

# GENTLEMEN EXPLORERS

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*(From the Earth to the Moon, Ch. XXI)*

PLAYERS GUIDE FOR

## *AMAZING JOURNEYS*

A *GlovEngine* role playing game Inspired by the works of Jules Verne

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## INTRODUCTION

*“It is but fair to add that these Yankees, brave as they have ever proved themselves to be, did not confine themselves to theories and formulae, but that they paid heavily, in propria persona, for their inventions. Among them were to be counted officers of all ranks, from lieutenants to generals; military men of every age, from those who were just making their debut in the profession of arms up to those who had grown old in the gun-carriage”* (Vol. 1, Ch. I)

*Gentlemen Explorers* is the players guide for the *Amazing Journeys* role playing game. It will allow you, the player, to create your *gentleman explorer* character. It will also provide the rules for playing your *gentleman explorer* in an *Amazing Journeys* game.

*Amazing Journeys* is about late 19<sup>th</sup> century European and Western adventurers that explore the furthest, wildest and darkest corners of the world. It is inspired by the *Amazing Journeys* series of novels by Jules Verne.

At the core of *Gentlemen Explorers* is the *GlovEngine*, a role playing game system designed for allowing the players to turn their source of inspiration into a game with minimal effort and maximum usage of the original, non-gaming materials.

The present book is directed at both players and Game Masters. Here you can find the rules that will allow you to become a *gentleman explorer*. It is not intended to be played on its own. To be able to start a game you need the complementary materials that are specifically directed at the Game Master:

- The *Amazing Journeys* novels by Jules Verne, the non-gaming books that provide the basic ideas for the setting where the *gentlemen explorers* will adventure;
- The Game Master’s notes on how to turn the novels into a role playing game.

The examples in the present game book were taken from Jules Verne’s *From the Earth to the Moon* and *Around the Moon* (identified as Vol. 1 and Vol. 2 respectively; quotes are referenced to their chapters since we’re using electronic versions of the books). You can get them at: <http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/book/search?author=jules+verne&amode=words> or <http://jv.gilead.org.il/works.html>

If you are the Game Master (GM from now on) you may look at the *setting books* we designed for *Gentlemen Explorers* based on several inspiration sources of our choice, and pick one as the basis of your game.

Now it’s your turn to become a *gentleman explorer* and dare to go where no civilized man went before but before you do this please consider my **deepest thanks to RPGnet** that provided an home for *Gentlemen Explorers* ([www.rpg.net](http://www.rpg.net)) and to **Stephen Colhoun** and **Conall Kavanagh** that helped me in improving the game with their excellent comments on this book (you can check Conall’s homepage at <http://www.geocities.com/conallk/>).

## A GENTLEMAN AT THE CORE PLAYER AND NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

*“It is well known with what energy the taste for military matters became developed among that nation of ship-owners, shopkeepers, and mechanics. Simple tradesmen jumped their counters to become extemporized captains, colonels, and generals, without having ever passed the School of Instruction at West Point; nevertheless; they quickly rivalled their compeers of the old continent ... This fact need surprise no one. The Yankees, the first mechanics in the world, are engineers – just as the Italians are musicians and the Germans metaphysicians – by right of birth.” (Vol. 1, Ch. I)*

Get a cigar, pick a glass of the finest Cognac, sit on a good chair and let’s play. You are a gentleman – or maybe a gentle lady –, one of the few that dare leave the shores of Western ports to brave the most distant corners of the world. Dangerous they are but what’s the worth of life without peril? Yet, who exactly are you?

### HOW TO CREATE A CHARACTER

The initial stage in character creation is framing the basic description of the character. For that purpose there are several alternative methods you can choose from.

#### Pick from source

The easiest way to define a character is just by picking one from any source on the period of the game that describes a personality of your liking. For instance, consider Impey Barbicane:

*“Impey Barbicane was a man of forty years of age, calm, cold, austere; of a singularly serious and self-contained demeanor, punctual as a chronometer, of imperturbable temper and immovable character; by no means chivalrous, yet adventurous withal, and always bringing practical ideas to bear upon the very arshest enterprises; an essentially New Englander, a Northern colonist, a descendant of the old anti-Stuart Roundheads, and the implacable enemy of the gentlemen of the South, those ancient cavaliers of the mother country. In a word, he was a Yankee to the backbone. Barbicane had made a large fortune as a timber merchant. Being nominated director of artillery during the war, he proved himself fertile in invention. Bold in his conceptions, he contributed powerfully to the progress of that arm and gave an immense impetus to experimental researches. He was personage of the middle height, having, by a rare exception in the Gun Club, all his limbs complete. His strongly marked features seemed drawn by square and rule; and if it be true that, in order to judge a man’s character one must look at his profile, Barbicane, so examined, exhibited the most certain indications of energy, audacity, and sang-froid.” (Vol. 1, Ch. II)*

Notice that you can gather a lot more information about Mr. Impey Barbicane if you read the book. This is just the first description presented to us and it is complemented by further data on this character as we see him in action. In any case, the data above is enough to provide you with a good grasp of the President of the Gun Club that you could use it right away if you are to impersonate such a distinguished gentleman.

Of course, this method of character creation has to be acceptable for the GM, so be sure that he validates your choice. In fact, he may be the first to suggest just this, specially if he is sure you don’t know the book on which he is basing his game. He may opt to have the players taking the role of the main characters in the book.

The difficulty with the “Pick from source” method is that it requires you to be conversant with the source from where you will pick the character. If you never had an interest in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, either in historical or fictional terms, you may not know a source from where to pick a character.

### **Read and annotate**

A good way to create a character is to pick the source and identify in it traits you would like to have in your character while you go through it. Basically you select bits of the description of different characters and combine them into your character’s description.

Harold is considering a new character, so he picks his book and leisurely skips through it. At a certain passage he reads, “*continued the famous James T. Maston, scratching with his steel hook his gutta-percha cranium*” (Vol. 1, Ch. I). “Well”, thinks Harold, “I never played a character with a physical deficiency”, and he notates *Steel hook for his hand*. He also notates the next sentences picked here and there:

- “*Barbican remained calm in the midst of this enthusiastic clamor*” (Vol. 1, Ch. III)
- “*of a fiery, daring, and violent disposition; a pure Yankee.*” (Vol. 1, Ch. X)
- “*obstinacy*” (Vol. 1, Ch. X)
- “*But for the strong hand of Colonel Blomsberry*” (Vol. 1, Ch. XVI)
- “*looked hard at this man who spoke so lightly of his project with such complete absence of anxiety*” (Vol. 1, Ch. XVIII)
- “*He was a little dried-up man, of an active figure, with an American “goatee” beard*” (Vol. 1, Ch. XX).

Harold decides he has enough to assemble a character. “Let’s see, we have a fellow that’s calm in the midst of clamour; of fiery, daring and violent disposition; obstinate; owner of a strong hand – a strong left-hand, since he has a steel hook for his right –; with a complete absence of anxiety when dealing with his personal projects; and physically he is a dried-up man with an active figure and a *goatee* beard. Not bad for a start”.

### **Create from scratch**

You can always create your own character without reference to a given fictional or real person. In this case all you have to do is to describe him as it comes to your mind. What should you consider in the description of the character? Anything you like. It can be his personal traits (physical, mental, moral traits, etc.), his education, social standing, past history, belongings, etc. It’s your character so you can do as you please.

Anna wants to play a lady. The GM has no lady taken from a source and Anna does not want to go through the process of searching for one. She thinks for a while and next she just tells the other players:

“Camilla is a 22 years old New Yorker. She lost her father when she was a child. Her mother was not rich, so Camilla had to start working early. When she was 16 she started to work with Miss Lucille, an old and rich lady, basically to make her company. For the next 5 years she lived with Miss Lucille. This allowed her to spend extended stays in Europe. She learned French, German and a little Italian. Miss Lucille died 10 months ago. Without close relatives, she left all her fortune to Camilla. Camilla is gentle but determined. She cannot be considered a beauty but has a way of being attractive despite of that. ... Well, I guess that’s enough, no?”

The GM agrees with Anna’s depiction of Camilla.

The point is, when creating the character you should be sure to cover some basic sets of data. These are:

1. Give your character a physical description. Take attention to the different senses: the way he looks, how he smells, how he feels to touch. Does the character have some outstanding traits like superior force or dexterity? Does he carry any particular disease? Things like these should also be considered.
2. Give your character a personality. What are his feelings, beliefs, interests, noticeable traits of character, goals? Does he have any compulsions like addiction or strong biases? Ask yourself this type of questions.
3. Give your character a history and context. Where was he born, what were his studies/apprenticeship, where has he been, to whom did and does he relate.

4. Based on the previous points consider which is the first impression your character makes when he meets someone for the first time. Define how much of his traits can be perceived in a normal interaction (like the way he looks and speaks) and how much is not easily perceived (he may have a non-perceptible disease, a twisted personality, a secret he doesn't want to remember or doesn't want people to know about).
5. Rework-it until you feel satisfied. You can go back and forth through the previous steps, each feeding on the others, until you have the final picture of your character.
6. Notice that this is just a suggestion. You are not constrained to follow these guidelines. You may expand on it, change it or just ignore it.

### **A combination of the above**

You are always free to combine the different methods. You may pick a character from a source or a pre-defined character and modify it by eliminating traits you don't like and introducing traits he lacks. You can pick these traits from other characters or create them from scratch. All permutations are possible.

The simplest way to do it is by just picking a character like in the first method above and changing his name. Picking a character is easy but if the other players read the book (or saw the film, or had access to whatever source you got the character from) they will know about his life in that source. That knowledge may conflict with the way you role play it, so it's usually better to change its name, thus turning him into another person all together.

Other operations you may consider to change a pre-defined character are to:

- *Shift to synonyms / antonyms.* Pick a dictionary and change the adjectives in the source to synonyms or antonyms.
- *Eliminate part of the description.* Just drop what you don't like in the original character.
- *Introduce new aspects* absent from the description of the character you use for inspiration.

Bernie liked the description of the Frenchman Ardan (Vol. 1, Ch. XVIII), but he doesn't want to use it as such, so he starts toying with it:

"For a start, he is not French but a true Yankee. And he is younger, say, he is 36. Besides, his name is Aldus Bearings". After some thought he comes out with the next (the changes are underlined):

"His massive head momentarily shook a shock of ~~reddish~~ golden hair, which resembled a lion's mane. ... Round, ~~wildish~~ blue eyes ... completed a physiognomy essentially feline. His nose was firmly shaped, his mouth particularly ~~sweet~~ stern in expression, ... a general air of decision gave him the appearance of a hardy, ~~jolly~~ companion. ...

Aldus has a passion for quotations and always finds something to say no matter what's the occasion."

Whatever the method of character creation of your choice, your character is mostly what's on your mind. The character sheet only provides the boundaries within which you can give free rein to your creativity.

## **OTHER ISSUES ABOUT CHARACTER CREATION**

Don't be naïve enough to think that all you need to be gentleman is to follow the process described above. To a great extent a true gentleman is born, it is not made. To help you ensure that that's the case with your character, here are some additional guidelines.

### **How to describe a character**

GE believes that you should have the freedom to use the descriptive method that better suits your taste. Here are some alternatives:

- *Full textual description.* In this case you write it down in full sentences, just as you can find in a novel or a short biography. Barbicane description above is a good example of this method.
- *List of traits.* In this case you make a list of the important aspects of the character. Harold's character was created in these terms with the *read and annotate* method.
- *Images.* You may even feel more inspired by images than by text. After all, don't they say that an image is worth a thousand words? Feel free to pick a portrait you like or even draw it yourself.
- Any combination of the above or any other possibility you may consider.

Campbell came late for his *Gentlemen Explorers* game session. He does not have a character and doesn't want to delay the start of the game. He looks at the cover of the *GE* booklet and says, "ok, my character will be like this guy here" and points to the man in white suit at the centre. The GM nods in acceptance but asks for some more detail. Campbell considers the portrait for a couple of minutes and comes with the next list of traits that complement the drawing:

- "He is clearly the taller guy. He is definitely above average in terms of strength".
- "That white suit, the small moustache and artistic hair... This guy is a colourful character and an art lover."
- "His placement at the centre and his loose position while the others are a lot more formal in outlook... He is a natural leader".

### **Limits for character creation**

We told you, it's your character so you can do as you please. Right? More or less. Yes, it's your character but it is going to be played along the characters of the other players and in the GM game. Due to this the latter has the final word on what can be in your character description.

Furthermore, you must be aware that you need to have a fair knowledge of the game world to be able to create your own character. But, hey, how do you expect to play a game set in a game world if you don't have a minimal knowledge of the same? If you don't have enough knowledge, ask the assistance of the GM and the other players, or don't attempt to go too deep in the description of the character, just focus on a short list of major highlights. You will have time to enhance the description latter in the course of the game.

How long or how detailed should be your description? There's no limit to it. (Unless the GM and the other players are waiting for you to finalize the description so that you can start to play. In this case you may have to stop before they take effective action.) As you can see, Barbicane's description is quite long, but this is because he is one of the main characters in the book. The minor characters are not as clearly defined, neither are the examples we provide.

The fact that there are no limits does not mean that you can make your character second to none at everything. Remember that there is that much a person can learn or do in a life time.

In any case, your character description is a subjective self assessment. A reasonable person knows his limits. If a player goes past what is reasonable, it may only mean that his character is a pretentious egotist with an overblown image of himself. The GM may consider that the way he sees himself is markedly different from the way he is perceived by others. Say, despite the fact that the character considers himself to be an example of grace and good taste, most gentlemen consider him a boring, tasteless person. You must be ready to work this out with the GM and the other players. Remember, your character is part of a wider set and your fun must be balanced with the fun of everybody around the table.

What if the different PCs have similar descriptions? For a start, the players should present their characters to each other by reading the respective descriptions aloud, allowing the other players to read the character sheet, showing their drawings, etc. (Of course, if your character has some secret trait this should not be disclosed to the other players.)

If the players realize that they have similar characters and they consider this to be a problem they need to rework their descriptions (if all the characters are cadets graduating from the Navy Academy the chances that there is a good deal of overlap are higher than if they are the

passengers of steam boat, for instance). The procedure is the same as the one detailed above to create a new character based on a pre-existing character.

### **Where are the formal traits?**

By now you have a nice description of your character. That's good, but is this enough? If you played other role playing games in the past you may be expecting more. You may be asking where are the formalized traits, the ones you can use as mechanics for game procedures. Well, there is nothing like that in GE. That does not mean that there are no game mechanics, it only means these don't require formalization of traits, as you will see in the second part of this game book.

So, if you ask yourself what in game terms means that Impey Barbicane is "*calm, cold, austere*", it means exactly that. It does not mean that he has such thing as a pre-defined for each of these three qualifications. And don't try to fathom what pre-ordained 'skills' may be at stake when it's mentioned that "*he proved himself fertile in invention*". There are none.

### **Keeping track of the gentleman's achievements**

The character is not a static entity. It changes through time as a result of the events that impact his life and of his own actions. These changes can apply to any of the components of his description. You are advised to record these changes at the end of the game session. For that purpose we provide a sample *Character Record* in the Appendix, page 34.

So far we have looked at several issues a gentleman should consider in the course of his life. Yet, the most important point a true *gentleman explorer* never forgets is that none of them define his gentlemanship since what makes a gentleman is not what he has, knows, was invested on him, or how he looks and feels. A gentleman is what he does. Action more than anything defines the man. So, it is the right time to look at the *gentleman explorer* in action.

## GENTLE BUT MANLY – PART I THE BASICS OF ACTION RESOLUTION

*“This is horrible!” said Tom Hunter one evening, while rapidly carbonizing his wooden legs in the fireplace of the smoking-room; “nothing to do! nothing to look forward to! What a loathsome existence!”*” (Vol. 1, Ch. I)

Now that you created your character you know what gentleman’s fiber you are made of. But how do you put it to the test? How do you handle the situations that your eventful life presents to you? This is the subject of the present section.

### ACTION RESOLUTION STEP BY STEP

Whenever you face a situation where your character has to act you need to specify the terms of his action. This is done in four steps: For a start the player must define the character’s *intentions*; since the character may not be able to reach his objectives, the player also must configure *alternative results* other than the intended goal; the ability of the character to act according to his intentions is dependent on personal and external constraints that define his *odds*; finally, the decision on which of the alternatives materialises depends on the concrete *performance* by the character.

Let’s look at a very simple example of how action resolution is handled in *Gentlemen Explorers* for a start. The Gun Club is trying to figure the characteristics of a gun able to send a shot to the moon.

*“I will now ask our worthy secretary to calculate the weight of a cast-iron gun with a bore of nine feet and a thickness of six feet of metal.”* [Says president Barbicane] *“In a moment,”* replied Maston. *Then, dashing off some algebraical formulae with marvelous facility, in a minute or two he declared the following result: “The cannon will weigh 68,040 tons.”*” (Vol. 1, Chap. XVIII)

If we look at it carefully, what’s at stake is Maston’s action. For a start Barbicane provides an objective to it, to *“calculate the weight of a cast-iron gun with a bore of nine feet and a thickness of six feet of metal”*. To address this issue Maston decides to find the answer by recourse to *“some algebraical formulae”*. The objective and the proposed task define the **goal** the character aims at when he starts his action.

At the end of his action Maston is to come with a result. The members of the Gun Club hope that the result will be the correct answer to the question. Yet, there can be other possibilities. We cannot exclude the possibility of a mistake on his part or even that he just fails to provide an answer. This means we should configure the **alternative results** for the action.

Maston seems very confident in getting at the right answer, yet we should ask ourselves if that confidence is well founded. We must identify the factors that may contribute to a good result and those that may distract from that result. For instance, Maston is well versed in the mathematics required to calculate the weight of the cannon and he is good at mathematical calculus. The **odds** are the balance of the factors that influence the action and determine the chances of getting a good result.

The final stage in action resolution is to decide on the **final result** by accessing the performance of the character as per his odds and thus deciding on which of the alternatives materializes. On what concerns Maston’s action, we may consider that his odds are very good and the problem he has to address is not of overwhelming complexity, so it’s reasonable to think he can provide the right answer. If he says that *“the cannon will weigh 68,040 tons”* we may confidently accept that answer for granted.

The character’s *intentions*, the *alternative results*, the *odds* of success and the actual *performance* are then the four steps in action resolution. Let’s look at each at a time.

#### **Start with what you intend to do**

The *goal* is what you expect to achieve with your action and how you plan to do it. Whenever your character has to take action, just note down his objective and the process he will set in motion to realize that objective.

*"For some months past, my brave colleagues," continued Barbicane, "I have been asking myself whether, while confining ourselves to our own particular objects, we could not enter upon some grand experiment worthy of the nineteenth century ... I ask myself whether, supposing sufficient apparatus could be obtained constructed upon the conditions of ascertained resistance, it might not be possible to project a shot up to the moon? ... I have the honor, my brave colleagues, to propose a trial of this little experiment." (Vol. 1, Ch. II).*

There are no fixed rules on how to frame a goal. It may be as grandiose as shooting a projectile to the moon or as mundane as searching for a cab to take the character from the train station to the Gun Club. The goal is what you are concentrating your energies on at each moment. On the other hand, there can be a hierarchy of goals if to achieve your ultimate aims you break them up into minor objectives. That's the case with the attempt by Barbicane and company described at the start of the present section:

*"I ask myself whether, supposing sufficient apparatus could be obtained constructed upon the conditions of ascertained resistance, it might not be possible to project a shot up to the moon? ... I have the honor, my brave colleagues, to propose a trial of this little experiment" (Vol. 1, Ch. II).*

In game terms you should focus your attention in the concrete action the characters are to perform. You may state your ultimate goals, but action resolution is about the steps that allow you to fulfil these goals. What you must look at are your immediate objectives that can be handled by the characters in the gaming situation.

As you can see, the Gun Club decides to shoot a projectile to the moon. To achieve this aim a lot of smaller issues have to be dealt with, given the magnitude of the task. Eventually the members of the club decide that *"the problem before us ... is how to communicate to a projectile a velocity of 12,000 yards per second"* (Vol. 1, Ch. VII), a difficult issue so – proposes Barbicane – *"let us at present examine the velocities hitherto attained"* (Vol. 1, Ch. VII) by other projectiles. With this sentence the President of the Gun Club sets his colleagues on a course of action that aims at answering this question. For that purpose he also defines how to go about it: *"General Morgan will be able to enlighten us on this point"* (Vol. 1, Ch. VII). With this we know what the members of the Gun Club intend to achieve at that particular stage of their brainstorming and how they want to do it. In other words, we know their **goal**.

**Automatic actions.** In most game situations you may assume that the character is able to do what he wants. In this case he only needs to state his goal and that's it, he has done it.

#### **Consider alternative results**

No matter how carefully you plan your course of action, events don't necessarily happen as you wish. You may not be able to ensure that things unfold as you expect. Most likely than not you can figure several alternative results from your action other than the one you're aiming at, alternative development of events that may materialize instead of the course of action you envision. So you need to lay down these *alternatives*.

The starting point for the definition of alternatives is, of course, your intentions. If you are able to realise these, your

action will be *spot-on*. But there are other possibilities:

- *Superb*. You over-do yourself. Define an added consequence to the action that goes past your expectations.
- ***Spot-on*. The end result of your action is exactly as per your intentions.**
- *Modest*. You didn't achieve your aim but you are in a better position to do it if you keep attempting, either because you were able to fulfil it in part or because you changed the circumstances in your favour.
- *Failure*. You simply didn't achieve the result you aimed at. You will have to try again.
- *Disaster*. It was better to have done nothing, not only you didn't achieve your objective but you are in a worst situation than before.

If they ask General Morgan it's because he is likely to provide the right answer. What if he is missing something? What if he is mistaken about the data he provides? Or there's a better expert than the General? No matter how extensive his expertise may be, he is still liable to fail in his quest for the best data on projectiles. Maybe some other information could provide a better result for the action. We have to consider what happens if the good General is unable to come up with the right answer. We need **alternatives**:

- Superb: Gen. Morgan comes with the exact information on the "*velocities hitherto attained*" and data on hypothesis that, if experimented, may allow for even higher velocities.
- Spot-on: Gen. Morgan comes with the exact information on the "*velocities hitherto attained*".
- Modest: Gen. Morgan presents the "*velocities hitherto attained*" as far as he knows it. Unfortunately he is not aware of a couple of other situations where somewhat higher velocities were attained.
- Failure: Gen. Morgan doesn't feel confident to provide data without checking it.
- Disaster: Gen. Morgan's memory betrays him. He overlooks the most recent data and presents velocities that are too slow by current standards.

**Simplified alternatives.** You may limit the set of alternatives. Usually you will do this by dropping the *superb* alternative and turning it into a *spot-on* result, or by ignoring the *fumble* considering it a *failure*. You may even reduce the set to two alternatives only: *spot-on* and *failure*.

### Get your odds

The course of action is not dependent on your will alone. There is a large set of factors that may interfere with it. These factors can be personal and relate to your character's description, or external and pertain to aspects of the circumstances around him.

What are the **odds** that General Morgan will provide the best answer to the question? It all depends on his capabilities as per his description, and on what's happening around him. Given the simplicity of the objective there are no external factors worth accounting for (other than a good provision of sandwiches to ensure that the members of the Club don't falter due to exhaustion). On the other hand, we may ask why General Morgan was chosen to answer the question. He provides the answer when he replies to Barbicane, "*And the more easily ... that during the war I was a member of the committee of experiments*" (Vol. 1, Ch. VII): he was chosen because he had access to the best data on the subject. This is a personal factor worth considering. He is also a thoughtful and judicious person, unlikely to err on such issues. The odds are in favour of getting a good answer.

Both the personal and external factors may contribute to or work against the fulfilment of the intended result. In the first case we call them **edges** while in the later case we call them **handicaps**. This means that in each game situation we need to determine the personal and external edges and handicaps, and know how they balance. For that purpose sum all the edges; also sum all the handicaps; next deduct the later from the former; thus you get your final odds. These can be an edge, neutral (if bonus and penalties cancel each out) or a handicap. The final odds give you a rough idea of how well you may perform in the action: the higher the edges, the better your chances; the higher the handicap, the most likely you face a disaster.

General Morgan is an expert in gunnery, so he deserves an edge when trying to come with the "*velocities hitherto attained*", but so are his peers of the Gun Club. What sets the General apart is the fact that he is the best expert on the issue since during the war he was "*a member of the committee of experiments*". Due to that the GM doubles his edge. His personality also works in favour of a successful answer. In the end he has an edge of 2 for expertise plus an edge of 1 for personality. His final odds are an edge of 3.

**Notating your odds.** For simplicity of reference we suggest the next notation for the personal and external factors and for the final odds (where  $n$  means the quantitative value of the factors or the odds):

- Personal or external edges are notated as  $ne$ .

### Check your final result

So far so good, but how do we reach a conclusion on the exact alternative chosen by the characters? A true *gentleman explorer* loves the thrill of emotion that only an unpredictable result can provide. For this purpose we introduce a random factor in the determination of the result of the action: Pick a number of 10-sided dice or d10 equal to the value of your odds plus one (this is the *Base Die* or BD, the die you roll when the odds are neutral) roll it, and retain a die according to the nature of the odds:

- Neutral odds roll 1d10, the BD; record the value you rolled with that die.
- Edge odds roll  $x$ d10 = BD +  $n$ E; take notice of the highest value rolled.
- Handicap odds roll  $x$ d10 = BD +  $n$ H; keep the lowest value rolled.

Since you are a *gentleman explorer* you determine the result of your action by comparing the value you rolled to the values in the *Gentlemen's roll* column of the table below. The *Result* column identifies which of the alternative results is fulfilled.

Result	Odds	
	Gentlemen's roll	Accountant's arithmetic
Superb	10	$\geq 5E$
<b>Spot-on</b>	<b>8 – 9</b>	<b>2E – 4E</b>
Modest	4 – 7	1H – 1H
Failure	2 - 3	4H – 2H
Disaster	1	$\leq 5H$

On what concerns General Morgan, we know what he intends to do, what are the alternative results that may come out of his action, and what are the odds that the end result will be satisfactory. Our final task is to decide how well the General **performs** in his search for “*the velocities hitherto attained*”.

The character rolls 4d10 (the BD plus 3E) and gets 2 – 2 – 5 – 9. Because the odds are an edge he picks the highest value rolled, the 9. This matches into a *spot-on* final result.

“*I may say, then, that the 100-pounder Dahlgrens, which carried a distance of 5,000 yards, impressed upon their projectile an initial velocity of 500 yards a second. The Rodman Columbiad threw a shot weighing half a ton a distance of six miles, with a velocity of 800 yards per second-- a result which Armstrong and Palisser have never obtained in England*” (Vol. 1, Ch. VII). If the General says that the Rodman Columbiad was the fastest projectile ever at 800 yards per second, there's no doubt about it.

On the other hand, there are plenty of little men around you that try to avoid danger and uncertainty as if the plague was coming upon them. For those rascals there's always the refuge of predictable results. If you are like one of these pitiful spineless accountants that are afraid of their own shadow, measure your odds to the values in the *Accountants arithmetic* column in the table above. The corresponding value in the *Result* column provides the mediocre result you are barely able to achieve.

It is not uncommon for General Morgan to handle things on the safer side, thus following the most predictable path and resorting to the Accountant's arithmetic instead of the gentleman's roll. If he did so in the situation above, his odds of 3E would still be *spot-on* but he would forego the chance to get a *superb* result.

On the other hand, even accountants can be as learned on gunnery as the members of the Gun Club, so even they could be *spot-on* “*the velocities hitherto attained*” by guns. Right?

Nah, don't even think about it. Such chickens would not dare to face real guns in real battles, they would not even venture the vicinity of a gun factory. Their armchair knowledge could at best provide them with the ability to distinguish a gun from a mortar (2h). It's not hard to venture that a rascal of that sort would be as clueless as a blind man and *fail* to provide any information of value.

Of course, a decision on whether you want to behave like a gentleman or to downgrade yourself to the position of a shameless accountant has to be taken upfront when you advance your intentions, not at the time you calculate your odds. Only the most spiteful accountant would want to reach a conclusion on this critical issue after balancing all the factors that affect his action.

**Stick to the accountant's arithmetic.** If you eliminate random result determination you get one less step in action resolution. Yes, it may not be the most gentlemanly behaviour, but expediency is also part of the *gentleman explorer's* bag of resources.

## SOME ADDED COMPLICATIONS

The basic outline for action resolution presented so far may require some added complications in specific situations. Let's look at some of these.

### Multiple iterations

Sometimes an iteration of the action resolution process is not enough for the characters to either fulfil their intentions or abandon the same. In that case they may need to repeat the process, maybe with changes in terms of redefined objectives or intervening factors.

Suppose that in the previous situation General Morgan had rolled 1 – 2 – 2 – 3. With a final result of 3 he would be unable to provide the answer to the question. Most likely he would say something like “there was the 100-pounder Dahlgrens and also the Rodman Columbiad if memory serves me well. But their velocities... hum, I'm really not sure. And it seems that Armstrong and Palisser have obtained some fine marks in England as well. Let me have a sandwich and think some more on the issue.”

When the action goes through several iterations of action resolution a failure implies added difficulties in subsequent attempts (1h for each failure). A disaster leads the character to abandon his current intentions.

After a round of sandwiches the members of the Gun Club silently turn their heads to the General. If he attempts again to come with an answer to the question at hand his odds will be lowered by 1h due to his previous failure, and be reduced to 2E.

The General puffs once or twice on his pipe, next he picks a fat file from his bag and, without a word, goes through it in deep concentration. After several minutes interrupted only by the General's occasional “hum” and “tss, tss” he says, “I am ready to answer our question!”

The savvy General! Too prudent to place his trust on his memory he decided to review his notes on the experiments recorded by the committee. This external factor gives him a further bonus of 1e, so he is back on his odds of 3E. This time he is spot-on and utters, “*I may say, then, that the 100-pounder Dahlgrens, which carried a distance of 5,000 yards, impressed upon their projectile an initial velocity of 500 yards a second. The Rodman Columbiad threw a shot weighing half a ton a distance of six miles, with a velocity of 800 yards per second-- a result which Armstrong and Palisser have never obtained in England*” (Vol. 1, Ch. VII).

“*We must take, then, for our starting point, this velocity of 800 yards*” (Vol. 1, Ch. VII) says Barbicane. The matter is closed and it's time to move to another action: “*We must increase it twenty-fold*” (Vol. 1, Ch. VII).

### Working together

What if several gentlemen decide to join their strengths to handle a particular situation? When this happens they determine their shared goal by defining a common objective and the tasks that each character will perform in order to bring to fruition that objective. Once the goal is set they can work on the alternate results. While the goal and the alternatives are common to all of them the odds are assessed independently.

The critical issue about collaboration concerns the determination of the final result. There are basically two possibilities:

First, it may be the case that the success of each gentleman does not depend on the action of the others. In this case you only assess the performance of the character with the *highest* odds.

While the General Morgan is using his vast knowledge to come with the data on “*the velocities hitherto attained*” by guns, the other members of the Gun Club don’t sit idle. Each one of them is considering into himself this momentous issue and trying to figure its answer.

If the performance of the different gentlemen is mutually dependent, in order to achieve the final result the performance of the collective will be based on the performance of the character with the *lowest* odds. The collective action will be as good as his performance.

### **From actor to subject**

So far we have been considering the situation where the gentleman is performing an action. What if he is the subject of the action from another party? If this happens things are worked out exactly in the way described before: One person performs his action having the gentleman as his subject. If the action is successful the gentleman will endure the consequences entailed in the result.

## **UNINTENDED EVENTS**

Not everything that happens is due to the wilful action of a gentleman, there are many situations where the characters are subject to events behind their power.

*“Suddenly a dreadful shock was felt, and the projectile, under the force of six billions of litres of gas, developed by the combustion of pyroxyle, mounted into space” (Vol. 2, Ch. I).*

True, getting inside the Columbiad was the result of a carefully thought out decision. Yet, from the moment the three friends are trapped inside the projectile they become powerless and have no say on the ensuing events. For all purposes they are at the mercy of whatever happens to them when the Columbiad shoots them into space.

### **Handling events**

Uncontrollable events are handled in a way similar to actions. The difference is that they don’t require a goal. All you need to do is to consider the alternative results that may come out of the event, the odds that affect it and to decide on the final result according to the odds.

Let us look at the **alternative results** first. These have to do with the way the unintended event will change the existing situation:

- *Critical*. The event produces an extreme result, most likely irreversible.
- *Major*. The event produces a medium intensity result that requires proper action to be reverted.
- *Minor*. The event produces a short intensity, short term result that reverts on itself without the need for external action.
- *Unimportant*. The event does not produce its result. Instead it brings some momentary side effect.
- *Null*. The event changes nothing.

What will happen to Barbicane, Nicholl and Ardan, the crew of the Columbiad? Let’s consider some **alternative results** keeping in mind the fact that we are dealing with a shot into space:

- *Critical*      The crew doesn’t recover from the shock and goes into a coma.
- *Major*        The crew faints and needs help to recover his senses.
- *Minor*        The crew faints and loses his senses. He recovers unaided after some time.
- *Unimportant* The crew doesn’t faint but he is unable to move for all the departure.
- *Null*         The crew endures the departure like if nothing happened.

Like for an action we need to sort out the **odds** that determine the likelihood of reaching a particular result from the event. We work this out in a similar way by looking for personal and

situational edges and handicaps. Notice only that these are seen from the perspective of the event, not from the perspective of the character that is subject to it.

What are the **odds** that will determine the final result? The “*dreadful shock*” felt at departure is an external factor that may bring major consequences by leading to a *critical* result. Due to its magnitude we can assign it 3e.

On the other hand, the Columbiad was designed with a “*movable disc*” in order to *nullify* the shock. The disk was “*sunk down to the bottom by the smashing of the partition-breaks and the escape of the water...*” (Vol. 2, Ch. II), thus reducing the impact of the departure. Let’s consider that it is a 1h external factor (a handicap since it reduces the magnitude of the shock).

“*We have now to decide how we can best place ourselves to resist the shock. Position cannot be an indifferent matter; and we must, as much as possible, prevent the rush of blood to the head.’ ... ‘let us stretch ourselves on our sides; we shall resist the shock better that way.’*” (Vol. 2, Ch. I). This is a counteraction on the part of the three friends directed at reducing the power of the shock (notice how events can be countered just in the same terms that actions can be countered; see below). It works as a 1h personal factor. All in all, the odds are 1E meaning that it is likely that the characters will be shocked by the departure of the projectile.

The **final result** is determined in standard terms by either rolling the dice or picking it from the Accountant’s Arithmetic column.

Finally we need to figure the exact **result**. Once more, this is handled in similar terms to actions.

The GM decides that the risk inherent in the situation means that the players should roll instead of following the accountant’s arithmetic. Each character rolls two dice and retains the highest value. Barbicane rolls 9 – 8, Ardan rolls 4 – 6 and Nicoll rolls 3 – 8. While Michael Ardan is subject to a minor shock his companions suffer a more important major shock.

As the GM says, “... *three bodies lay apparently lifeless. Barbicane, Nicholl, and Michel Ardan--did they still breathe? or was the projectile nothing now but a metal coffin, bearing three corpses into space? // Some minutes after the departure of the projectile, one of the bodies moved, shook its arms, lifted its head, and finally succeeded in getting on its knees. It was Michel Ardan. He felt himself all over, gave a sonorous ‘Hem!’ and then said: // ‘Michel Ardan is whole. How about the others?’ // The courageous Frenchman tried to rise, but could not stand. His head swam, from the rush of blood; he was blind; he was a drunken man. ... Ardan felt the tide of life return by degrees. His blood became calm, and returned to its accustomed circulation. Another effort restored his equilibrium. He succeeded in rising, drew a match from his pocket, and approaching the burner lighted it*” (Vol. 2, Ch. II).

(The continuation of the present example and an in-depth look at how to deal with shock is presented in page 23.)

### Comparing the results of events to the results of actions

Both actions and events may produce similar results. For instance, a gentleman may be injured when hit by a falling tree in a day of tempest, but he may also be wounded by the treacherous blow of a thug. The main difference is that an action can produce disastrous consequences for the person performing it, something that has no equivalent in the case of an event. Because of this, we can work out the next correspondences between the results of actions and events:

<b>ACTION</b>	↔	<b>EVENT</b>
Superb	↔	Critical
Spot-on	↔	Major
Modest	↔	Minor
Failure	↔	Unimportant, null
Disaster	↔	-

Keep in mind that this relates to doing the action or the happening of the event. It does not relate to being *subject* to the action or event.

## CONFLICTS

A good deal of the challenges the gentleman has to face happen when another character or some other external influence attempts to interfere with his action. When this takes place the action of the gentleman is performing the *primary action*. The interfering action is the *counteraction*.

Conflicts follow the rules above but with some adaptations. The first step is to ascertain the **goals** of both participants in the conflict. The character performing the primary action describes his goal first. The goal of the adversary will be to ensure that he is not able to fulfil his objective.

The President of the Gun Club presents Mr. Michael Ardan to the public, the indomitable adventurer that proposes to go to the moon inside the Columbiad. Unknown to them, Captain Nicholl, sworn enemy of Barbicane, waits patiently in the crowd for his opportunity to discredit the whole project. That opportunity comes when he enters a verbal fray with Michael Ardan where arguments fly both sides, as sharp as razors: “*Barbicane and his colleagues devoured with their eyes the intruder who had so boldly placed himself in antagonism to their enterprise. Nobody knew him, and the president, uneasy as to the result of so free a discussion, watched his new friend with some anxiety. The meeting began to be somewhat fidgety also, for the contest directed their attention to the dangers, if not the actual impossibilities, of the proposed expedition*” (Vol. 1, Ch. XX).

Ardan’s *goal* is to ascertain the feasibility of going to the moon inside the Columbiad’s projectile. The *goal* of the intruder is to discredit the project by disproving the Frenchman’s arguments.

Next we need to define the **alternatives** according to the intentions of the person performing the primary action.

- Superb: The crowd is now more supportive of the project than ever.
- **Spot-on:** **The crowd keeps its faith in the project.**
- Modest: The project loses its consensual support; an opposing party forms within the crowd.
- Failure: The project is discredited. If it is taken forward it will find no public support.
- Disaster: The project is completely discredited and has to be abandoned.

The third step is, of course, to determine the **odds** for both of the participants in the conflict.

“‘Sir’ replied Ardan’s antagonist, ‘*there are many and incontrovertible reasons which prove the absence of an atmosphere in the moon. I might say that, a priori, if one ever did exist, it must have been absorbed by the earth; but I prefer to bring forward indisputable facts.*’ // ‘Bring them forward then, sir, as many as you please.’” (Vol. 1, Ch. XX), says Michael Ardan.

“‘... It follows, therefore, that the moon cannot be surrounded by an atmosphere.’ // ‘In point of fact,’ replied Ardan, ‘*this is your chief, if not your only argument; and a really scientific man might be puzzled to answer it. For myself, I will simply say that it is defective...*’” (Vol. 1, Ch. XX).

This passage represents the interchange happening between Michael Ardan and Captain Nicholl. What is at stake is not only the nature of the arguments (based on the astronomical knowledge of each of them) but also the argumentative capacity of the adversaries (according to their charisma and oratory skills).

None of the two is an expert astronomer but both are well informed on the issue (1e for each of them). Michael Ardan is a more impressive figure (1e). By not being on the platform Nicholl is less visible, so he is at a disadvantage (1h). At the start of the interaction the crowd was favourable to the Gun Club and very supportive to the project (1e in favour of Ardan). The difficulty and uncertainty of the project works in favour of Nicholl (1h).

All in all, Ardan counts on a personal modifier of 2e and a circumstantial modifier of 1e for a total of 3E, while Nicholl has to live with a personal modifier of 1e, and two circumstantial modifiers, one handicap and one edge, for a total of 1E.

What is specific about conflicts is the way the counteraction impacts the primary action. This is sorted out at the moment of determining the performance of both characters. Basically the primary action is handled normally according to the rules presented before with the added complication that the counteraction may work as an extra penalty depending on its level of success:

- *Superb*. The counteraction makes it really hard for the primary action to succeed. 5h to the primary action.
- *Spot-on*. The counteraction is a sizable added difficulty to the primary action. 3h to the primary action.

- *Modest*. The counteraction results in a minor difficulty to the primary action. 1h to the primary action.
- *Failure*. The counteraction is ineffective and has no impact on the primary action.
- *Disaster*. The counteraction actually contributes to the success of the primary action. 1e for the primary action.

Of course, a gentleman will roll his odds when determining the result of his counteraction, just as in the case of an independent action or a primary action.

Both Michael Ardan and Captain Nicholl are willing to take the risks involved in their respective stances: “‘On again, then,’ replied Ardan; ‘Herschel, in 1787, observed a great number of luminous points on the moon’s surface, did he not?’ // ‘Yes! but without offering any solution of them. Herschel himself never inferred from them the necessity of a lunar atmosphere. And I may add that Baeer and Maedler, the two great authorities upon the moon, are quite agreed as to the entire absence of air on its surface.’” (Vol. 1, Ch. XX).

Nicholl’s player rolls two dice and gets a 3 plus a 4, thus he keeps the higher value, a *modest* result for his counteraction that only handicaps Michael Ardan’s primary action by 1h.

Once you have determined the impact of the counteraction on the primary action the player performing the latter can carry on with the determination of the actual performance of his character.

We have seen that Ardan’s odds are 3E to which we must apply the result of the counteraction, 1h. This reduces his odds to 2E. The Frenchman’s player rolls three dice and gets 2 – 2 – 5. The corresponding result is a modest success in ascertaining his ideas despite the captain’s counterarguments: “*A movement was here manifest among the assemblage, who appeared to be growing excited by the arguments of this singular personage.*” (Vol. 1, Ch. XX).

Just as in a simple action, if intentions are not fulfilled in a single iteration of the action resolution process the players may continue with further attempts.

Fortunately for Michael Ardan the discussion didn’t stop at that and slowly he started to win the public to his side: “‘*But is this established as a fact?*’ // ‘*Absolutely certain!*’ // *A counter-movement here took place in favor of the hero of the meeting, whose opponent was now reduced to silence.*” Eventually Captain Nicholl is forced to give up the argument: “‘*It really is too much!*’ cried Michel Ardan’s adversary. ‘*I do not know why I should continue so frivolous a discussion! Please yourself about this insane expedition! We need not trouble ourselves about you!*’”. Michael Ardan’s victory is total: “*The platform was lifted by a hundred strong arms, and the president of the Gun Club shared with Michel Ardan triumphal honors*” (all from Vol. 1, Ch. XX).

## THE ANALOGY PRINCIPLE

There may be occasions where there’s a disagreement between the GM and a player or between two players on whether a certain action fits the setting. This is due to the rather loose and descriptive approach to action definition proposed in the present rules. If this happens, the best way to handle the disagreement is to follow the analogy principle: If there’s a similar situation in the book(s), it’s acceptable in the game. Basically the principle means that you can do similar actions to those present in Verne’s writings.

Whenever a player proposes to do an action he may be requested to demonstrate that the said action fits the setting. For that purpose he has to advance an example taken from a book by Jules Verne or any other sources acceptable in the context of his game, and to explain why the action he described is similar to the quoted one. If he is able to win the other players, his character can do it. If he is not able to convince them, he has to think about another course of action.

## GENTLE BUT MANLY – PART II

### ADVANCED ACTION RESOLUTION

*“It was delightful once upon a time! One invented a gun, and hardly was it cast, when one hastened to try it in the face of the enemy! Then one returned to camp with a word of encouragement from Sherman or a friendly shake of the hand from McClellan.”* (Vol. 1, Ch. I)

In the previous section we went through the basics of action resolution. The rules presented are enough to handle most situations, yet there are occasions that may require a different approach. In the present section we will develop the rules so far presented by looking in more depth at the different stages of action resolution and by describing some more particular cases of its usage.

#### A HELPING HAND

Sometimes a character may be doing an action and get a helping hand from someone else. Say, he is lifting a trunk and another character gives him a hand. Help works in similar terms to a conflict but the impact of the helping action is positive, not negative:

- *Superb*. Help provides a substantial contribution to the primary action, 5e.
- *Spot-on*. Help provides a major contribution to the primary action, 3e.
- *Modest*. Help provides a minor contribution to the primary action, 1e.
- *Failure*. Help is ineffective and has no impact on the primary action.
- *Disaster*. The helping hand actually is prejudicial to the success of the primary action, 1h.

Barbican lay on the floor after fainting. *“Ardan and Nicholl raised the president of the Gun Club and laid him on the divan”* (Vol. 2, Ch. II). This is their **goal**.

Let us consider that the issue is both about taking Barbican from the ground to the divan, and doing it as gently as possible. Let us also consider that Ardan is controlling the operations while Nicholl is helping him. The **alternatives** are:

- *Superb*: *“Ardan and Nicholl raised the president of the Gun Club and laid him on the divan”* as gently as if he was a newborn.
- **Spot-on**: *“Ardan and Nicholl raised the president of the Gun Club and laid him on the divan”*.
- *Modest*: *“Ardan and Nicholl raised the president of the Gun Club”* and dropped him on the divan, shaking him in the process.
- *Failure*: *“Ardan and Nicholl [were unable to rise] the president of the Gun Club”* that stayed lying in the ground.
- *Disaster*: *“Ardan and Nicholl raised the president of the Gun Club”* only to drop him to the ground, thus hurting him badly in the process.

What are the **odds**? Ardan is a strong man, so he can count on 1e personal factor. Barbican, being an average man, does not change the odds in either sense. Nicholl is of average strength (0 personal factor), and decides to play safe by going for the accountant’s arithmetic, thus providing a 1e with his helping hand. On the overall the odds are in favour of Michael Ardan with 2E, more than enough to secure a spot-on action. The end **result** is that, well, *“Ardan and Nicholl raised the president of the Gun Club and laid him on the divan”*.

#### ADVANCED COOPERATION

We have seen in the previous section that the characters may cooperate in order to achieve a common goal. Here we review the rules for cooperation in order for it to reflect the performance of all people involved in the cooperative effort.

The starting point is to define the **overall goal** and, based on that, the **alternative results** that may come out of it.

“ ‘One question presents itself,’ said Barbicane. ‘We cannot keep the dead body of this dog with us for the next forty-eight hours.’

‘No! certainly not,’ replied Nicholl; ‘but our scuttles are fixed on hinges; they can be let down. We will open one, and throw the body out into space’ ” (Vol. 2, Ch. V).

The crews of the Columbiad are forced to get rid of poor Satellite, their dead dog. Yet, this raises two problems according to Barbicane, “‘the first relates to the air shut up in the projectile, and of which we must lose as little as possible’”, “‘the second reason is that we must not let the outer cold, which is excessive, penetrate the projectile or we shall be frozen to death’.” (Vol. 2, Ch. V).

Based on this it’s easy to define the **overall goal** and the **alternatives** for the action:

- Superb: They “open one [scuttle], and throw the body out into space” without loss of air or penetration of cold.
- **Spot-on:** “ ‘Our scuttles are fixed on hinges; they can be let down. We will open one, and throw the body out into space’ ” with a **minor loss of air and penetration of cold.**
- Modest: They “open one [scuttle], and throw the body out into space” with a sizable loss of air and penetration of cold.
- Failure: They fail to “open one [scuttle], and throw the body out into space”.
- Disaster: They “open one” scuttle but fail to “throw the body out into space” while suffering a major loss of air and penetration of cold.

The next stage is to break up that overall goal and alternatives into **individual goals** and their corresponding **individual alternatives**.

As it can be seen, the action requires the intervention of several people, each taking care of a different part of the overall goal: “The bolts of the right scuttle, the opening of which measured about twelve inches across, [had to be] carefully drawn [by Captain Nicholl], while Michel, quite grieved, prepared to launch his dog into space. The glass, [was to be] raised by a powerful lever [operated by President Barbicane], which enabled it to overcome the pressure of the inside air on the walls of the projectile” (Vol. 2, Ch. V). We may consider that Nicholl’s action is not problematic. The potential problems relate to the performance of either Barbicane or Ardan. Should one of them misstep and they all may face disaster. Thus, we need to rework separate alternatives for their respective participation in the cooperative effort.

Alternatives for Barbicane:

- Superb: Operates the powerful lever that raises the glass with no loss of air or penetration of cold. Allows Ardan to throw the body into space.
- **Spot-on: Operates the powerful lever that raises the glass with a minor loss of air and penetration of cold. Allows Ardan to throw the body into space.**
- Modest: Operates the powerful lever that raises the glass with a sizable loss of air and penetration of cold. Allows Ardan to throw the body into space.
- Failure: Fails to operate the powerful lever that raises the glass. Ardan cannot throw the body into space.
- Disaster: Wrongly operates the powerful lever that raises the glass allowing for a major loss of air and penetration of cold while not allowing Ardan to throw the body into space.

Alternatives for Ardan:

- Superb: Launches the body into space with no loss of air or penetration of cold.
- **Spot-on: Launches the body into space with a minor loss of air and penetration of cold.**
- Modest: Launches the body into space with a sizable loss of air and penetration of cold.
- Failure: Fails to launch the body into space.
- Disaster: Fails to launch the body into space and allows for a major loss of air and penetration of cold.

The **odds** are then determined for each individual participating in the collaborative effort.

Barbicane and Ardan check their odds separately. The action is simple and easy to do (1e external factor for each); the materials they are dealing with are of high quality so they are easy to operate (1e external factor for each); on what concerns Barbicane, he is an engineer used to handle similar mechanisms (1e personal factor); they take their time to prepare the operation so that they will maximise their chances of success (1e personal factor for each). Yes, sending Satellite into space is a high risk operation but the odds are good: 4E for Barbicane and 3E for Ardan.

Each of the participants determines his **result**. The overall result will be a factor of the results for each participant.

Finally, the cooperative action is executed. How did the Frenchman and the President of the Gun Club **perform**? Ardan gets 1 – 2 – 10 while Barbicane gets 2 – 5 – 5 – 8. *“The bolts of the right scuttle, the opening of which measured about twelve inches across, were carefully drawn, while Michel, quite grieved, prepared to launch his dog into space. The glass, raised by a powerful lever, which enabled it to overcome the pressure of the inside air on the walls of the projectile, turned rapidly on its hinges, and Satellite was thrown out. // Scarcely a particle of air could have escaped”* (Vol. 2, Ch. V). The superb performance on the part of the Frenchman was not matched by the President of the Gun Club, thus allowing for a minimal loss of air. Yet, *“the operation was so successful that later on Barbicane did not fear to dispose of the rubbish which encumbered the car”* (Vol. 2, Ch. V).

## CHAINED ACTIONS

Some times it’s better to break up an ambitious goal into more modest but easier to perform actions in such a way that the overall result will be dependent on the success in the component actions.

*“I ask myself whether ... it might not be possible to project a shot up to the moon? ... I have the honor, my brave colleagues, to propose a trial of this little experiment”* (Vol. 1, Ch. II). We have seen that this is the initial aim of the Gun Club. Yet, *“after some discussion, it was agreed to consult the astronomers regarding the astronomical part of the enterprise. Their reply once ascertained, they could then discuss the mechanical means, and nothing should be wanting to ensure the success of this great experiment”* (Vol. 1, Ch. IV). In other words, the original intention is broken up into two minor goals: To address the astronomical issues and to look after the mechanical means required by the Columbiad experiment.

Eventually the astronomical issues were answered by the Observatory of Cambridge in their reply to a letter sent by Barbicane (Vol. 1, Ch. V). On the other hand, *“The mechanical part still remained. // President Barbicane had, without loss of time, nominated a working committee of the Gun Club. The duty of this committee was to resolve the three grand questions of the cannon, the projectile, and the powder”* (Vol. 1, Ch. VII). Once more, a greater goal (the mechanical issues) is broken up into three more limited objectives.

*“The meeting was opened by the president himself. // “Gentlemen,” said he, “we have to resolve one of the most important problems in the whole of the noble science of gunnery. It might appear, perhaps, the most logical course to devote our first meeting to the discussion of the engine to be employed. Nevertheless, after mature consideration, it has appeared to me that the question of the projectile must take precedence of that of the cannon, and that the dimensions of the latter must necessarily depend on those of the former”* (Vol. 1, Ch. VII).

As you can see, deciding on the order of the questions may be subject to debate to the point that it may become an issue for action resolution itself. In any case, what is important is that by breaking up a big issue, a broad goal, we can reach the point where we identify a more concrete aim that may determine a precise course of action, like searching for the solution for a problem such as *“how to communicate to a projectile a velocity of 12,000 yards per second”* (Vol. 1, Ch. VII).

To achieve the overall goal in a chain of actions the characters have to be successful at the all different stages. Failure at a step in the chain puts the whole into a halt.

## MULTIPLE GOALS

What if a gentleman wants to achieve several independent goals that could be done independently with a single action? A gentleman can do anything he fancies provided he has the resources to do it, so there’s nothing stopping him in trying to pursue two goals at the same time.

After several rounds of heated discussion the Gun Club was able to reach a consensus on the major issues but *“one question remained yet to be decided; it was necessary to choose a favorable spot for the experiment”* (Vol. 1, Ch. XI). Eventually *“it was finally agreed, then, that the Columbiad must be cast on the soil of either Texas or Florida”* (Vol. 1, Ch. XI).

Texas or Florida it may be, but precisely in which of these two states? A possible way to choose the location is in terms of the *“appropriation of the soil, the facility of communication, the rapidity of*

*transport*”, in other words, in terms of technical specifications by searching for the place that maximizes the chances of success of the experiment.

If only things were that simple. Both Texas and Florida constituted lobbies to pressurise the members of the Gun Club in their favour thus creating “*a rivalry entirely without precedent between the different towns of these two States. ... The rival parties promenaded the streets with arms in their hands; and at every occasion of their meeting a collision was to be apprehended which might have been attended with disastrous results ... President Barbicane knew not which way to look. Notes, documents, letters full of menaces showered down upon his house. Which side ought he to take?*” (Vol. 1, Ch. XI).

At this stage the members of the Gun Club have two ways to handle the situation: Either they search for the better place in technical terms (their original criteria) or submit to the lobby that is able to exert the strongest political pressure. In other words, they need to decide which criteria they will follow, the technical criteria that maximises the technical feasibility of the project or the political criteria that maximises the political backing for the project.

There’s a further possibility, though. What if they are able to find a solution that is *both* the best in technical and political terms? In this case they will be pursuing two goals.

When pursuing two or more goals you need to state which is your primary goal. This is the most important outcome you want to achieve. Next you define the **alternative results** in terms of the interplay between the two goals:

- *Superb*. You are spot-on both goals.
- *Spot-on*. You are spot-on your primary goal but fail the secondary goal.
- *Modest*. You are spot-on your secondary goal but fail the primary goal.
- *Failure*. You are unable to fulfil both of your goals.
- *Disaster*. A disastrous consequence comes out on what concerns your primary goal.

Of course, the members of the Club are specially concerned with the technical specifications of the place where the Columbiad will be placed, so this criterion defines the main goal for their action. Being able to handle the political pressure in such terms that their decision is widely accepted is of secondary importance, at least from the point of view of the experiment. Given that, our alternatives are:

- *Superb*: The best location according to both the technical and the political criteria.
- *Spot-on*: The best location according to the technical criteria, even if it is a poor choice according to the political criteria.
- *Modest*: A poor if minimally acceptable location on what concerns the technical specifications provided it offers the best political solution.
- *Failure*: The members of the Gun Club are completely clueless on how to choose the location for the Columbiad.
- *Disaster*: A technically bad location chosen because of political issues.

The **odds** for actions with multiple goals are determined in standard terms.

We must consider that the members of the Gun Club are experts in gunnery, so they know fairly well what they require from the place where the Columbiad is to be cast. This gives them a 1e modifier.

Furthermore, they have the assistance of the best scientists around the country like the people at Cambridge. Another 1e for this.

On the other hand, there’s plenty of lobbying that may pressurise the members of the Gun Club to decide based solely on political grounds. This heavy pressure may cloud their judgement. This is a penalty, of course, so 1h.

What about personal factors that may influence the decision? When framing the task the player should take into account the personal traits of the President of the Gun Club. Well, we know that “*Impey Barbicane was ... calm, cold, austere ... of imperturbable temper and immovable character*” (Vol. 1, Ch. II). This means that he will not be easily amenable to bow to external pressures. Let’s give him a modifier of 1e.

At this stage we can calculate the odds as 1+1+1 edge less 1 handicap. The final odds are 2E.

The **final result** is also accessed in standard terms.

How is the Gun Club going to choose a place for the Columbiad? We roll 3d10 and get 1 – 4 – 8, so we retain the highest value, 8. The performance by the Gun Club is *spot-on*, it will base its choice on strictly technical issues. In the words of Barbicane, “*As for political prepossessions, they had nothing to do with the question*” (Vol. 1, Ch. XI).

Notice that what was described above is how to handle two goals at the same time. Sometimes it is convenient to handle those goals in separation, one at each time. Another possibility is to revise one goal after achieving the other.

Despite the intention of the Gun Club to handle the issue of the location of the Columbiad in purely technical terms, none of these two states presents compelling advantages when compared to the other, so there is no clear-cut technical criterion to decide between Texas and Florida. Both states provide spot-on locations. It seems the Gun Club is stuck on the issue.

*"This dead block had existed for some little time, when Barbicane resolved to get rid of it all at once. He called a meeting of his colleagues, and laid before them a proposition which, it will be seen, was profoundly sagacious. // "On carefully considering," he said, "what is going on now between Florida and Texas, it is clear that the same difficulties will recur with all the towns of the favored State. The rivalry will descend from State to city, and so on downward. Now Texas possesses eleven towns within the prescribed conditions, which will further dispute the honor and create us new enemies, while Florida has only one. I go in, therefore, for Florida and Tampa Town."* (Vol. 1, Ch. XI).

In other terms, Barbicane reviews the political issues involved and that way he is able to reach a decision that provides the best political outcome without sacrificing on technical issues.

## COMPETITIONS

In a competition both characters attempt similar actions, each one trying to perform better than his adversary. Competitions are handled as two separate simple actions or as a succession of simple actions with similar goals. The character that performs better or the one that is able to fulfil the goal first wins in the competition.

Let's go back and consider what happened when the Gun Club made it known that the Columbiad would be placed either in Texas or Florida since *"it was, therefore, only those portions of Texas and Florida which were situated below this parallel which came within the prescribed conditions of latitude. .... So, scarcely was the decision known, when the Texan and Floridan deputies arrived at Baltimore in an incredibly short space of time. From that very moment President Barbicane and the influential members of the Gun Club were besieged day and night by formidable claims. .... Texas produced its array of twenty-six counties; Florida replied that twelve counties were better than twenty-six in a country only one-sixth part of the size. // Texas plumed itself upon its 330,000 natives; Florida, with a far smaller territory, boasted of being much more densely populated with 56,000"* (Vol. 1, Ch. XI).

The following weeks saw an escalation of arguments relating to economy, natural resources, geographic features, history and Americaness.

*" 'Scandalous!' roared the Texas deputies. 'A wretched little strip of country like Florida to dare to compare itself to Texas ... a country, in fine, which voluntarily annexed itself to the United States of America!' // 'Yes; because it was afraid of the Mexicans!' replied Florida. // 'Afraid!' From this moment the state of things became intolerable. A sanguinary encounter seemed daily imminent between the two parties in the streets of Baltimore. It became necessary to keep an eye upon the deputies"* (Vol. 1, Ch. XI).

What we see here is a presentation of similar arguments, a parallel course of action where each party attempts to outdo the other. In other words, a competition.

Since in a competition each party is trying to out-do the other, we don't need to describe different **alternatives**. All we need to know is whether the character performs superbly, spot-on, modestly, etc.

Let us look at a particular moment in the dispute to see how it can be handled with the *Gentlemen Explorers* rules. Suppose that each part wants to demonstrate that his state has the best natural resources to service the experiment:

*"The Texans, through the columns of the Herald claimed that some regard should be had to a State which grew the best cotton in all America, produced the best green oak for the service of the navy, and contained the finest oil, besides iron mines, in which the yield was fifty per cent. of pure metal.*

*To this the American Review replied that the soil of Florida, although not equally rich, afforded the best conditions for the moulding and casting of the Columbiad, consisting as it did of sand and argillaceous earth"* (Vol. 1, Ch. XI).

In a situation like this the intention of each party is to present the best argument, the word that will decide the dispute.

The **odds** are defined in standard terms for each party.

Each party presents the odds in favour of his argument. For Texas it's all about natural resources that may be useful in the construction of the Columbiad (cotton, oak, oil, iron). For Florida it's about the "*conditions for the moulding and casting*" the cannon due to the fact that it consists "*of sand and argillaceous earth*". We may consider that each party has 1B for their relative advantages.

Finally, each party computes his **final result**. The one with the best performance wins the argument. If they have equal performances there's no winner: Either they abandon the competition or carry on in another competitive round.

Both states present good reasons to be chosen. The problem is that neither advances an outstanding argument that would finish the competition once and for all.

## FINAL WORDS ON ACTION RESOLUTION

Sometimes it may be hard to decide on how to handle a particular situation since it may be configured in any of several possible ways.

In the course of their bid to host the Columbiad both Florida and Texas want to demonstrate that they have the best port to service the experiment: "*That may be all very well,*" replied the Texans; "*but you must first get to this country. Now the communications with Florida are difficult, while the coast of Texas offers the bay of Galveston, which possesses a circumference of fourteen leagues, and is capable of containing the navies of the entire world!*" // "*A pretty notion truly,*" replied the papers in the interest of Florida, "*that of Galveston bay below the 29th parallel! Have we not got the bay of Espiritu Santo, opening precisely upon the 28th degree, and by which ships can reach Tampa Town by direct route?*" (Vol. 1, Ch. XI).

As you can see this situation as both the characteristics of a competition, since each party is trying to present the best argument, and of a conflict since each side counters the allegations of the other side:

The Texans present the bay of Galveston remarking that it "*possesses a circumference of fourteen leagues, and is capable of containing the navies of the entire world*". This is countered by Florida by remarking that Galveston bay is "*below the 29th parallel*".

On the other hand, Florida advances "*the bay of Espiritu Santo, opening precisely upon the 28th degree, and by which ships can reach Tampa Town by direct route*", thus trying to undermine the Texan argument that "*the communications with Florida are difficult*".

How to handle such a situation? It all depends on your tastes, the importance you assign to the situation and how fun it may turn out in play. Ultimately it's your choice.

In the situation above you can handle it as a succession of conflicts where each party presents an argument to be countered by the other party. The moment one of two parties is unable to counter the principal argument and is unable to present a convincing argument of its own that party has lost the fray.

On the other hand, you can deal with it as a competition where each party attempts to present the best argument.

In any case, we suggest that you choose the simplest way to handle the situation if it has no big impact in the whole game, and reserve the more complex and demanding options to critical moments in the events.

Of course, if a discussion cannot be won, there's always the possibility of stepping up the arguments "*A fine bay; half choked with sand!*" // "*Choked yourselves!*" returned the others" (Vol. 1, Ch. XI).

## THROUGH LESS PLEASURABLE MOMENTS HARDSHIPS OF A GENTLEMAN EXPLORER'S LIFE

*“Many had found their rest on the field of battle whose names figured in the "Book of Honor" of the Gun Club; and of those who made good their return the greater proportion bore the marks of their indisputable valor ... and it was calculated by the great statistician Pitcairn that throughout the Gun Club there was not quite one arm between four persons and two legs between six.” (Vol. 1, Ch. I)*

There are many situations when the character may be physically subject to hardships with enduring consequences. Physical hardships are the result of an action or an unintended event. The character may be wounded by a falling tree branch the tempest hits the forests of Borneo. He can get sick due to the disastrous mishandling of an infected bistoury at the Royal Hospitals lab. He may be poisoned by the dart thrown by a Tupi tribesman.

Since physical hardships are the result of an action or an unintended event, the rules for action resolution apply here as well. The players should roleplay the situation in normal terms in order to reach a result that may be harmful to the character. When it happens they must record that result in their Character Record.

What follows are just some examples of physical hardships, their impact on the character's action and how they can recover from it. They are presented as the outcome of some unintended event. If they are produced by human action consider the equivalences presented in page 14.

### SHOCK

Shock is the result of some mechanical impact that affects the character's senses and conscience. As a result of shock the character may pass away or be put out of action, at least for some moments.

We suggest that at this stage you recall the situation presented above in p. 14.

The **alternatives** can usually be framed within these terms:

- *Critical*. The character loses his senses and will not recover without proper medical assistance.
- *Major*. The character loses his senses as a result of the shock. He will not recover on his own in the course of the ongoing situation. He may recover faster if assisted by a third party.
- *Minor*. The character loses his senses. He recovers after some time and may resume action within the course of the ongoing situation.
- *Unimportant*. The character is shaken momentarily and does nothing for the time that the cause of the shock produces its result.
- *Null*. The character endures the shock as if nothing happened.

The **odds** that the character will be shocked are based on the magnitude of the shocking event, his physical state, any measures that may lessen the impact of the shock, etc. The **final result** is assessed in standard terms.

### Consequences of shock

Usually shock puts the character out of action for a variable period of time depending on how strong the shock was.

### Recovering from shock

How does a character **recover from shock**? In some situations the recovery will come naturally. On the other hand, if the shock is extreme the character may not be able to recover unless specialized care is provided by someone else.

Recovery can be handled automatically or as an action according to the rules presented before. Usually the character will recover unaided but this may not happen in time to allow him to resume his course of action. The GM just states at what pace and how the recovery takes place.

*We have seen that "Some minutes after the departure of the projectile, one of the bodies moved, shook its arms, lifted its head, and finally succeeded in getting on its knees. It was Michel Ardan. He felt himself all over, gave a sonorous 'Hem!' and then said: // 'Michel Ardan is whole. How about the others?' // The courageous Frenchman tried to rise, but could not stand. His head swam, from the rush of blood; he was blind; he was a drunken man. ... Ardan felt the tide of life return by degrees. His blood became calm, and returned to its accustomed circulation. Another effort restored his equilibrium. He succeeded in rising, drew a match from his pocket, and approaching the burner lighted it" (Vol. 2, Ch. II).*

On the other hand, there may be an action by another gentleman directed at recovering the gentleman from the shock. In this case the attempt should be handled a counteraction, including the framing of the **alternative results** that may come out of it:

- *Superb.* The subject completely recovers from the shock as if nothing happened.
- *Spot-on.* The subject partially recovers from the shock. Reduce the degree of the shock by two levels.
- *Modest.* The subject partially recovers from the shock. Reduce the degree of the shock by one level.
- *Failure.* The subject keeps in the same situation as before.
- *Disaster.* The subject goes into a deeper shock than before.

After recovering Ardan looked after his companions only to find them under the influence of a *major* shock. Deciding to hasten their recovery he "*lifted the captain, propped him up against the divan, and began to rub vigorously*" (Vol. 2, Ch. II). The attempt may lead into different results:

- *Superb:* Michael Ardan "*lifted the captain, propped him up against the divan, and began to rub vigorously. This means, used with judgment, restored Nicholl, who opened his eyes, and instantly*" recovered "*his presence of mind*".
- *Spot-on:* Michael Ardan "*lifted the captain, propped him up against the divan, and began to rub vigorously. This means, used with judgment, restored Nicholl, who opened his eyes*" and completely recovered "*his presence of mind*" after some moments of rest: "*His head swam, from the rush of blood; he was blind; he was a drunken man.*" Nicholl "*felt the tide of life return by degrees. His blood became calm, and returned to its accustomed circulation. Another effort restored his equilibrium. He succeeded in rising*".
- *Modest:* Michael Ardan "*lifted the captain, propped him up against the divan, and began to rub vigorously. This means, used with judgment,*" improved Nicholl's condition into a *minor* shock.
- *Failure:* Michael Ardan "*lifted the captain, propped him up against the divan, and began to rub vigorously. This means*" were not able to change Nicholl's condition.
- *Disaster:* Michael Ardan "*lifted the captain, propped him up against the divan, and began to rub vigorously. This means*" used with too much energy dragged Nicholl into an even deeper shock and he finds himself in a *critical* condition.

The **odds** are determined normally.

What are the odds that Michael Ardan will be successful in restoring the captain's condition? Well, he obviously knows what he is doing. We can give him 1e. Michael Ardan rolls and gets 7 – 10, a *superb* result! He "*lifted the captain, propped him up against the divan, and began to rub vigorously. This means, used with judgment, restored Nicholl, who opened his eyes, and instantly recovering his presence of mind, seized Ardan's hand and looked around him. // "And Barbicane?" said he*" (Vol. 2, Ch. II).

## INTOXICATION AND POISONING

Intoxication and poisoning are treated as an event where a character is subjected to a poison or an intoxicating substance like alcohol or drugs. Notice that the character may be subject to the poison or intoxicating substance as the result of the action of a character, but the effect of the substance is handled separately as an event.

The **alternative results** for the intoxication can usually be framed within these terms:

- *Critical*: The character is completely intoxicated.
- *Major*: The character is heavily intoxicated.
- *Minor*: The character is mildly intoxicated.
- *Unimportant*: The character feels the sensations generated by the intoxicating substance but it does not affect his action.
- *Null*: The character is not intoxicated.

If the substance is taken in a single dose, deal with the situation as if it was a simple event. If the character keeps receiving more and more of the substance for a long period of time, you may handle the situation as a series of chained events. In any case, the main factors to account for are the quantity of the substance the character is subject to, its potency and for how long the character is absorbing more of it.

*“But whence this excitement, which was evidently growing upon the tenants of the projectile? Their sobriety could not be doubted.”* (Vol. 2, Ch. VII).

The crews of the Columbiad are subject to a mysterious intoxication to the point that they themselves don't notice its effects. Since it grown slowly we have reason to think that the intoxicating substance had been absorbed slowly but at a continuous pace. The best way to handle it is as a series of chained events.

Let's look at the possible impact of the intoxication in terms of **alternative results**:

- *Critical*: The crew falls *“motionless to the bottom of the projectile”*.
- *Major*: The crew is highly *“excited”* and acts very unreasonably.
- *Minor*: The crew is *“excited”*. He behaves in a strange way.
- *Unimportant*: The crew feels the sensations generated by the intoxicating substance but it does not affect his action.
- *Null*: The crew is not intoxicated.

**Odds and final result** determination follows the usual process.

What about the **odds** that the mysterious substance will intoxicate the characters? It seems not to be too potent or to be absorbed at a very slow pace. This means that at the start of the process the substance's chance of intoxicating the characters is 1h. On the other hand, the ability to resist the intoxication may be dependent on personal factors, yet none of these apply to the three companions.

With odds of 1H the chain of events that is putting the crews of the Columbiad under the influence of a mysterious intoxicating substance leaves them mildly intoxicated: *“Their faces were as rosy as if they had been exposed to the roaring flames of an oven; their voices resounded in loud accents; their words escaped like a champagne cork driven out by carbonic acid; their gestures became annoying, they wanted so much room to perform them”* (Vol. 2, Ch. VII).

If a substance is absorbed slowly you should increase its intoxicating or poisoning impact step by step by modifying it by +1e or +2e (depending on its power) each successive round.

As we have just seen the crews of the Columbiad are being intoxicated yet, *“strange to say, they none of them noticed this great tension of the mind.”* (Vol. 2, Ch. VII). The substance operates at a slow pace so its potency increases at a rate of 1e by each round. As the process continues the crews higher and higher levels of the substance with the corresponding impact in the character's actions.

A couple of rounds latter the potency of the intoxication went up to 1E. At that stage there's a visible change in the behaviour of the three companions:

*“And if there are no Selenites?”* retorted Nicholl, who, under the influence of this unaccountable intoxication, was very contradictory.

*"Who said that there were no Selenites?" exclaimed Michel in a threatening tone.*

*"I do," howled Nicholl.*

*"Captain," said Michel, "do not repeat that insolence, or I will knock your teeth down your throat!"*

*The two adversaries were going to fall upon each other, and the incoherent discussion threatened to merge into a fight, when Barbicane intervened with one bound.*

*"Stop, miserable men," said he, separating his two companions; "if there are no Selenites, we will do without them." (Vol. 2, Ch. VII).*

Later still at 3E the inebriation due to the intoxication leads them to even stranger behaviour:

*"Then they struck up a frantic dance, with maniacal gestures, idiotic stampings, and somersaults like those of the boneless clowns in the circus. Diana, joining in the dance, and howling in her turn, jumped to the top of the projectile. An unaccountable flapping of wings was then heard amid most fantastic cock-crows, while five or six hens fluttered like bats against the walls" (Vol. 2, Ch. VII).*

Eventually the intoxication reaches the point where the characters are completely intoxicated, at 5E:

*"Then the three traveling companions, acted upon by some unaccountable influence above that of intoxication, inflamed by the air which had set their respiratory apparatus on fire, fell motionless to the bottom of the projectile" (Vol. 2, Ch. VII).*

### **Consequences of intoxication and poisoning**

Minor levels of intoxication or poisoning affect the behaviour of the character according to the nature of the substance absorbed. In extreme cases it will put the character out of action or even lead him to death. If the characters don't realize the intoxication or poisoning process and don't put an end to it they may be doomed.

### **Recovering from intoxication and poisoning**

When the intoxication process is interrupted it can be reverted by allowing the body to purge out the intoxicating or poisoning substance. The first step is to stop absorbing more of the substance.

*"What had happened? Whence the cause of this singular intoxication, the consequences of which might have been very disastrous? A simple blunder of Michel's, which, fortunately, Nicholl was able to correct in time ... Nicholl hastened to stop the escape of oxygen with which the atmosphere was saturated, which would have been the death of the travelers, not by suffocation, but by combustion" (Vol. 2, Ch. VIII).*

After that it may be sufficient to allow the body to purge itself of the intoxicating or poisoning substance.

*"An hour later, the air less charged with it restored the lungs to their normal condition. By degrees the three friends recovered from their intoxication; but they were obliged to sleep themselves sober over their oxygen as a drunkard does over his wine" (Vol. 2, Ch. VIII).*

Of course, the process may be accelerated by adequate action on the part of the characters, usually by being given an anti-poison or other adequate medicine. As always we have to look at the **alternatives**:

- *Superb.* The subject immediately recovers from poison or intoxication as if nothing happened.
- *Spot-on.* Major recovery. Reduce the degree of the intoxication or poisoning by two levels.
- *Modest.* Minor recovery. Reduce the degree of the intoxication or poisoning by one level.
- *Failure.* The subject keeps in the same situation as before.
- *Disaster.* The subject goes into a deeper state of poisoning or intoxication than before.

## **INJURY**

The adventurous life of the *gentleman explorer* will take him into situations where he can get hurt or wounded. These may result from natural causes like when he is chased by a wild fire in the prairies of the West, from his inability to handle a difficult situation as when he falls down a crevice while attempting to scale the Mont Blanc, or to the vicious attack of a fiend, be it a hungry lion in Africa or some thugs in the back streets of the Amsterdam port.

The **alternative results** for injury may be specified in terms similar to these:

- *Critical*: The character is lethally injured. Either he dies on the spot or he will die if not subject to urgent medical attention.
- *Major*: The character suffers a major, disabling wound.
- *Minor*: The character suffers a sizable but non-disabling wound. He may be handicapped in his action, though.
- *Unimportant*: The character suffers a bruise, small cut or other minor injury with no impact on his action.
- *Null*: The character suffers no injury.

Let's go back to the first moments after the departure of the projectile. "*As to Satellite, he seemed quite lost. They had to hunt a long time before finding him in one of the upper compartments of the projectile, whither some unaccountable shock must have violently hurled him*" (Vol. 1, Ch. III).

Satellite has been injured at the moment of the departure. What are the **alternatives**?

- *Critical*: The crew/dog is lethally injured like if "*its skull had been broken against the roof*".
- *Major*: The crew/dog suffers a disabling wound.
- *Minor*: The crew /dog suffers a handicapping wound.
- *Unimportant*: The crew /dog suffers a minor wound.
- *Null*: The crew/dog is not injured.

The **odds** and the **final result** are determined in standard terms.

What about the **odds**? Unlike Barbicane and company the dogs have no clue about their fate so they cannot consider preventive measures like lying on the floor. We may suppose that when the Columbiad departed Satellite was standing (personal factor, 1e). Furthermore a protruding metal box lies very close to Satellite (external factor, 1e). We must also consider the impact of departure. We have seen that it is extreme in the case of shock but we may consider that it is less in the case of injury (external factor, 1e). This means that for Satellite the odds of regrettable accident are 3E.

All we need now is to define the **final result**. Satellite rolls 1 – 4 – 9 – 10. No, his skull didn't hit the roof as Michael Ardan believed, it hit the corner of the metallic box. "*The poor beast, much hurt, was in a piteous state. // "The devil!" said Michel. // They brought the unfortunate dog down with great care. Its skull had been broken against the roof, and it seemed unlikely that he could recover from such a shock. Meanwhile, he was stretched comfortably on a cushion. Once there, he heaved a sigh*" (Vol. 2, Ch. III).

### **Consequences of injuries**

While a critical injury may just kill the character an unimportant wound may do nothing else than a small cut or bruise.

After the departure of the projectile Barbicane "*seemed to have suffered more than either of his companions; he was bleeding, but Nicholl was reassured by finding that the hemorrhage came from a slight wound on the shoulder, a mere graze*" (Vol. 2, Ch. II). This *unimportant* wound will not affect the President's ability to act after recovering from shock.

Most major injuries will disable the character and he will be unable to act while minor injuries may handicap his action afterwards.

Depending on the situation the disability or handicap may be general or local. In the first case the disability or handicap applies to all action while if it is local it may affect only some specific activities. Examples of local disabilities or handicaps are those that are the result of wounds that only affect a particular limb, say, the right arm. Only actions that require the usage of the right arm will be subject to the effect of the wound.

Sometimes injury leaves lasting consequences. For instance, a character may lose a limb due to injury and suffer a permanent disability as a consequence. Even if he does not lose a limb he may have its functionality affected and be permanently handicapped.

It's important to notice that if a character suffers a wound and the tool used to harm him is contaminated by poison or a disease agent, the character may be contaminated and suffer the effects of that poison or disease, even in the case of an unimportant wound like a small cut.

### **Recovering from injury**

Unimportant injury can be recovered without any action. Most of the time all that is needed is to protect the wound or bruise from further aggression and just allow the body to restore itself. On the other hand, more important injury may require urgent measures to be stabilized and proper medical care for complete recovery.

If the character is just trying to stabilize the injury with urgent measures the **alternatives** are:

- *Superb.* The wounded stabilizes and the injury is reduced by one level of magnitude.
- *Spot-on.* The injury is stabilized. If there's bleeding it stops bleeding, a broken bone is straightened and correctly wrapped, etc. The wounded can be moved.
- *Modest.* The wound is cleaned and is stable for as long as the wounded is not moved. If he moves the wound may re-open and get worse.
- *Failure.* The attempt to stabilize the injury fails.
- *Disaster.* The attempt at stabilizing the injury fails and even worsens it by a level of magnitude.

Note that stabilization only ensures that things don't get worse. It does not lead to recovery in the long run.

Barbicane "was bleeding ... from a slight wound on the shoulder, a mere graze". This unimportant injury was "bound up carefully" (Vol. 2, Ch. II) by Nicholl. It stabilizes the injury so that it stops bleeding. Complete cure will only come after some time and if Barbicane is not careful he may reopen the wound.

On the other hand, the **alternatives** for recovering from injury by proper medical care are:

- *Superb.* The injury is properly treated. The character completely recovers.
- *Spot-on.* The injury is properly treated. The magnitude of the injury is reduced by two levels immediately and will recover completely after some time.
- *Modest.* The treatment is partially successful. The magnitude of the injury is reduced by one level. Additional treatment may be needed to improve to completely cure the wound.
- *Failure.* The attempt to treat the injury fails.
- *Disaster.* The attempt to treat the injury fails and even makes it worse by a level of magnitude.

Treatment may require time depending on the nature of the injury.

In the case where the character suffers a permanent disability or handicap due to injury he may somehow be able to recover his functional abilities through proper usage of prosthesis.

"Crutches, wooden legs, artificial arms, steel hooks, caoutchouc jaws, silver craniums, platinum noses, were all to be found in the collection" (Vol. 1, Ch. I).

## **MULTIPLE HARDSHIPS**

A character may suffer simultaneously several different types of hardships.

We have seen that the different crews of the projectile suffered the effects of shock. We have also seen that two in particular, the dog Satellite and President Barbicane, suffered injuries of different magnitude.

When this happens the different hardships should be handled in separate.

Satellite was able to recover from shock but unfortunately his wound his were too serious. The stabilization measures taken by Ardan could only lessen his suffering before his demise.

On the other hand, Barbicane was more seriously shocked than hurt to the point that it took him "*a long time coming to himself, which frightened his friends, who did not spare friction*" (Vol. 2, Ch. II).

While the wound could be stabilized by just being "*bound up carefully*" the shock required a lot of effort on the part of his companions: "*He breathes though,*" said Nicholl, putting his ear to the chest of the wounded man. // "*Yes,*" replied Ardan, "*he breathes like a man who has some notion of that daily operation. Rub, Nicholl; let us rub harder.*" And the two improvised practitioners worked so hard and so well that Barbicane recovered his senses. He opened his eyes, sat up, took his two friends by the hands, and his first words were... // "*Nicholl, are we moving?*" (Vol. 2, Ch. II)

## **OTHER HARDSHIPS**

There are other situations that can be configured where the character will be subject to undesirable hardships like in the case of fatigue, sickness or starvation. These can be handled in similar terms to the ones presented above.

You can treat fatigue in similar terms to injury with the next differences:

- It will not lead to death but only to the collapse of the character.
- The recovery will be faster and may only require adequate rest.

On what concerns sickness, it can be handled in the same terms as intoxication and poisoning but take into account that:

- The alternate results must conform to the illness agent.
- Recovery may require the recourse to adequate medicine.

Starvation and thirst by themselves produce no particular results. Their importance is that they may lead to fatigue, to poisoning or to sicknesses.

## **THE STUFF A GENTLEMAN IS MADE OF** ***GENTLEMEN EXPLORERS IN PRACTICE***

*“FRANCE, PARIS,  
30 September, 4 A.M.  
Barbicane, Tampa Town, Florida, United States.  
Substitute for your spherical shell a cylindro-conical projectile.  
I shall go inside. Shall arrive by steamer Atlanta.  
MICHEL ARDAN” (Vol. 1, Ch. XVII)*

In the previous two sections we covered character creation and action resolution. By now you are able to play a game of *Gentlemen Explorers* yet it may happen that you may want some more details on how to play your character. We will look at this in the present section.

### **WORKING THE ODDS**

The hardest part when handling the odds is to decide on which and how the different factors apply. Here are some guidelines to help you in this task. Let's start with personal factors:

- Consider that most characters are mature persons at the top of their capabilities. By default their performance is average in anything that does not require specialized knowledge or ability, that is common knowledge and that is not mentioned in their character record.
- If something is mentioned in the character record, the character should get a 1e personal factor for it.
- If something is mentioned in the character record as a field of expertise or if the character is ranked as the top performer in that field among the PCs, he should get a 2e personal factor.
- If something is not mentioned in the character record and requires specialized knowledge, the character should either be unable to do it (like reading a document in a language the character never learned) or suffer a 2h personal factor (attempting to verbally communicate basic ideas through gestures and facial expressions with someone that only speaks an alien language).
- If something included in the character record can be presented as working against the goals of the character he should suffer a 1h or 2h personal factor.
- Consider the current status of the character in terms of health, fatigue, etc. Apply a handicap of 1 or 2 if he is in poor shape. In some exceptional cases he may get a 1e like when he prepares himself for a particular situation.

What about external factors? Here are some suggestions:

- Consider how easy / hard, simple / complex is the task. Accordingly apply a modifier that can go from 2h to 2e.
- Consider environmental factors like ambient light, weather, stability of the place, etc.
- Consider if he has the required equipment or if he can do without it.

### **APPLIED ACTION RESOLUTION**

What follows is a series of examples of action resolution where we see how to define the goal, the alternatives and the odds for particular situations.

### **If the gentleman is a man of knowledge and reason**

Often gentlemen have a high degree of education and revel in dealing with the highest issues of philosophy and scientific matters. Most of the time their interest is oriented towards the practical applications of such momentous issues, though. In any case, intellectual challenges tend to be complex and to rely on a lot of data or long series of inferences.

Usually the **goal** the character envisions when handling intellectual challenges is simply to find the answer to a problem and to define the reasoning that will lead to it.

There are basically two types of problems a character may face, recurring problems that have to do with the application of a well known and established principle to a particular situation, or solving so-far unanswered questions.

“ *And now,*” said Nicholl, *”to find out the speed of the projectile when it leaves the atmosphere, we have only to calculate that.”*” (Vol. 2, Ch. IV).

In other words, what we have here is the application of a standard method of calculus to a concrete situation.

The **alternatives** are often defined in the next terms:

- *Superb*. The character finds the right answer and gets an insight that leads in directions not anticipated at the start.
- *Spot-on*. The character finds the right answer to the problem.
- *Modest*. The character progressed in the way to find the right answer but is still to solve the problem.
- *Failure*. The character didn’t advance in the way to the solution to the problem.
- *Disaster*. The character comes out with a wrong answer.

In the case above we may consider the next alternatives:

- *Superb*: The captain correctly calculates “*the speed of the projectile when it leaves the atmosphere*” after a moment’s thought and without needing to put on paper his calculations.
- *Spot-on*: The captain correctly calculates “*the speed of the projectile when it leaves the atmosphere*”.
- *Modest*: The captain advances in the calculus of “*the speed of the projectile when it leaves the atmosphere*”.
- *Failure*: The captain fails to calculate “*the speed of the projectile when it leaves the atmosphere*”.
- *Disaster*: The captain wrongly calculates “*the speed of the projectile when it leaves the atmosphere*”.

The **odds** usually have to do with the personal traits of the character, with the complexity or novelty of the problem, with the availability of reference sources, with the time available to solve the problem, etc.

“*The captain, as a practical man equal to all difficulties, began to write with frightful rapidity. Divisions and multiplications grew under his fingers; the figures were like hail on the white page. Barbicane watched him, while Michel Ardan nursed a growing headache with both hands*” (Vol. 2, Ch. IV).

As we can see, Nicholl was the one that took upon him the task of calculating the velocity of the projective because he is particularly endowed for this type of reasoning: he has the required knowledge (1e) and personality (1e). He also has plenty of time and no distractions that might make it harder to make the calculus.

On the other hand, Michael Ardan would not even attempt to pick up the calculus both because he is not good at this type of tasks (1h) and has only a passing knowledge of the mathematics involved (1h).

The **final result** is determined in standard terms.

“ *”Very well?” asked Barbicane, after some minutes’ silence. // “Well!” replied Nicholl; every calculation made, v zero, that is to say, the speed necessary for the projectile on leaving the atmosphere, to enable it to reach the equal point of attraction, ought to be----” // “Yes?” said Barbicane. // “Twelve thousand yards.” // “What!” exclaimed Barbicane, starting; “you say----” // “Twelve thousand yards.” // “The devil!” cried the president, making a gesture of despair. // “What is the matter?” asked Michel Ardan, much surprised. // “What is the matter! why, if at this moment our speed had already diminished one-third by friction, the*

*initiatory speed ought to have been----" // "Seventeen thousand yards." // "And the Cambridge Observatory declared that twelve thousand yards was enough at starting; and our projectile, which only started with that speed----" // "Well?" asked Nicholl. // "Well, it will not be enough." // "Good." // "We shall not be able to reach the neutral point." // "The deuce!" // "We shall not even get halfway." // "In the name of the projectile!" exclaimed Michel Ardan, jumping as if it was already on the point of striking the terrestrial globe. // "And we shall fall back upon the earth!" " (Vol. 2, Ch. IV)*

For other situations where characters need to handle knowledge or to think their way out consider the examples presented in pages 8 and 9-11.

### **If the gentleman has to deal with the material needs of existence**

Whenever the character has to look after his material needs he will have to be able to get the good or goods he is looking for or the cash that will allow him to buy it.

In these situations, the **goal** usually concerns how the gentleman gets the goods he needs.

*"The astronomical, mechanical, and topographical difficulties resolved, finally came the question of finance. The sum required was far too great for any individual, or even any single State, to provide the requisite millions." (Vol. 1, Ch. XII)*

As you can see, the President of the Gun Club needs to get the financial means that will allow him to pay for the experiment. For that purpose he opens a subscription asking people for donations in cash.

The **alternatives** can usually be framed within these terms:

- *Superb.* The character gets more than what he wants.
- *Spot-on.* The character gets exactly what he wants.
- *Modest.* The character gets part of what he wants.
- *Failure.* The character gets nothing.
- *Disaster.* The character gets nothing and even loses something in process.

We are not told how much the experiment would cost (the Gun Club considered this sensible piece of data too sensible to be disclosed to the public). Yet, we can work out the next alternatives:

- *Superb:* The Gun Club gets "*the sum required*" and an extra amount that would be able to cover any unexpected costs.
- *Spot-on:* The Gun Club gets "*the sum required*".
- *Modest:* The Gun Club most of the "*the sum required*". The Gun Club considers it can go forward with minor adjustments in the project that reduce the financing required and with bank credit to cover whatever sum it was not able to get with the subscription.
- *Failure:* The Gun Club gets only a small fraction of "*the sum required*". It needs to open a second subscription to try to get the money.
- *Disaster:* The Gun Club gets a pittance as compared to "*the sum required*". It has to return that small sum to the donors and shelve the project. It becomes the laugh of people worldwide.

Notice that a *failure* may jeopardize the experiment irrevocably if it means the Gun Club will have to spend extra time collecting funds, time that it needs to put the Columbiad in place.

Let's now look at the **odds**. These are usually based on the availability of the goods the character is searching for, how much he needs them, the time available to look for it, how good the character is at negotiating for it.

The experiment is going to be extremely expensive which implies a heavy penalty to the action, 2h.

*"President Barbicane undertook, despite of the matter being a purely American affair, to render it one of universal interest, and to request the financial co-operation of all peoples. It was, he maintained, the right and duty of the whole earth to interfere in the affairs of its satellite. The subscription opened at Baltimore extended properly to the whole world – Urbi et orbi" (Vol. 1, Ch. XII). By tapping into the resources of the whole world the President increases markedly his odds of success, 2e. The experiment had been widely publicized internationally and had become a popular subject, 1e. The idea of sending a bullet to the moon is very appealing and people worldwide wanted to see the experiment happen, 1e.*

The final odds are 2E.

As always the **final result** is assessed in standard terms.

Given the risks involved in the operation the players decide they should do a *gentleman's roll*. The dice came out with 4 – 7 – 10, a *superb* result!

*"This subscription was successful beyond all expectation; notwithstanding that it was a question not of lending but of giving the money. It was a purely disinterested operation in the strictest sense of the term, and offered not the slightest chance of profit.*

*... the Gun Club ... found itself in possession of a considerable capital, of which the following is a statement:*

<i>United States subscriptions</i>	<i>\$4,000,000</i>	
<i>Foreign subscriptions</i>	<i><u>\$1,446,675</u></i>	
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$5,446,675"</i>	<i>(Vol. 1, Ch. XII)</i>

### **Handling other situations**

There are endless possible situations where your character will have to take the issues into his hands. Here let's only focus on some generic guidelines on how to handle them.

Consider what the focus of the action is: The performance itself or to bring about a particular state relating to the character, another person, an object or any other entity.

If the focus the performance itself, like when the gentleman is enjoying dancing with a fair lady at the Kings ball, the framing of the goal and alternatives should reflect just that.

If the focus is to bring a change in a personal state, it may represent a *hardship* to the character or to another person. Say, the despicable owner of the Inn where your character is going to spend the night attempts to drug him to rob his purse. In this case the goal is connected with the hardship to be inflicted on the subject of the action. Here are some possibilities:

**The gentleman is involved in physical action.** He may need to jump over a chasm in the snows of the Alps, ride a Saharan camel, swim across the waters of the Mississippi. Usually this is a simple performance where there is no hardship as a result of the action but there are situations where there's a clear change into the subject of the action like when the gentleman needs to axe his way through the wooden doors of a dungeon.

The situational and personal factors have to do with the skills of the gentleman to perform the feat, the equipment used or required and environmental factors like weather.

Don't forget that such feats may place a heavy toll on the character in terms of fatigue and exhaustion.

**The gentleman has to fight his way out of trouble.** In this case either the action aims at shocking or injuring the adversary and the description of the goal and alternatives can follow the guidelines presented before.

The situational and personal factors have to do with the weapons used, the fighting abilities of the characters, the place where the fight takes place, etc.

A fight can be handled as a single action or as a series of chained actions where injury or chock may accumulate as the outcome of the different rounds of combat.

**The gentleman has to handle instruments, machinery or complex equipment.** He has to drive a steamer, do laboratorial research, repair his Swiss-made clock.

In situations like this knowledge as much as dexterity may be called into action. Proper equipment may be a requirement and a calm environment may be welcome.

Other examples may be taken directly from the many novels authored by Jules Verne. These will be presented in future game books based on those novels.

## APPENDIX

### CHARACTER RECORD FORM

### SAMPLE CHARACTERS

In the following pages you can find a blank Character Record form and three sample characters: Impey Barbicane, Michael Ardan and Captain Nicholl.

The Character Record has space for the next data:

- **Name.** The name of the character.
- **Description and history.** How you describe the character and narrate his past life.
- **Portrait.** The painting, drawing or daguerreotype of your character.
- **Notes.** As you play you may record here notes on things that change often like the hardships your character goes through.
- **Possessions.** Record here the possessions of your character so that you can refer to it or delete when they are spent, lost or given away without messing with the description and history of the character.
- **Player's name.** Your name, so that if you loose the Character Record it can be returned to you by your fellow players.
- **Date created.** The date when you created the character.
- **Back.** In the back of the Character Record sheet you can describe and narrate the events that happen to the character as you play it.

The sample characters have been taken from Verne's books. They can be used directly or used as inspiration for the creation of other characters.

Feel free to copy the Character Record form or the sample characters if you want to play these.

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY</b>	<i>PORTRAIT</i>
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<b>NOTES</b>
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<b>POSSESSIONS</b>
--------------------

<b>Player's Name</b> _____	<b>Date created</b> ___ / ___ / ___
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## IMPEY BARBICANE, PRESIDENT OF THE GUN CLUB

### DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY

*"Impey Barbicane was a man of forty years of age, calm, cold, austere; of a singularly serious and self-contained demeanor, punctual as a chronometer, of imperturbable temper and immovable character; by no means chivalrous, yet adventurous withal, and always bringing practical ideas to bear upon the very arshest enterprises; an essentially New Englander, a Northern colonist, a descendant of the old anti-Stuart Roundheads, and the implacable enemy of the gentlemen of the South, those ancient cavaliers of the mother country. In a word, he was a Yankee to the backbone.*

*Barbicane had made a large fortune as a timber merchant. Being nominated director of artillery during the war, he proved himself fertile in invention. Bold in his conceptions, he contributed powerfully to the progress of that arm and gave an immense impetus to experimental researches.*

*He was personage of the middle height, having, by a rare exception in the Gun Club, all his limbs complete. His strongly marked features seemed drawn by square and rule; and if it be true that, in order to judge a man's character one must look at his profile, Barbicane, so examined, exhibited the most certain indications of energy, audacity, and sang-froid."* (Vol. 1, Ch. II)

*"God preserve us!" said the religious Barbicane"* (Vol. 2, Ch. I)



### NOTES

### POSSESSIONS

Player's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date created \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

## MICHAEL ARDAN, A FRENCHMAN AMONG AMERICANS

### DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY

*He was a man of about forty-two years of age, of large build, but slightly round-shouldered. His massive head momentarily shook a shock of reddish hair, which resembled a lion's mane. His face was short with a broad forehead, and furnished with a moustache as bristly as a cat's, and little patches of yellowish whiskers upon full cheeks. Round, wildish eyes, slightly near-sighted, completed a physiognomy essentially feline. His nose was firmly shaped, his mouth particularly sweet in expression, high forehead, intelligent and furrowed with wrinkles like a newly-plowed field. The body was powerfully developed and firmly fixed upon long legs. Muscular arms, and a general air of decision gave him the appearance of a hardy, jolly, companion. He was dressed in a suit of ample dimensions, loose neckerchief, open shirt collar, disclosing a robust neck; his cuffs were invariably unbuttoned, through which appeared a pair of red hands. On the bridge of the steamer, in the midst of the crowd, he bustled to and fro, never still for a moment, "dragging his anchors," as the sailors say, gesticulating, making free with everybody, biting his nails with nervous avidity. He was one of those originals which nature sometimes invents in the freak of a moment, and of which she then breaks the mould.*

*... this curiosity gave himself out for a sublime ignoramus, "like Shakespeare," and professed supreme contempt for all scientific men. ... He was, in fact, a thorough Bohemian, adventurous, but not an adventurer; a hare-brained fellow, a kind of Icarus, only possessing relays of wings. For the rest, he was ever in scrapes, ending invariably by falling on his feet, like those little figures which they sell for children's toys. In a few words, his motto was "I have my opinions," and the love of the impossible constituted his ruling passion.*

*Such was the passenger of the Atlanta, always excitable, as if boiling under the action of some internal fire by the character of his physical organization" (Vol. 1, Ch. XVIII)*



### NOTES

### POSSESSIONS

Player's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date created \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

## CAPTAIN NICHOLL, MASTER OF ARMOUR

### DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY

*"... a man of science ... of a fiery, daring, and violent disposition; a pure Yankee ... he lived at Philadelphia ... Nicholl was a great forger of plates ... Nicholl had completed a new armor-plate of wrought steel. It was a masterpiece of its kind, and bid defiance to all the projectiles of the world. The captain had it conveyed to the Polygon at Washington ..."* (Vol. 1, Ch. ?)



### NOTES

### POSSESSIONS

Player's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date created \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_