

Even the old crow looked puzzled for a second or two. He knew that all men were liars in a more or less polished or brutal way, but that this pretty slip of a girl should have reduced it to a fine art fairly staggered him. No wonder he was a cynical old crow.

"I have just been wondering for some months back if you would be surprised to see me again," he answered slowly, and somewhat irrelevantly, watching the girl's face intently, as if he would have liked to have drawn some inference from it. "I hope you are glad to see me?" he added.

"Oh, of course," she rejoined quickly, as if she thought that perhaps she had not been quite so civil to him as she might have been; "and my father will be glad to see an old friend, for you know you were one to him."

The hound made another circular bound into the roadway, and scattered the little birds right and left. As for the old crow, he leant back on his perch until he was in imminent danger of falling off backwards, and chuckled hoarsely and grimly to himself, as if he were immensely tickled over something. He looked as if he thanked—goodness knows what—that he was a crow and not a stupid human being. He was a satirical old crow, and looked as if he had indeed seen life. An apoplectic seizure after hearing some spicier piece of scandal than usual shall one day be his ultimate fate. Pessimists and cynics and such-