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Who's Who in the Golden Book



cer and a beautiful Greek woman. His youth was spent in Dublin and later in Wales. He came to America at the age of nineteen, and left it again twenty-one years later, in 1890. In that year he went to Japan, and fell so in love with the country that he never left it again. He married a Japanese woman, became a Japanese citizen, and ended his days teaching in Japanese universities and writing glowing interpretations of the East.

While he was in America, most of the time as correspondent on the New Orleans *Times-Democrat*, he wrote *Creole Sketches*, *The Diary of an Impressionist*, and *Fantastics*. He so beautifully embodied in them the spirit of the American places about which he was writing that America proudly adopted him as her own. And surely such descriptive prose as "The Fountain of Youth"—pages from the *Diary of an Impressionist*—has been rarely surpassed.

Hearn was sensitive, humorous, delightfully eccentric. Elizabeth Bisland, editor of the complete edition of his works, describes him thus:

"He was at this time (1882) a most unusual and memorable person. About five feet three inches in height, with unusually broad and powerful shoulders for such a stature, there was an almost feline grace and lightness in his step and movements. . . . He spoke always in short sentences, and the manner of his speech was very modest and deferential. . . . A more delightful or—at times—more fantastically witty companion it would be impossible to imagine, but it is equally impossible to attempt to convey his astounding sensitiveness. To remain on good terms with him it was necessary to be as patient and wary as one who stalks the hermit thrush to its nest."



WERE YOU TO NAME a half-dozen of America's exquisite literary workmen, the chances are you would include Lafcadio Hearn. And this although he was not an American, nor did he spend even half of his lifetime in this country.

Born on the Ionian Island of Lefkada, from which he took his name, he was the son of an Irish army offi-



C. B. Falls

To the Fountain of Youth

By LAFCADIO HEARN

THOUGH THE DAYS of faith be dead, men look for that Phantom Fountain still. Yearly, from the gray cities of wintry lands, thousands hasten to the eternal summer of this perfumed place, to find new life, new strength . . . in the elixir-breath of this tropical Nature. . . .

It was among the Bahamas that Juan Ponce de Leon first sought for the waters of youth. Then it was he heard of the mainland where "the wished-for waters flowed as a river upon whose banks lived the rejuvenated races in serene idleness and untold luxuriance." . . .

Narrow and labyrinthine the river is, but so smooth that like a flood of quicksilver it repeats inversely all the intricacies of tangle growths, all delicate details of leaf and blossom, all the bright variations of foliage colour. . . . But whether radiant or sombre, the colour is seen as

through a gauze—through the gray veil ubiquitously woven by the aërial moss that fringes every crest, that drools from every twig, that droops in myriad festoons, that streams in hoary cascades from every protruding bough. And mistletoe mingles with the moss, and air-plants nestle in the arm-pits of the cypresses, and orchids bloom on dead limbs: while, from the morass below, extraordinary parasitic things, full of snaky beauty, climb and twine and interwreath, often to lose their strangling hold at last, and fall back in spiral coils. . . .

Little frogs, metallically bright as the lily-leaves on which they sit, chant in chorus; butterflies flutter on vermilion wing from bank to bank: sometimes the nose of an alligator furrows the river.

The Diary of an Impressionist.