

## Ye Giglampz

A bit of Cincinnati literary history to celebrate the visit of THE GROLIER CLUB OF NEW YORK to Cincinnati, Monday, April 29, 1963

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### L Hearn 1817—

Reminiscences of an Editorship under difficulties

*One day in the 1880's, Henry Farny, a Cincinnati artist, paused to browse the quarter stand of a local bookstore and discovered a forgotten memento of his life. It was a set of eight numbers of YE GIGLAMPZ which he and Lafcadio Hearn had published in the summer of 1874. The set was bound in black pebble cloth and throughout were small pencilled notations, naming the author of each article. Farny recognized Hearn's handwriting. On the front fly leaf was the sentence (reproduced above): "Reminiscences of an Editorship under difficulties," and Hearn's signature with the date 1877. Laid in was a list of the subscribers.*

*Farny bought the set and took it home. On April 13, 1944 the Cincinnati Public Library acquired YE GIGLAMPZ from Farny's son, Daniel. At this time it was thought that the set was complete in eight numbers: All the authorities said so. Then in April of 1952, bookseller Ernest Wessen's "Midland Notes" offered for sale a collection of numbers 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9. The Library was stunned—our set was not complete. A telephone call brought the missing number to Cincinnati, and the sale of the duplicate numbers paid for the transaction.*

*It was then that a curious fact was discovered. Although all of Hearn's biographers and bibliographers said that there were only eight numbers in YE GIGLAMPZ, Hearn, himself, had stated that there were nine numbers in an article he had written for the CINCINNATI ENQUIRER of October 4, 1874.*

Lafcadio Hearn arrived in Cincinnati in 1869 a friendless, penniless young man, shy, half blind and abandoned by his family. Cincinnati, in the beginning, was no friendlier than New York City where he had first live in America. But Hearn kept his courage and soon found friends and employment.

In the autumn of 1872, Hearn began to work for the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, at first as contributor and then as staff member. His specialty was expose, especially of quack doctors and religionists, spiritualists, and free love advocates like the Chafin sisters. He also wrote book reviews. By 1874 Hearn had begun to write sensational articles in the style of such French romanticists as Victor Hugo, Theophile Gautier and Gustave Flaubert. He wrote about artists and models, oriental music, the Negroes of the public landing, and cemeteries.

Henry Farny was an Alsatian by birth, but a very American artist and the principal illustrator of the McGuffey readers published in Cincinnati. He achieved local fame as a painter of Indian scenes.

These two, Hearn and Farny, determined to publish a magazine of humor and criticism in the manner of *Punch*. This first number of *Ye Giglampz* was dated June 21, 1874. For the next eight weeks the two wrangled and fought as they attempted to make a success of their effort. Instead, *Ye Giglampz* was a complete failure. Hearn's articles were largely leftovers from his work on the local newspaper. But some of Farny's cartoons were excellent, as biting now as they were then. After nine numbers *Ye Giglampz* folded.

On November 8th, 1874 Hearn began a series of articles on the horrible Tan Yard Murder Case, a particularly brutal and vicious crime. His account was reprinted throughout the country and his name and fame as a "crime reporter" spread. But, within a year he was dismissed from the *Enquirer* because of a love affair with a handsome Negress, Althea Foley.

Hearn then went to work for Murat Halstead, editor of the Cincinnati *Commercial* where he continued to write his personal brand of sensationalism, as well as acting as drama critic. His writing became leaner and less flamboyant. He stayed two years, growing increasingly unhappy with his position. In October, 1877 Hearn left Cincinnati for New Orleans never to return.

YEATMAN ANDERSON, III Curator of Rare Books Cincinnati Public Library

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"THE GIGLAMPZ."

*PUBLISHED DAILY, EXCEPT WEEK-DAYS.*

TERMS, \$2.50 PER ANNUM.

Address "GIGLAMPZ PUBLISHING CO.,"

150 West Fourth Street.

SALUTATORY.

BY A CELEBRATED FRENCH AUTHOR. A FRIEND OF GIGLAMPZ.

It was a dark and fearsome night in the month of June, 1874; and the pavements of Fourth Street were abandoned to solitude.

The lamps, dripping huge water-drops fire-tinged from their lurid glare, seemed monstrous yellow goblin-eyes, weeping phosphorescent tears.

It was raining, and the funereal sky flamed with lightning. It was such a rain as in the primeval world created verdant seas of slimy mud, subsequently condensed into that fossiliferous strata where to-day spectacled geologists find imbedded the awful remains of the titanic iguanodon, the plesiosaurus, and the ichthyosaurus.

We sat motionlessly meditative in the shadows of a Gothic doorway of medieval pattern, and ruefully observed the movements of a giant rat, slaking his thirst at a water-spout. Suddenly we were aware of a pressure—a gentle pressure on our shoulder.

A hurried glance convinced us that the pressure was occasioned by the presence of a hand.

It was a long, bony, ancient hand, dried and withered to the consistency of India-rubber. It might have been compared to the hand of a mummy embalmed in the reign of Ramases III., but we felt a living warmth in its pressure, penetrating our summer linen.

The Oriental wizards occasionally need the assistance of a magic candle, in their groping amid ancient tombs—a candle which burns with a fuming stench so foul, that hungry ghouls flee dismayedly away. This candle is made of green fat—the fat of men long dead. For such a candle it is of course necessary to have a candlestick. To procure this candlestick it is necessary to cut off the right hand of a murderous criminal executed by impalement, and having carefully dried it, to insert the candle in its ghastly grasp. Now the hand laid on our shoulder strongly resembled such a hand.

The living warmth of its pressure alone restrained us from uttering a shriek of hideous fear. A cold sweat ravaged the starched bosom of our under-garment.

Suddenly a face peered out from the shadow, and the sickly glare of the flickering gas-lamp fell full upon it.

The aspect of that face immediately reassured us.

It was long to grotesqueness and meagre even to weirdness. It would have been strongly Mephistophelic but for an air of joviality that was not wholly saturnine. The eyes were deep, piercing, but “laughter-stirred,” as those of Haroun Alraschid. The nose was almost satanically aquiline, but its harsh outline was more than relieved by the long smiling mouth, and the countless wrinkles of merriment that intersected one another in crow's-feet all over the ancient face. The stranger's

complexion was that of caoutchouc; and his long lank locks were blacker than the plumage of those yellow-footed birds that prey upon the dead. His whole aspect was that of one who, by some eerie, occult art of self-preservation, had been enabled to live through the centuries.

“Am I not addressing the celebrated author —?” said the voice of the uncouthly-featured.

It was a half-merry, half-mocking voice—a deep voice that sounded as though conveyed from a vast distance through the medium of a pneumatic tube.

It therefore resembled in its tone the dreamily-distant voices never-slumbering Fancy hears in the hours devoted to darkness and slumber by moral people.

An enormous drop of soot-tinged water fell upon our nose, incontestably proving that we were awake; and we murmured monosyllabic assent to the stranger's query.

“It is well,” replied the Unknown, with a latitudinarian smile of joy. “I have been seeking you. I need your assistance, your talent, your mental vigor so enormously manifested in your cyclopean phrenological development.”

“*Sapristi*, monsieur!—permit me to inquire the nature of —”

“Attend a little, friend, and your curiosity shall be sated with ample satisfaction. I have existed as you see through all ages. I have lived under a thousand alias names, under the various regimes of a thousand civilizations, which flourished on ancient soil now covered by the mile-deep waters of foaming oceans. I have made my dwelling-place in the mighty palace-halls of Egyptian kings, in the giant cities of dead Assyria, in the residences of Aztec monarchs and Peruvian Incas, in the snow-columned temples of the Greek, and the lordly homes of the luxurious Roman. In fact I am rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun; and have been worshiped as a genius in far-sparkling planets ere this mundane sphere was first evolved from that flaming orb. In all time when individualized intelligent thought existed, I have inculcated in living beings the truth of that sublime and eternal maxim —“Laugh and grow fat.” To-day men must be taught this glorious truth by the Bullock Press rather than the Tongue. I want your pen, not your tongue. Write me a salutatory for my new illustrated weekly—only five cents a copy.”

With these words he pressed a glazed Bristol-board card into our trembling hand, and disappeared.

By the light of the weeping street-lamps we read thereon this weird legend:

L Hearn?

Col. George Ward Nickels has been engaged as caricaturist for the new paper, The Giglampz. — [Volksblatt.

Contrary and notwithstanding the inference which a benighted public may have drawn from the pictures that have been exhibited over the Colonel's signature, we maintain that he is NOT a caricaturist, and is certainly not connected with this paper.

H F, Farny

There was a period in the history of journalism when for an editor to reject an MS, as unfit for publication was to provoke a duel with its author; and when a rejected MS, was usually returned to the writer with a note bearing the words, "Sir, the choice of weapons rests with you." But happily those days are dead; and we have just purchased an extremely large waste-basket.

L Hearn

Since our Aldermanic Board amuses itself with comic petitions, we would suggest a public minstrel performance by that august body. Our worthy Mayor would of course take the part of "Mr. Johnson," while Si and Jimmy would make unequaled "end men," and the pensive tax-payer would at least reap some amusement from his shekels.

H F F

Once upon a time there was an English judge who acted upon the principle that ali crimes were equally deserving of capital punishment, and who finally got into hot water by waking up suddenly from a snooze in court to pronounce the death sentence upon somebody before the trial was half through. There is an august city official in Cincinnati who is suspected of being a *marchand de justice*; and people are hoping that he may some day yield to slumber in the Police Court.

L Hearn

The entire force of day-police were recently invited to a fashionable wedding reception given at the palatial residence of one of our wealthiest citizens. Seven only, however, of the constables were able to accept the kind invitation; and these did not appear to enjoy themselves as might have been expected, wandering in melancholy meditation about the grounds, and mingling but little with the other six hundred guests present. Evidently the poor fellows were not used to fashionable company.

L Hearn

When notorious counterfeiters have been so unfortunate as to fall into the clutches of the inexorable law, and when mourning friends show their sympathy by inflicting grievous bodily harm with beer glasses upon the person of a United States detective, detained as prosecuting witness, it is the legislative custom of Cincinnati to arrest the United States detective, while the assaulting parties depart in triumphant peace. It has become a misdemeanor to have one's head broken.

L H

The tide of public disfavor—to use an extravagantly mild term—appears to be setting in strongly against journalistic gentlemen. Pulpit, senate, and bar are fulminating ferociously against them; and there is every prospect that we are soon to have a first-class sensation in the shape of a journalistic martyrdom. Only last Sunday one of our oldest and most prominent lawyers said that it would today be “impossible to impanel a jury in Hamilton County, that would hang a man for killing an editor or a reporter.” Coming events cast their shadows before.

L.H.

The public has indulged in speculation, and no little levity, in regard to our name. In this, as in the future conduct of this extraordinary sheet, we seek only to please ourselves. Whether the publishing company will declare “Irish dividends” in six months, or not, does not concern us. We (the editorial corps) being on a salary, look on public favor with serene indifference. The name pleases us. We look upon it in the light of a conundrum, calculated to induce reflection in simple minds. We hope some one may solve it, as we have incontinently given it up.

L Hearn