

The Economist

DECEMBER 23RD 2017–JANUARY 5TH 2018

Sexual harassment: a turning point?

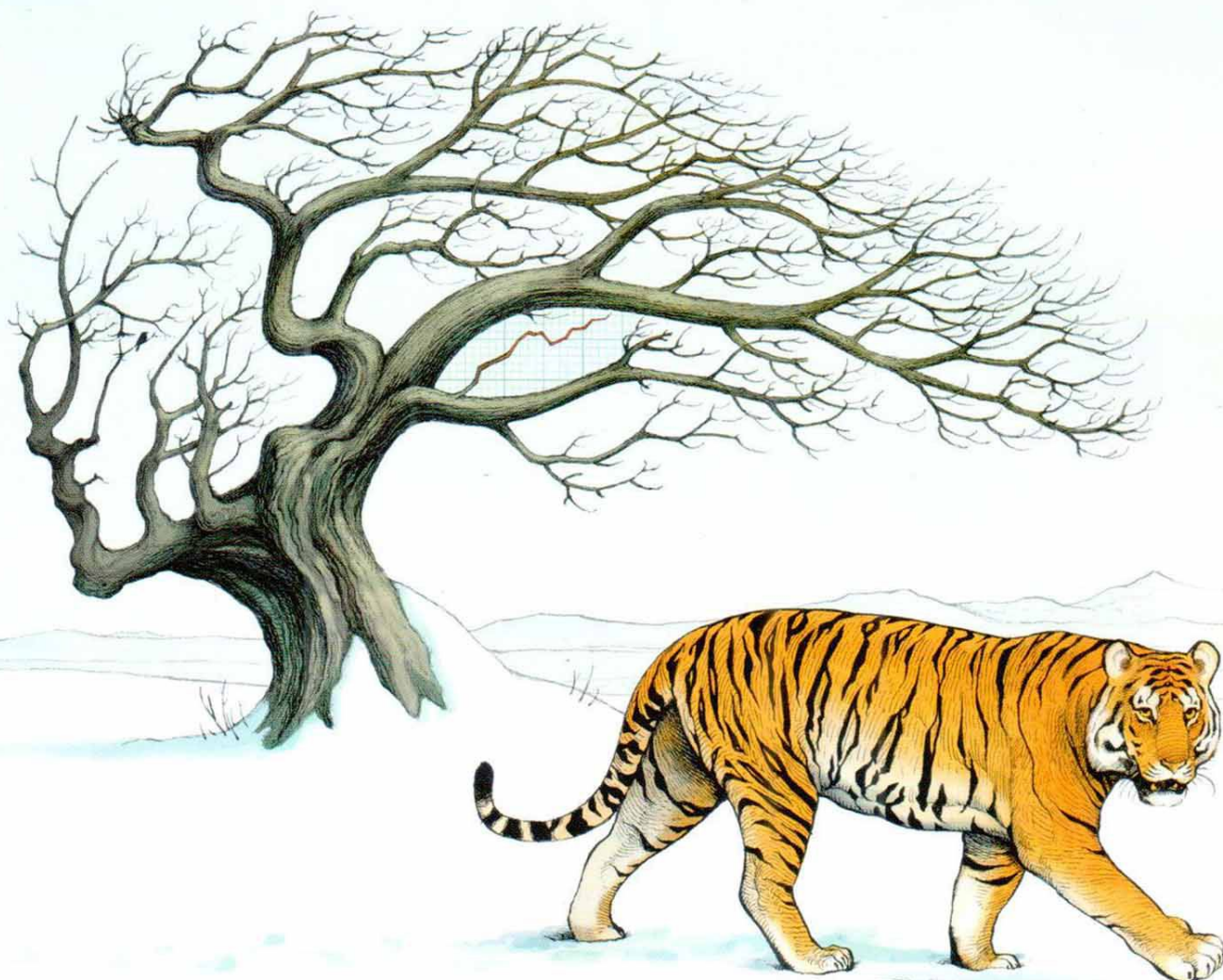
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Our country of the year

Christmas double issue

A tiger's tale * Nationalism: an essay * What's in an oil barrel? * Songs bands play live
The West Wind * Punk science * The opium wars * Fermenting food * Polygamy
Icelandic * Bike sharing * RER B * Women in economics * Our quiz
and much more



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China.....	RMB 95	Japan.....	¥1,444+Tax	Nepal.....	NR850	Singapore.....	S\$16 (Inc. GST)	Vietnam.....	US\$10.00

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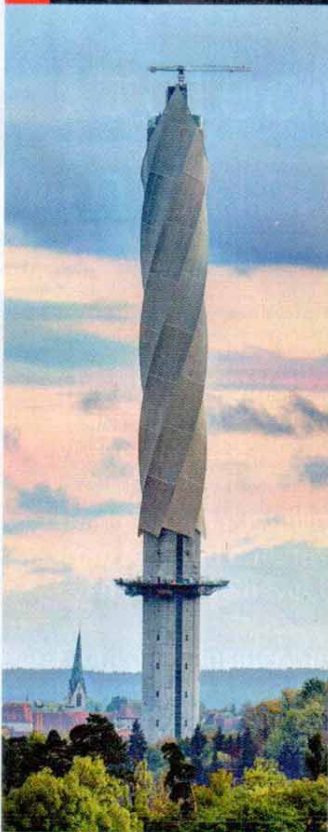
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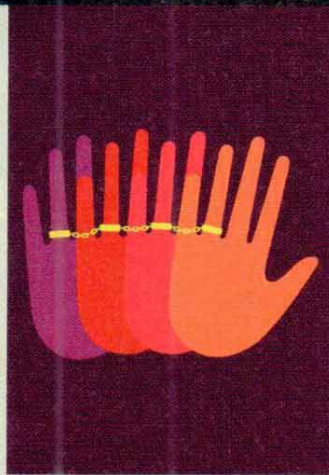
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to take part in "a severe contest between
intelligence, which presses forward, and
an unworthy, timid ignorance obstructing
our progress."

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The tone of **Donald Trump's** first year as president was set at his swearing-in ceremony, where he delivered a blistering attack on the political establishment for inflicting "American carnage". A row ensued with the media about the size of the inauguration crowd (it was small). His relationship with the press went downhill from there. Millions protested against the start of the Trump era at "women's marches".

Mr Trump introduced a variety of controversial policies, aiming **travel bans** at citizens from several Muslim countries, pulling America out of a trans-Pacific **trade deal**, renegotiating **NAFTA**, setting in motion America's exit from the **Paris accord** on climate change and recognising **Jerusalem** as Israel's capital.

Allegations were made that some in Mr Trump's inner circle had made illicit contact with **Russian** officials. Michael Flynn's resignation as national-security adviser fed the rumour mill, as did Mr Trump's sacking of James Comey as director of the **FBI**. Speculation mounted that Mr Trump might do the same to Robert Mueller, the special counsel looking into the affair.

All the haters and fools

Amid accusations of nurturing "fake news", tech firms found they had a lot of explaining to do. Facebook, Google and Twitter were hauled in front of Congress after it emerged that a trove of controversial American **political ads** on their sites had been paid for by Russian provocateurs. Mr Trump said he believed Vladimir Putin's denial of meddling: "You can only ask so many times."

Xi Jinping tightened his grip on power at the Communist Party's national congress in **China**. His "thoughts on socialism" were written into the party's constitution. The last Chinese leader to have his ideology thus enshrined while still alive was Mao Zedong.

Turkey's strongman, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, consolidated his political dominance in a referendum that boosted the power of his presidency. A diplomatic row followed when Angela Merkel's government shut down rallies held in Germany by Turkish ministers. The referendum result was met by widespread protests in Turkey amid claims of fraud.

I try so hard to be his friend

North Korea goaded America with missile tests, declaring itself a "complete" nuclear state with nukes that could hit anywhere in the United States. America hinted at military action if the North kept improving its nuclear arsenal. Both countries' leaders insulted each other, with Kim Jong Un calling Mr Trump a "dolt" and Mr Trump describing Mr Kim as a "sick puppy".



Robert Mugabe's 37 years of misrule in **Zimbabwe** came to a sudden end. He was ousted by the army after sacking the vice-president, Emmerson Mnangagwa, who then returned from exile to succeed him. Mr Mnangagwa was complicit in the mass killing of the Ndebele people in the 1980s. He now promises to be a good democrat, but has stuffed his cabinet with some of Mr Mugabe's worst henchmen.

Kenya's supreme court tore up the results of a presidential election in August because of

"irregularities". The subsequent poll in October, which the main opposition candidate boycotted, delivered the same result: victory to Uhuru Kenyatta, the incumbent.

Sexual harassment was a big issue in 2017. Hundreds of women exposed men in high places who can't keep their hands to themselves. Harvey Weinstein, a Hollywood mogul, saw the firm he co-founded crumble and sought treatment for "sex addiction". A senator, several congressmen and Britain's defence secretary all stepped down. Hopes were raised that women might be treated better in future.

Claims of sexual harassment were also levelled at **Uber**. A lawsuit alleging the theft of self-driving technology and news that it had concealed a huge hack (and paid off the hackers) were just some of its other woes. Arianna Huffington, a board member, said that there was "no room...for brilliant jerks". Travis Kalanick stepped down, eventually, as chief executive.

Britain's prime minister, Theresa May, saw that the opposition Labour Party was in disarray and called a snap election. It backfired spectacularly. After a dismal campaign, early forecasts of a 100-seat majority for her Conservative Party proved fanciful. Mrs May lost her majority. Jeremy Corbyn, Labour's hard-left leader, consolidated his position. To govern, Mrs May had to do a deal with the Democratic Unionists, a tiny Protestant party from Northern Ireland. That has complicated the **Brexit** talks.

A fire that killed 71 people in a public-housing block in London shone a light on the poverty that endures in some of the city's ritziest neighbourhoods. The **Grenfell** disaster epitomised the mood of an uneasy, fractured Britain.

Angela Merkel's Christian Democrats lost seats in **Germany's** election, which were a breakthrough for the

anti-immigrant Alternative for Germany. She struggled to form a government.

After an election in **Japan**, Shinzo Abe, the prime minister, can now pass legislation without approval from the upper house. He will seek to change Japan's pacifist constitution to acknowledge the existence of the Japanese army, which will upset China and South Korea.



The election of Emmanuel Macron as president of **France** delighted rootless cosmopolitans everywhere. Mr Macron's campaign was marked by Kennedyesque optimism and a wholehearted embrace of globalism. He thrashed the National Front's Marine Le Pen. But governing is always more tricky: Mr Macron's approval ratings tumbled in his first few months in office.

Need tax cuts

Global **stockmarkets** had a bumper year. The Dow Jones Industrial Average, S&P 500 and **NASDAQ** broke record after record. The belief that Mr Trump would roll back regulations and cut taxes explained much of the euphoria lifting stocks, as did the strength of the global economy.

Despite warnings that it is a speculative bubble primed to burst, the price of **bitcoin** soared by 1,800% over the course of the year, to over \$19,000 (at the time of writing; by the time you have finished reading this section it may have passed \$20,000).

Many **central banks** tightened monetary policy, as inflationary pressures started to emerge. The Federal Reserve ►►