into the fire—"a most unnatural child, a model infant. It is prematurely old and philosophic. It dies in poverty to slow music. It dies surrounded by luxury to slow music. It dies with an accompaniment of golden water and rattling carts to slow music. Previous to its decease it makes a will; it repeats the Lord's Prayer, it kisses the 'booser lady'. That child——"

"Is mine," said the phantom.

"I see a good woman, undersized. I see several charming women, but they are all undersized. They are more or less imbecile and idiotic, but always fascinating and undersized. They wear coquettish caps and aprons. I observe that feminine virtue is invariably below the medium height, and that it is always babyish and infantine. These women——"

"Are mine."
"I see a haughty, proud, and wicked lady. She is tall and
queenly. I remark that all proud and wicked women are tall
and queenly. That woman——"

"Is mine," said the phantom, wringing his hands.

"I see several things continually impending. I observe
that whenever an accident, a murder, or death is about
to happen, there is something in the furniture, in the locality,
in the atmosphere that foreshadows and suggests it years in
advance. I cannot say that in real life I have noticed it—the
perception of this surprising fact belongs——"

"To me!" said the phantom. The Haunted Man con-
tinued, in a despairing tone:

"I see the influence of this in the magazines and daily
papers: I see weak imitators rise up and enfeeble the world
with senseless formula. I am getting tired of it. It won't
do, Charles, it won't do!" and the Haunted Man buried his
head in his hands and groaned. The figure looked down upon
him sternly; the portrait in the frontispiece frowned as he
gazed.

"Wretched man," said the phantom, "and how have these
things affected you?"

"Once I laughed and cried, but then I was younger.
Now, I would forget them if I could."

"Have then your wish. And take this with you, man
whom I renounce. From this day henceforth you shall live
with those whom I displace. Without forgetting me, 'twill
be your lot to walk through life as if we had not met. But
first you shall survey these scenes that henceforth must be
yours. At one tonight, prepare to meet the phantom I have
raised. Farewell!"

The sound of its voice seemed to fade away with the
dying wind, and the Haunted Man was alone. But the fire-
light flickered gaily, and the light danced on the walls, making
grotesque figures of the furniture.

"Ha, ha!" said the Haunted Man, rubbing his hands
gleefully. "Now for a whisky punch and a cigar."

II

One! The stroke of the far-off bell had hardly died
before the front door closed with a reverberating clang. Steps
were heard along the passage; the library door swung open of itself, and the Knocker—yes, the Knocker—slowly strode into the room. The Haunted Man rubbed his eyes—no! There could be no mistake about it—it was the Knocker's face, mounted on a misty, almost imperceptible body. The brazen rod was transferred from its mouth to its right hand, where it was held like a ghostly truncheon.

"It's a cold evening," said the Haunted Man.

"It is" said the Goblin, in a hard, metallic voice.

"It must be pretty cold out there," said the Haunted Man, with vague politeness. "Do you ever—will you—take some hot water and brandy?"

"No," said the Goblin.

"Perhaps you'd like it cold, by way of change?" continued the Haunted Man, correcting himself, as he remembered the peculiar temperature with which the Goblin was probably familiar.

"Time flies," said the Goblin coldly. "We have no leisure for idle talk. Come!" He moved his ghostly truncheon towards the window, and laid his hand upon the other's arm. At his touch the body of the Haunted Man seemed to become as thin and incorporeal as that of the Goblin himself, and together they glided out of the window into the black and blowy night.

In the rapidity of their flight the senses of the Haunted Man seemed to leave him. At length they stopped suddenly.

"What do you see?" asked the Goblin.

"I see a battlemented medieval castle. Gallant men in mail ride over the drawbridge, and kiss their gauntleted fingers to fair ladies, who wave their lily hands in return. I see fight and fray and tournament. I hear roaring heralds bawling the charms of delicate lovers, and shamelessly proclaiming their lovers. Stay. I see a Jewess about to leap from a battlement. I see knightly deeds, violence, rapine, and a good deal of blood. I've seen pretty much the same at Astley's."

"Look again."

"I see purple moors, glens, masculine women, bare-legged men, priggish bookworms, more violence, physical excellence, and blood. Always blood—and the superiority of physical attainments."

"And how do you feel now?" said the Goblin.
The Haunted Man shrugged his shoulders.  
"None the better for being carried back and asked to sympathize with a barbarous age."

The Goblin smiled and clutched his arm; they again sped rapidly through the black night, and again halted.

"What do you see?" said the Goblin.

"I see a barrack room, with a mess-table, and a group of intoxicated Celtic officers telling funny stories, and giving challenges to duel. I see a young Irish gentleman capable of performing prodigies of valour. I learn incidentally that the acme of all heroism is the cornetcy of a dragoon regiment.

I hear a good deal of French! No, thank you," said the Haunted Man hurriedly, as he stayed the waving hand of the Goblin, "I would rather not go to the Peninsula, and don't care to have a private interview with Napoleon."

Again the Goblin flew away with the unfortunate man, and from a strange roaring below them he judged they were above the ocean. A ship hove in sight, and the Goblin stayed its flight. "Look," he said, squeezing his companion's arm.

The Haunted Man yawned. "Don't you think, Charles, you're rather running this thing into the ground? Of course, it's very moral and instructive, and all that. But ain't there a little too much pantomime about it? Come now!"

"Look!" repeated the Goblin, pinching his arm malevolently. The Haunted Man groaned.

"Oh, of course, I see Her Majesty's ship Arethusa. Of course I am familiar with her stern First Lieutenant, her eccentric Captain, her one fascinating and several mischievous midshipmen. Of course, I know it's a splendid thing to see all this, and not to be sea-sick. Oh, there the young gentlemen are going to play a trick on the purser. For God's sake, let us go," and the unhappy man absolutely dragged the Goblin away with him.

When they next halted, it was at the edge of a broad and boundless prairie, in the middle of an oak opening.

"I see," said the Haunted Man, without waiting for his cue, but mechanically, and as if he were repeating a lesson which the Goblin had taught him—"I see the Noble Savage. He is very fine to look at! But I observe under his war paint, feathers, and picturesque blanket—dirt, disease, and an un-
symmetrical contour. I observe beneath his inflated rhetoric deceit and hypocrisy. Beneath his physical hardihood, cruelty, malice, and revenge. The Noble Savage is a humbug. I remarked the same to Mr. Catlin."

"Come," said the phantom.
The Haunted Man sighed, and took out his watch.
"Couldn't we do the rest of this another time?"
"My hour is almost spent, irreverent being, but there is yet a chance for your reformation. Come!"
Again they sped through the night, and again they halted. The sound of delicious but melancholy music fell upon their ears.

"I see," said the Haunted Man, with something of interest in his manner, "I see an old moss-covered manse beside a sluggish, flowing river. I see weird shapes: witches, Puritans, clergymen, little children, judges, mesmerized maidens, moving to the sound of melody that thrills me with its sweetness and purity.

"But, although carried along its calm and evenly flowing current, the shapes are strange and frightful: an eating lichen gnaws at the heart of each; not only the clergymen, but witch, maiden, judge, and Puritan, all wear Scarlet Letters of some kind burned upon their hearts. I am fascinated and thrilled, but I feel a morbid sensitiveness creeping over me. I—I beg your pardon." The Goblin was yawning frightfully. "Well, perhaps we had better go."

"One more, and the last," said the Goblin. They were moving home. Streaks of red were beginning to appear in the Eastern sky. Along the banks of the blackly flowing river, by moorland and stagnant fens, by low houses, clustering close to the water's edge, like strange mollusks, crawled upon the beach to dry; by misty black barges, the more misty and indistinct seen through its mysterious veil, the river fog was slowly rising. So rolled away and rose from the Heart of the Haunted Man, etc., etc.

They stopped before a quaint mansion of red brick. The Goblin waved his hand without speaking.

"I see," said the Haunted Man, "a gay drawing-room. I see my old friends of the club, of the college, of society, even as they lived and moved. I see the gallant and unselfish men whom I have loved, and the snobs whom I have hated. I see strangely mingling with them, and now and then blending
with their forms, our old friends Dick Steele, Addison, and Congreve. I observe, though, that these gentlemen have a habit of getting too much in the way. The royal standard of Queen Anne, not in itself a beautiful ornament, is rather too prominent in the picture. The long galleries of black oak, the formal furniture, the old portraits, are picturesque, but depressing. The house is damp. I enjoy myself better here on the lawn, where they are getting up a Vanity Fair. See, the bell rings, the curtain is rising, the puppets are brought out for a new play. Let me see."

The Haunted Man was pressing forward in his eagerness, but the hand of the Goblin stayed him, and pointing to his feet, he saw between him and the rising curtain a new-made grave. And bending above the grave in passionate grief, the Haunted Man beheld the phantom of the previous night.

The Haunted Man started, and—woke. The bright sunshine streamed into the room. The air was sparkling with frost. He ran joyously to the window and opened it. A small boy saluted him with "Merry Christmas". The Haunted Man instantly gave him a Bank of England note. "How much like Tiny Tim, Tom, and Bobby that boy looked—bless my soul, what a genius this Dickens has!"

A knock at the door, and Boots entered.

"Consider your salary doubled instantly. Have you read *David Copperfield*?"

"Yezzur."

"Your salary is quadrupled. What do you think of *The Old Curiosity Shop*?"

The man instantly burst into a torrent of tears, and then into a roar of laughter.

"Enough! Here are five thousand pounds. Open a porter-house, and call it, 'Our Mutual Friend'. Huzza! I feel so happy!" And the Haunted Man danced about the room.

And so, bathed in the light of that blessed sun, and yet glowing with the warmth of a good action, the Haunted Man, haunted no longer, save by those shapes which make the dreams of children beautiful, re-seated himself in his chair, and finished *Our Mutual Friend.*
THE GREY PARROT

W. W. JACOBS
W. W. Jacobs introduced an entirely new type of humorous story with his entertaining yarns of barge skippers and sailormen, though he has proved by *The Monkey's Paw* that he is equally at home in a macabre atmosphere. *Many Cargoes, The Skipper's Wooing,* and others of his numerous books are universally popular.
THE GREY PARROT

THE Chief Engineer and the Third sat at tea on the s.s. Carlow in the East India Docks. The small and not over-clean steward having placed everything he could think of upon the table, and then added everything the Chief could think of, had assiduously poured out two cups of tea and withdrawn by request. The two men ate steadily, conversing between bites, and interrupted occasionally by a hoarse and sepulchral voice, the owner of which, being much exercised by the sight of the food, asked for it, prettily at first, and afterwards in a way which at least compelled attention.

“That’s pretty good for a parrot,” said the Third critically. “Seems to know what he’s saying too. No, don’t give it anything. It’ll stop if you do.”

“There’s no pleasure to me in listening to coarse language,” said the Chief with dignity.

He absently dipped a piece of bread-and-butter in the Third’s tea, and losing it chased it round and round the bottom of the cup with his finger, the Third regarding the operation with an interest and emotion which he was at first unable to understand.

“You’d better pour yourself out another cup,” he said thoughtfully as he caught the Third’s eye.

“I’m going to,” said the other dryly.

“The man I bought it of,” said the Chief, giving the bird the sop, “said that it was a perfectly respectable parrot and wouldn’t know a bad word if it heard it. I hardly like to give it to my wife now.”

“It’s no good being too particular,” said the Third, regarding him with an ill-concealed grin; “that’s the worst of all you young married fellows. Seem to think your wife has got to be wrapped up in brown paper. Ten chances to one she’ll be amused.”

The Chief shrugged his shoulders disdainfully. “I bought
the bird to be company for her," he said slowly; "she'll be very lonesome without me, Rogers."

"How do you know?" inquired the other.

"She said so," was the reply.

"When you've been married as long as I have," said the Third, who having been married some fifteen years felt that their usual positions were somewhat reversed, "you'll know that generally speaking they're glad to get rid of you."

"What for?" demanded the Chief in a voice that Othello might have envied.

"Well, you get in the way a bit," said Rogers with secret enjoyment; "you see, you upset the arrangements. Housecleaning and all that sort of thing gets interrupted. They're glad to see you back at first, and then glad to see the back of you."

"There's wives and wives," said the bridegroom tenderly.

"And mine's a good one," said the Third, "registered A1 at Lloyd's, but she don't worry about me going away. Your wife's thirty years younger than you, isn't she?"

"Twenty-five," corrected the other shortly. "You see, what I'm afraid of is that she'll get too much attention."

"Well, women like that," remarked the Third.

"But I don't, damn it!" cried the Chief hotly. "When I think of it I get hot all over. Boiling hot."

"That won't last," said the other reassuringly; "you won't care twopence this time next year."

"We're not all alike," growled the Chief; "some of us have got finer feelings than others have. I saw the chap next door looking at her as we passed him this morning."

"'Lor', said the Third.

"I don't want any of your damned impudence," said the Chief sharply. "He put his hat on straighter when he passed us. What do you think of that?"

"Can't say," replied the other with commendable gravity; "it might mean anything."

"If he has any of his nonsense while I'm away I'll break his neck," said the Chief passionately. "I shall know it."

The other raised his eyebrows.

"I've asked the landlady to keep her eyes open a bit," said the Chief. "My wife was brought up in the country, and she's very young and simple, so that it is quite right and proper for her to have a motherly old body to look after her."
"Told your wife?" queried Rogers.

"No," said the other. "Fact is, I've got an idea about that parrot. I'm going to tell her it's a magic bird, and will tell me everything she does while I'm away. Anything the landlady tells me I shall tell her I got from the parrot. For one thing, I don't want her to go out after seven of an evening, and she's promised me she won't. If she does I shall know, and pretend that I know through the parrot. What do you think of it?"

"Think of it?" said the Third, staring at him. "Think of it? Fancy a man telling a grown-up woman a yarn like that!"

"She believes in warnings and death-watches, and all that sort of thing," said the Chief, "so why shouldn't she?"

"Well, you'll know whether she believes in it or not when you come back," said Rogers, "and it'll be a great pity, because it's a beautiful talker."

"What do you mean?" said the other.

"I mean it'll get its little neck wrung," said the Third.

"Well, we'll see," said Gannett. "I shall know what to think if it does die."

"I shall never see that bird again," said Rogers, shaking his head as the Chief took up the cage and handed it to the steward, who was to accompany him home with it.

The couple left the ship and proceeded down the East India Dock Road side by side, the only incident being a hot argument between a constable and the engineer as to whether he could or could not be held responsible for the language in which the parrot saw fit to indulge when the steward happened to drop it.

The engineer took the cage at his door, and, not without some misgivings, took it upstairs into the parlour and set it on the table. Mrs. Gannett, a simple-looking woman, with sleepy brown eyes and a docile manner, clapped her hands with joy.

"Isn't it a beauty?" said Mr. Gannett, looking at it. "I bought it to be company for you while I'm away."

"You're too good to me, Jem," said his wife. "She walked all round the cage admiring it, the parrot, which was of a highly suspicious and nervous disposition, having had boys at its last place, turning with her. After she had walked round him
five times he got sick of it, and in a simple sailorly fashion said so.

“Oh, Jem!” said his wife.

“It’s a beautiful talker,” said Gannett hastily, “and it’s so clever that it picks up everything it hears, but it’ll soon forget it.”

“It looks as though it knows what you are saying,” said his wife. “Just look at it, the artful thing.”

The opportunity was too good to be missed, and in a few straightforward lies the engineer acquainted Mrs. Gannett of the miraculous powers with which he had chosen to endow it.

“But you don’t believe it?” said his wife, staring at him open-mouthed.

“I do,” said the engineer firmly.

“But how can it know what I’m doing when I’m away?” persisted Mrs. Gannett.

“Ah, that’s its secret,” said the engineer; “a good many people would like to know that, but nobody has found out yet. It’s a magic bird, and when you’ve said that you’ve said all there is to say about it.”

Mrs. Gannett, wrinkling her forehead, eyed the marvellous bird curiously.

“You’ll find it’s quite true,” said Gannett; “when I come back that bird’ll be able to tell me how you’ve been and all about you. Everything you’ve done during my absence.”

“Good gracious!” said the astonished Mrs. Gannett.

“If you stay out after seven of an evening, or do anything else that I shouldn’t like, that bird’ll tell me,” continued the engineer impressively. “It’ll tell me who comes to see you, and in fact it will tell me everything you do while I’m away.”

“Well, it won’t have anything bad to tell of me,” said Mrs. Gannett composedly, “unless it tells lies.”

“It can’t tell lies,” said her husband confidently; “and now, if you go and put your bonnet on, we’ll drop in at the theatre for half an hour.”

It was a prophetic utterance, for he made such a fuss over the man next to his wife offering her his opera-glasses that they left, at the urgent request of the management, in almost exactly that space of time.

“You’d better carry me about in a bandbox,” said Mrs. Gannett wearily as the outraged engineer stalked home beside her. “What harm was the man doing?”
"You must have given him some encouragement," said Mr. Gannett fiercely—"made eyes at him or something. A man wouldn't offer to lend a lady his opera-glasses without."

Mrs. Gannett tossed her head—and that so decidedly, that a passing stranger turned his head and looked at her. Mr. Gannett accelerated his pace, and, taking his wife's arm, led her swiftly home with a passion too great for words.

By the morning his anger had evaporated, but his misgivings remained. He left after breakfast for the Curlew, which was to sail in the afternoon, leaving behind him copious instructions by following which his wife would be enabled to come down and see him off with the minimum exposure of her fatal charms.

Left to herself Mrs. Gannett dusted the room, until, coming to the parrot's cage, she put down the duster and eyed its eerie occupant curiously. She fancied that she saw an evil glitter in the creature's eye, and the knowing way in which it drew the film over it was as near an approach to a wink as a bird could get.

She was still looking at it when there was a knock at the door, and a bright little woman—rather smartly dressed—bustled into the room and greeted her effusively.

"I just came to see you, my dear, because I thought a little outing would do me good," she said briskly; "and if you've no objection I'll come down to the docks with you to see the boat off."

Mrs. Gannett assented readily. It would ease the engineer's mind, she thought, if he saw her with a chaperon.

"Nice bird," said Mrs. Cluffins, mechanically bringing her parasol to the charge.

"Don't do that," said her friend hastily.

"Why not?" said the other.

"Language!" said Mrs. Gannett solemnly.

"Well, I must do something to it," said Mrs. Cluffins restlessly.

She held the parasol near the cage and suddenly opened it. It was a flaming scarlet, and for the moment the shock took the parrot's breath away.

"He don't mind that," said Mrs. Gannett.

The parrot, hopping to the farthest corner of the bottom of his cage, said something feebly. Finding that nothing dreadful happened, he repeated his remark somewhat more
boldly, and, being convinced after all that the apparition was quite harmless and that he had displayed his craven spirit for nothing, hopped back on his perch and raved wickedly.

"If that was my bird," said Mrs. Cluffins, almost as scarlet as her parasol, "I should wring its neck."

"No, you wouldn't," said Mrs. Gannett solemnly. And having quieted the bird by throwing a cloth over its cage, she explained its properties.

"What I" said Mrs. Cluffins, unable to sit still in her chair. "You mean to tell me your husband said that!"

Mrs. Gannett nodded.

"He's awfully jealous of me," she said with a slight simper.

"I wish he was my husband," said Mrs. Cluffins in a thin, hard voice. "I wish C. would talk to me like that. I wish somebody would try and persuade C. to talk to me like that."

"It shows he's fond of me," said Mrs. Gannett, looking down.

Mrs. Cluffins jumped up, and snatching the cover off the cage, endeavoured, but in vain, to get the parasol through the bars.

"And you believe that rubbish!" she said scathingly. "Boo, you wretch!"

"I don't believe it," said her friend, taking her gently away and covering the cage hastily just as the bird was recovering, "but I let him think I do."

"I call it an outrage," said Mrs. Cluffins, waving the parasol wildly. "I never heard of such a thing; I'd like to give Mr. Gannett a piece of my mind. Just about half an hour of it. He wouldn't be the same man afterwards—I'd parrot him!"

Mrs. Gannett, soothing her agitated friend as well as she was able, led her gently to a chair and removed her bonnet, and finding that complete recovery was impossible while the parrot remained in the room, took that wonder-working bird outside.

By the time they had reached the docks and boarded the Curlew Mrs. Cluffins had quite recovered her spirits. She roamed about the steamer asking questions, which savoured more of idle curiosity than a genuine thirst for knowledge, and was at no pains to conceal her opinion of those who were unable to furnish her with satisfactory replies.
“I shall think of you every day, Jem,” said Mrs. Gannett tenderly.

“I shall think of you every minute,” said the engineer reproachfully.

He sighed gently and gazed in a scandalized fashion at Mrs. Cluffins, who was carrying on a desperate flirtation with one of the apprentices.

“She’s very light-hearted,” said his wife, following the direction of his eyes.

“She is,” said Mr. Gannett curtly, as the unconscious Mrs. Cluffins shut her parasol and rapped the apprentice playfully with the handle. “She seems to be on very good terms with Jenkins, laughing and carrying on. I don’t suppose she’s ever seen him before.”

“Poor young things,” said Mrs. Cluffins solemnly, as she came up to them. “Don’t you worry, Mr. Gannett; I’ll look after her and keep her from moping.”

“You’re very kind,” said the engineer slowly.

“We’ll have a jolly time,” said Mrs. Cluffins. “I often wish my husband was a seafaring man. A wife does have more freedom, doesn’t she?”

“More what?” inquired Mr. Gannett huskily.

“More freedom,” said Mrs. Cluffins gravely. “I always envy sailors’ wives. They can do as they like. No husband to look after them for nine or ten months in the year.”

Before the unhappy engineer could put his indignant thoughts into words there was a warning cry from the gangway, and with a hasty farewell he hurried below. The visitors went ashore, the gangway was shipped, and in response to the clang of the telegraph the Curlew drifted slowly away from the quay and headed for the swing bridge slowly opening in front of her.

The two ladies hurried to the pier-head and watched the steamer down the river until a bend hid it from view. Then Mrs. Gannett, with a sensation of having lost something, due, so her friend assured her, to the want of a cup of tea, went slowly back to her lonely home.

In the period of grass widowhood which ensued, Mrs. Cluffins’s visits formed almost the sole relief to the bare monotony of existence. As a companion the parrot was an utter failure, its language being so irredeemably bad that it spent most of its time in the spare room with a cloth over its cage, wondering when the days were going to lengthen a bit. Mrs.
Cluffins suggested selling it, but her friend repelled the suggestion with horror, and refused to entertain it at any price, even that of the publican at the corner, who, having heard of the bird’s command of language, was bent upon buying it.

“I wonder what that beauty will have to tell your husband,” said Mrs. Cluffins, as they sat together one day some three months after the Curlew’s departure.

“I should hope that he has forgotten that nonsense,” said Mrs. Gannett, reddening; “he never alludes to it in his letters.”

“Sell it,” said Mrs. Cluffins peremptorily. “It’s no good to you, and Hobson would give anything for it almost.”

Mrs. Gannett shook her head. “The house wouldn’t hold my husband if I did,” she remarked with a shiver.

“Oh yes, it would,” said Mrs. Cluffins; “you do as I tell you, and a much smaller house than this would hold him. I told C. to tell Hobson he should have it for five pounds.”

“But he mustn’t,” said her friend in alarm.

“Leave yourself right in my hands,” said Mrs. Cluffins, spreading out two small palms and regarding them complacently. “It’ll be all right, I promise you.”

She put her arm round her friend’s waist and led her to the window, talking earnestly. In five minutes Mrs. Gannett was wavering, in ten she had given way, and in fifteen the energetic Mrs. Cluffins was en route for Hobson’s, swinging the cage so violently in her excitement that the parrot was reduced to holding on to its perch with claws and bill. Mrs. Gannett watched the progress from the window, and with a queer look on her face sat down to think out the points of attack and defence in the approaching fray.

A week later a four-wheeler drove up to the door, and the engineer, darting upstairs three steps at a time, dropped an armful of parcels on the floor, and caught his wife in an embrace which would have done credit to a bear. Mrs. Gannett, for reasons of which lack of muscle was only one, responded less ardently.

“Ha, it’s good to be home again,” said Gannett, sinking into an easy-chair and pulling his wife on his knee. “And how have you been? Lonely?”

“I got used to it,” said Mrs. Gannett softly.

The engineer coughed. “You had the parrot,” he remarked.
"Yes, I had the magic parrot," said Mrs. Gannett.
"How's it getting on?" said her husband, looking round.
"Where is it?"
"Part of it is on the mantelpiece," said Mrs. Gannett, trying to speak calmly, "part of it is in a bonnet-box upstairs, some of it's in my pocket, and here is the remainder."
She fumbled in her pocket and placed in his hand a cheap two-bladed clasp-knife.
"On the mantelpiece!" repeated the engineer, staring at the knife; "in a bonnet-box!"
"Those blue vases," said his wife.
Mr. Gannett put his hand to his head. If he had heard aright, one parrot had changed into a pair of vases, a bonnet, and a knife. A magic bird with a vengeance!
"I sold it," said Mrs. Gannett suddenly. The engineer's knee stiffened inhospitably, and his arm dropped from his wife's waist. She rose quietly and took a chair opposite.
"Sold it!" said Mr. Gannett in awful tones. "Sold my parrot!"
"I didn't like it, Jem," said his wife. "I didn't want that bird watching me, and I did want the vases, and the bonnet, and the little present for you."
Mr. Gannett pitched the little present to the other end of the room.
"You see, it mightn't have told the truth, Jem," continued Mrs. Gannett. "It might have told all sorts of lies about me, and made no end of mischief."
"It couldn't lie," shouted the engineer passionately, rising from his chair and pacing the room. "It's your guilty conscience that's made a coward of you. How dare you sell my parrot?"
"Because it wasn't truthful, Jem," said his wife, who was somewhat pale.
"If you were half as truthful you'd do," vociferated the engineer, standing over her. "You, you deceitful woman."
Mrs. Gannett fumbled in her pocket again, and producing a small handkerchief applied it delicately to her eyes.
"I—I got rid of it for your sake," she stammered. "It used to tell such lies about you. I couldn't bear to listen to it."
"About me!" said Mr. Gannett, sinking into his seat and
staring at his wife with very natural amazement. "Tell lies about me! Nonsense! How could it?"

"I suppose it could tell me about you as easily as it could tell you about me?" said Mrs. Gannett. "There was more magic in that bird than you thought, Jem. It used to say shocking things about you. I couldn’t bear it."

"Do you think you’re talking to a child or a fool?" demanded the engineer.

Mrs. Gannett shook her head feebly. She still kept the handkerchief to her eyes, but allowed a portion to drop over her mouth.

"I should like to hear some of the stories it told about me—if you can remember them," said the engineer with bitter sarcasm.

"The first lie," said Mrs. Gannett in a feeble but ready voice, "was about the time you were at Genoa. The parrot said you were at some concert gardens at the upper end of the town."

One moist eye coming mildly from behind the handkerchief saw the engineer stiffen suddenly in his chair.

"I don’t suppose there even is such a place," she continued.

"I—believe—there—is," said her husband jerkily. "I’ve heard—our chaps—talk of it."

"But you haven’t been there?" said his wife anxiously.

"Never!" said the engineer with extraordinary vehemence.

"That wicked bird said that you got intoxicated there," said Mrs. Gannett in solemn accents, "that you smashed a little marble-topped table and knocked down two waiters, and that if it hadn’t been for the captain of the Pursuit, who was in there and who got you away, you’d have been locked up. Wasn’t it a wicked bird?"

"Horrible!" said the engineer huskily.

"I don’t suppose there ever was a ship called the Pursuit," continued Mrs. Gannett.

"Doesn’t sound like a ship’s name," murmured Mr. Gannett.

"Well, then, a few days later it said the Curlew was at Naples."

"I never went ashore all the time we were at Naples," remarked the engineer casually.

"The parrot said you did," said Mrs. Gannett.
“I suppose you’ll believe your own lawful husband before that damned bird?” shouted Gannett, starting up.

“Of course I didn’t believe it, Jem,” said his wife. “I’m trying to prove to you that the bird was not truthful, but you’re so hard to persuade.”

Mr. Gannett took a pipe from his pocket, and with a small knife dug with much severity and determination a hardened plug from the bowl, and blew noisily through the stem.

“There was a girl kept a fruit-stall just by the harbour,” said Mrs. Gannett, “and on this evening, on the strength of having bought three-pennyworth of green figs, you put your arm round her waist and tried to kiss her, and her sweetheart, who was standing close by, tried to stab you. The parrot said that you were in such a state of terror that you jumped into the harbour and were nearly drowned.”

Mr. Gannett having loaded his pipe lit it slowly and carefully, and with tidy precision got up and deposited the match in the fireplace.

“It used to frighten me so with its stories that I hardly knew what to do with myself,” continued Mrs. Gannett. “When you were at Suez—”

The engineer waved his hand imperiously.

“That’s enough,” he said stiffly.

“I’m sure I don’t want to have to repeat what it told me about Suez,” said his wife. “I thought you’d like to hear it, that’s all.”

“Not at all,” said the engineer, puffing at his pipe. “Not at all.”

“But you see why I got rid of the bird, don’t you?” said Mrs. Gannett. “If it had told you untruths about me, you would have believed them, wouldn’t you?”

Mr. Gannett took his pipe from his mouth and took his wife in his extended arms. “No, my dear,” he said brokenly, “no more than you believe all this stuff about me.”

“And I did quite right to sell it, didn’t I, Jem?”

“Quite right,” said Mr. Gannett with a great assumption of heartiness. “Best thing to do with it.”

“You haven’t heard the worst yet,” said Mrs. Gannett. “When you were at Suez—”

Mr. Gannett consigned Suez to its only rival, and, thumping the table with his clenched fist, forbade his wife to mention the word again, and desired her to prepare supper.
Not until he heard his wife moving about in the kitchen below did he relax the severity of his countenance. Then his expression changed to one of extreme anxiety, and he restlessly paced the room, seeking for light. It came suddenly.

"Jenkins!" he gasped. "Jenkins and Mrs. Cluffins, and I was going to tell Cluffins about him writing to his wife. I expect he knows the letter by heart."
TO CALIFORNIA AND BACK

ARTEMUS WARD
Charles Farrer Browne, who adopted the pseudonym of Artemus Ward, lived 1832–1867. He died of consumption, from which he was suffering severely when he delivered his “Lecture” in London. His chief works are his Travels Among the Mormons and his Life in London. He was the forerunner of the many American humorists who, since his day, have written in peculiar forms of orthography and syntax.
TO CALIFORNIA AND BACK

ON THE STEAMER

NEW YORK, Oct. 13, 1863.

THE steamer Ariel starts for California at noon.

Her decks are crowded with excited passengers, who instantly undertake to "look after" their trunks and things; and what with our smashing against each other, and the yells of the porters, and the wails over lost baggage, and the crash of boxes, and the roar of the boilers, we are for the time being about as unhappy a lot of maniacs as were ever thrown together.

I am one of them. I am rushing round with a glaring eye in search of a box.

Great jam, in which I find a sweet young lady with golden hair, clinging to me fondly, and saying, "Dear George, farewell!"—discovers her mistake, and disappears.

I should like to be George some more.

Confusion so great that I seek refuge in a state room, which contains a single lady of forty-five summers, who says, "Base man! leave me!" I leave her.

By and by we cool down, and become somewhat regulated.

Next day.

When the gong sounds for breakfast we are fairly out on the sea, which runs roughly, and the Ariel rocks wildly. Many of the passengers are sick, and a young naval officer establishes a reputation as a wit by carrying to one of the invalids a plate of raw salt pork, swimming in cheap molasses. I am not sick; so I roll round the deck in the most cheerful sea-dog manner.

The next day and the next pass by in a serene manner. The waves are smooth now, and we can all eat and sleep. We
might have enjoyed ourselves very well, I fancy, if the Ariel, whose capacity was about three hundred and fifty passengers, had not on this occasion carried nearly nine hundred, a hundred at least of whom were children of an unpleasant age. Captain Semmes captured the Ariel once, and it is to be deeply regretted that that thrifty buccaneer hadn't made mince-meat of her, because she is a miserable tub at best, and hasn't much more right to be afloat than a second-hand coffin has. I do not know her proprietor, Mr. C. Vanderbilt. But I know of several excellent mill privileges in the State of Maine, and not one of them is so thoroughly Dam'd as he was all the way from New York to Aspinwall.

I had far rather say a pleasant thing than a harsh one; but it is due to the large number of respectable ladies and gentlemen who were on board the steamer Ariel with me that I state here that the accommodations on that steamer were very vile. If I did not so state, my conscience would sting me through life, and I should have horrid dreams, like Richard III, Esq.

The proprietor apparently thought we were undergoing transportation for life to some lonely island, and the very waiters who brought us meats that any warder of any penitentiary would blush to offer convicts, seemed to think it was a glaring error our not being in chains.

As a specimen of the liberal manner in which this steamer was managed, I will mention that the purser (a very pleasant person, by the way) was made to unite the positions of purser, baggage clerk, and doctor; and I one day had a lurking suspicion that he was among the waiters in the dining-cabin, disguised in a white jacket and slipshod pumps.

I have spoken my Piece about the Ariel, and I hope Mr. Vanderbilt will reform ere it is too late. Dr. Watts says the vilest sinner may return as long as the gas-meters work well, or words to that effect.

We were so densely crowded on board the Ariel, that I cannot conscientiously say we were altogether happy. And sea-voyages at best are a little stupid. On the whole I should prefer a voyage on the Erie Canal, where there isn't any danger, and where you can carry picturesque scenery along with you, so to speak.
THE Isthmus

On the ninth day we reached Aspinwall in the Republic of Grenada. The President of New Grenada is a Central American named Mosquero. I was told that he derived quite a portion of his income by carrying passengers’ valises and things from the steamer to the hotel in Aspinwall. It was an infamous falsehood. Fancy A. Lincoln carrying carpet-bags and things! And indeed I should rather trust him with them than Mosquero, because the former gentleman, as I think someone has before observed, is “honest”.

I entrust my bag to a speckled native, who confidentially gives me to understand that he is the only strictly honest person in Aspinwall. The rest, he says, are niggers—which the coloured people of the Isthmus regard as about as scathing a thing as they can say of one another.

I examined the New Grenadian flag, which waves from the chamber window of a refreshment saloon. It is of simple design. You can make one.

Take half of a cotton shirt, that has been worn two months, and dip it in molasses of the Day and Martin brand. Then let the flies gambol over it for a few days, and you have it. It is an emblem of Sweet Liberty.

At the Howard House the man of sin rubbeth the hair of the horse to the bowels of the cat, and our girls are waving their lily-white hoofs in the dazzling waltz.

We have a quadrille, in which an English person slips up and jams his massive brow against my stomach. He apologizes and I say, “All right, my lord.” I subsequently ascertain that he superintended the shipping of coals for the British steamers, and owned fighting-cocks.

The ball stops suddenly.

Great excitement. One of our passengers intoxicated and riotous in the street. Openly and avowedly desires the entire Republic of New Grenada to “come on”.

In case they do come on, agrees to make it lively for them. Is quieted down at last, and marched off to prison by a squad of Grenadian troops. Is musical as he passes the hotel, and, smiling sweetly upon the ladies and children on the balcony, expresses a distinct desire to be an Angel, and with the Angels
stand. After which he leaps nimbly into the air, and imitates the war-cry of the red man.

The natives amass wealth by carrying valises, etc., then squander it for liquor. My native comes to me as I sit on the verandah of the Howard House smoking a cigar, and solicits the job of taking my things to the cars next morning. He is intoxicated, and has been fighting, to the palpable detriment of his wearing apparel; for he has only one pair of tattered pantaloons and a very small quantity of shirt left.

We go to bed. Eight of us are assigned to a small den upstairs, with only two lame apologies for beds. Mosquitoes and even rats annoy us fearfully. One bold rat gnaws at the feet of a young Englishman in the party. This was more than the young Englishman could stand, and rising from his bed he asked us if New Grenada wasn’t a Republic? We said it was. “I thought so,” he said. “Of course I mean no disrespect to the United States of America in the remark, but I think I prefer a bloated monarchy!” He smiled sadly—then, handing his purse and his mother’s photograph to another English person, he whispered softly, “If I am eaten up, give them to Me mother—tell her I died like a true Briton, with no faith whatever in the success of a republican form of government!” And then he crept back to bed again.

We start at seven the next morning for Panama.
My native comes bright and early to transport my carpet sack to the railway station. His clothes have suffered still more during the night, for he comes to me now dressed only in a small rag and one boot.
At last we are off. “Adios, Americanos!” the natives cry; to which I pleasantly reply, “Adous! and long may it be before you have the chance to Do us again.”
The cars are comfortable on the Panama railway, and the country through which we pass is very beautiful. But it will not do to trust it much, because it breeds fevers and other unpleasant disorders at all seasons of the year. Like a girl we most all have known, the Isthmus is fair but false.
There are mud huts all along the route, and half-naked savages gaze patronizingly upon us from their doorways. An
elderly lady in spectacles appears to be much scandalized by the scant dress of these people, and wants to know why the Select men don’t put a stop to it. From this, and a remark she incidentally makes about her son who has invented a washing machine which will wash, wring, and dry a shirt in ten minutes, I infer that she is from the hills of Old New England, like the Hutchinson family.

The Central American is lazy. The only exercise he ever takes is occasionally to produce a Revolution. When his feet begin to swell and there are premonitory symptoms of gout, he “revolushes” a spell, and then serenely returns to his cigarette and hammock under the palm trees.

These Central American Republics are queer concerns. I do not of course precisely know what a last year’s calf’s ideas of immortal glory may be, but probably they are about as lucid as those of a Central American in regard to a republican form of government.

And yet I am told they are a kindly people in the main. I never met but one of them—a Costa-Rican, on board the Ariel. He lay sick with fever, and I went to him and took his hot hand gently in mine. I shall never forget his look of gratitude. And the next day he borrowed five dollars of me, shedding tears as he put it in his pocket.

At Panama we lost several of our passengers, and among them three Peruvian ladies, who go to Lima, the city of volcanic eruptions and veiled black-eyed beauties.

The Señoritas who leave us at Panama are splendid creatures. They taught me Spanish, and in the soft moonlight we walked on deck and talked of the land of Pizarro. (You know old Piz conquered Peru, and, although he was not educated at West Point, he had still some military talent.) I feel as though I had lost all my relations, including my grandmother and the cooking-stove, when these gay young Señoritas go away.

They do not go to Peru on a Peruvian bark, but on an English steamer.

We find the St. Louis, the steamer awaiting us at Panama, a cheerful and well-appointed boat, and commanded by Captain Hudson.
MEXICO

We make Acapulco, a Mexican coast town of some importance, in a few days, and all go ashore.

The pretty peasant girls peddle necklaces made of shells, and oranges, in the streets of Acapulco, on steamer days. They are quite naïve about it. Handing you a necklace they will say, "Me give you pres-ent, Señor," and then retire with a low curtsy. Returning, however, in a few moments, they say quite sweetly, "You give me pres-ent, Señor, of quarter-dollar!" which you at once do unless you have a heart of stone.

Acapulco was shelled by the French a year or so before our arrival there, and they effected a landing. But the gay and gallant Mexicans peppered them so persistently and effectually from the mountains near by that they concluded to sell out and leave.

Napoleon has no right in Mexico. Mexico may deserve a licking. That is possible enough. Most people do. But nobody has any right to lick Mexico except the United States. We have a right, I flatter myself, to lick this entire continent, including ourselves, any time we want to.

The signal gun is fired at eleven, and we go off to the steamer in small boats.

In our boat is an inebriated United States official, who flings his spectacles overboard and sings a flippant and absurd song about his grandmother's spotted calf, with his ri-fol-lol-tiddery-i-do. After which he crumbles, in an incomprehensible manner, into the bottom of the boat, and Howls Dismally.

We reach Manzanillo, another coast place, twenty-four hours after leaving Acapulco. Manzanillo is a little Mexican village, and looked very wretched indeed, sweltering away there on the hot sands. But it is a port of some importance, nevertheless, because a great deal of merchandise finds its way to the interior from there. The white-and-green flag of Mexico floats from a red steam-tug (the navy of Mexico, by the way, consists of two tugs, a disabled raft, and a basswood.