

**from On the Phantom Air Ship Mystery**

**18 April**

Farmer Bert Swearing  
found a dirty note  
on a reed

For Thomas A. Edison  
from L. C. Harris  
stating Airship No. 3

Was here at two-thirty  
at fourteen-thirty feet  
heading east-northeast

\*

Sometime after nine a glowing red cigar wavered in from the northwest over Sisterville  
The sawmill whistle blew and soon crowded streets stared up where it hovered  
Shining down two blinding searchlights

From the hills around some saw in their glare  
An elliptical ovoid fin-winged sixty yards long rising  
Red, white, and green lights running along its sides

**19 April**

In a tiny metal screw-top canister dropped in a field  
A note read there are three of us with Captain Harris  
Lost aboard a loose airship provisions nigh exhausted

\*

...Airship No. 3 is a pure fake...I prefer to devote my time to projects of commercial value...air ships can only ever be toys...

**21 April**

*The Free Press* having turned the ‘NOCTURNAL AERIAL VISITOR’ completely over in its mind, is *now* of the opinion that the airship is not of *this world*, but is probably operated by a party of scientists from the planet Mars, who are out, either on a lark, or a tour of inspection of the solar system in the cause of science.

\*

Whines and barks  
Drew John Barclay out

To view a mirror-smooth  
Varnished winged cigar

Spiral in to land  
The pilot disembark

Tall in a midnight flight-suit  
Pale and goggled

Still a hundred yards off  
He stopped the farmer

Said his name was Smith  
Needed bluestone and chisels

Barclay got for him  
With the bills he gave him

Smith was from Anywhere  
Due in Greece tomorrow

And took off  
As if shot from a gun

\*

Neighbour Frank Nichols heard a strange whirring  
Thirty minutes later saw a brilliant light in his field  
The crew from appearance and speech Japanese offered him a tour

\*

Former Kentucky Indian Fighter and Member of the House of Representatives for Yates Centre  
LeRoy Farmer Alexander Hamilton stakes his sacred honour  
Last Monday night he woke up near eleven  
The bulldog playing pranks among the cattle  
From the door an air ship descending slowly on the cow lot forty rods off  
With tenant Jed Hislip and son Will wielding axes he approached the corral  
Not fifty yards away hovered thirty feet off the ground  
Dimly flickering red a three hundred foot cigar  
Metal strips suspended a brightly-lit gondola

At their curses a spotlight caught them  
A thirty-foot turbine-wheel started to turn and buzz  
And the vessel rose like a crow to hover three hundred feet over  
A bawling two-year-old heifer jerking caught in the wire fence  
Around her neck a red half-inch cable slip-knot pulled her upward  
Impossible to undo or cut they freed her from the wire  
To rise from sight crying out into the northwest  
Neighbour "Red" Link found the bloodless gutted carcass next day  
Colon cored out deep and genitals, lips, eyes, and tongue cut away  
The State Oil Inspector, Sheriff, Deputy Sheriff, Banker, Pharmacist, Lawyer, Justice of the  
Peace, Druggist, Registrar of Deeds, and Postmaster swear on Hamilton's word

### **24 April**

A Scot and two brothers  
Worked on it three years  
Secretly in his barn

They found a note  
"Off for the patent"  
The trio gone

### **26 April**

Sunday in Merkel churchgoers returning from evening service saw a dragging along the ground  
Followed it bounce onto the tracks and catch a rail  
A light ship's anchor roped high up to a lamp brighter than a locomotives  
And lit gondola-windows of an air ship  
After nine minutes a small man in a cobalt blue jumpsuit  
Came down the line to look things over and cut it