

[1925, dimanche 25 janvier]

Up 2 p.m. Bkfst GK. Sonny arr. Leeds ar. RK ar. discussion in both rooms.

Sonny lv. Rest adj. cafeteria & SL's. GK lv. RK AL & HPL ret. session

GK's. adj. caf. RK lv. Rest disperse 3:30 a.m.

Lever 2h après-midi. Petit-déjeuner avec Kirk. Arrivée de Belknap, puis Leeds, enfin Kleiner. On discute dans les deux chambres, Belknap repart. On descend à la cafeteria, Loveman et Kirk repartent, Lovecraft, Leeds et Kleiner remontent chez Kirk, puis à nouveau cafétéria on se sépare à 3 h 30 du matin.

Et pourquoi Lovecraft, dans ces brèves notations des allées et venues des « Boys », n'aurait pas plutôt, un jour comme celui-ci, fait la liste des thèmes et avis de leur discussion ? Est-ce que ça ressemble aux lettres qu'il enverra plus tard, celles mortelles d'ennui à Derleth, celles passionnantes à Robert Howard, celles familières à Alfred Galpin ou enfin à Barlow l'adolescent ? On devrait lui passer un coup de fil pour le lui suggérer, tiens, puisque (Main 1401) on a le numéro. Ou bien rien de cela n'a d'importance : il sera bien plus heureux, dans quelque temps, à leur écrire de folles et interminables lettres dans tous ses registres de langues inventées plutôt qu'à passer tout ce temps dans ces discussions pour refaire la littérature et le monde. Et on entend encore une fois son rire comme de hoquet suraigu brisant soudain sa voix de crécelle, toujours perchée un cran plus haut que tous les autres. Reste la stabilisation d'une forme d'emploi du temps : on a pour soi les deux chambres, celle de Kirk et la sienne, les copains savent où les trouver, on se lève comme ça en début d'après-midi, on a semble-t-il la cafétéria Tiffany à volonté pour la logistique, et c'est aux petites heures qu'on se sépare : on dirait presque, *arrive, retire, disperse*, un emploi du temps militaire... Toute la Une du journal sur l'éclipse bien sûr : des villes entières qui se sont arrêtées pour la contempler, et les scientifiques embarqués sur le Los Angeles, ce Zeppelin géant, ont finalement pu mener leur mission à bien. Mais ceux qui, au-dessus des montagnes glacées, sont partis la photographier dans leurs escouades biplans, est-ce qu'on n'est pas déjà dans la préfiguration des *Montagnes de la folie* (et l'expédition Byrd de 1928 qui en sera une des sources), ou encore qu'on en ait profité pour tenter la photographie *en couleur* ? Bien sûr c'est le supplément littéraire du *New York Times* aujourd'hui, et tenez : cette curieuse rubrique de questions réponses, exactement comme on se l'est appropriée du temps des blogs et forums, et maintenant de nos « réseaux », toujours tenter, avec cette épaisseur d'un siècle, de s'en appuyer pour distancier notre regard au présent...

New York Times, 25 janvier 1925. Les gratte-ciels ont cligné des yeux dans les rues vides. Le centre-ville comme un dimanche. Les toits encombrés de spectateurs. Un matin comme un crépuscule. Le maire Hylan a regardé l'éclipse depuis les marches du City Hall hier et a éclairé l'obscurité de quelques axiomes caractéristiques et d'une prédiction, entre deux coups d'œil furtifs à travers plaques de verre fumées et télescope. Le maire, bien sûr, était en-dehors de la ceinture d'obscurité totale, et, comme des milliers d'habitants contraints à rester dans Manhattan Sud, Brooklyn ou Staten Island, il se contenta de voir ce qu'il y avait à voir. Les informations disant que le seul endroit dans lequel l'éclipse serait total, serait la zone au nord de la 83ème rue et en remontant plus au nord, se sont révélées juste. Le centre de Manhattan, à 8h le matin, ou même à 9 heures et pendant la bonne demi-heure à suivre, ne ressemblait pas à soi-même. Le district financier avait des airs de dimanche après-midi en été, bien que des groupes d'employés fussent à tendre le cou depuis les fenêtres orientées à l'est ou essayassent de voir un peu du spectacle du ciel dans l'espace étroit entre leurs immeubles. Plusieurs centaines de personnes admirèrent le spectacle depuis la Woolworth Tower, d'autres eurent un clair aperçu de la brillance du ciel depuis les ponts de l'East River, et ceux qui furent assez chanceux pour être sur Lexington Avenue et la 47ème rue eurent l'avantage d'une protection des yeux gratuites grâce à la fumée qui s'échappa d'une cheminée juste au bon moment. Plusieurs milliers de personnes installées Battery Park eurent une vue parfaite sur l'orbite qui s'assombrissait, encore les magnifiques effets de couleur et les bandes d'ombre circulaires manquaient. Des équipes spéciales de policiers étaient postées ça et là dans le parc, mais eurent peu à faire et purent eux-mêmes profiter du ciel. Ceux qui disposaient d'emplacements favorables en dehors de la zone de totalité purent voir distinctement la couronne gris-perle bordant le soleil éteint. Quand la balle noire de la lune entama la fière sphère du soleil, la couronne brillante apparut en un relief aigu sur le ciel terne. [...] Plus près du spectacle étaient ceux qui avaient décidé que le toit des gratte-ciels serait l'endroit le plus avantageux pour apprécier ce film de la nature. Mais pour eux aussi manquèrent les différents effets du spectre au moment de l'éclipse complète. Ceux qui ne purent se dispenser d'aller au travail furent rares, et les wagons qui d'habitude auraient été bondés étaient déserts, les quelques passagers semblant grogner intérieurement sur leur impossibilité d'assister au show du siècle. Mais ceux qui furent contraints de rester dans la zone au sud de la 83ème rue eurent leur dédommagement. En plus de scène qui se déroulait dans le ciel, pendant que la lune passait entre le soleil et la terre, surgit de panorama étrange des bâtiments perçant l'horizon, leur sommet masqué par l'obscurité de l'éclipse. Et pour tous ceux qui depuis Battery Park regardaient vers le nord, les gratte-ciels, dressant leur squelette dans l'obscurité de l'éclipse, semblèrent autant de gris fantômes.

Queries and Answers

Communications for these columns should be of a literary nature. They should be addressed to the Editor of *Queries and Answers*, New York Times. They should be written on one side of the paper only, and must contain the name and address of the writer as evidence of good faith. Queries that do not seem of general literary interest will not be published; others will be answered by mail, if possible, when stamped envelopes accompany the queries.

QUERIES

By Will Carleton

H. C. H.—I am anxious to get a copy of a poem written many years ago by Will Carleton. The theme of the poem was a conversation, which took place, supposedly, between the weed and the flowers in the garden where the weed grew. The weed speaks very scornfully and contemptuously to the flowers. It says: "In the open air, on the ground, I get my bit and sup," and again, "I get no drink out of a watering pot." While the weed is thus belaboring the flowers and extolling itself, along comes a gardener who chops up the weed.

"When the First Buds Burst"

W. A. M.—I recall the following lines of a poem, the title of which I do not remember nor the name of the author. Will some one kindly help me find this information?

When the first buds burst on the tangled hedge,
And the green comes back to the south hillside,
And the lilting note of a distant bird
Drifts over the meadow land, still and wide,
I want to go home, just to watch again
The maples that grow by the vine-wreathed door.

"Beauty of Fire and Embers"

F. T. W.—Will you tell me the title and the author of the poem that contains these lines:

Only stay quiet while my mind remembers
The beauty of fire from the beauty of embers.

"Alice Brown"

J. B. H.—I would like to know where I can find the words of the following poem:

She was a robber's daughter and her name was Alice Brown,
Her father was the terror of a small suburban town.

I am under the impression that it is in the Gilbert and Sullivan collection.

"No Friend Like an Old Friend"

M. M. Le B.—Can you tell me the source of this quotation: "There is no friend like an old friend whose life path meets our own."

"The Aborigines"

J. C. B.—I should like to know who is the author of the following expression: "They fell upon their knees and then upon the Aborigines."

"Give Me Roses"

D. McA.—Can any one tell me from what poem these lines are a part: "Give me roses while I'm living and do the knocking when I'm dead."

"Darkness on the Hearth"

A. H. W.—Can you obtain the complete song that has three or more verses, the first of which I quote be-

neath London churches, and which begins with the following verse:

Will you lend me five farthings,
Said the bells of St. Martin's.

"Pyramids Over My Head"

J. M. A. J.—Will some one tell me the author, the title of the poem and where to find these lines:

Lying here dead, with the pyramids
Over my head,
With my deeds all done and my words
All said,
And the deeds of my days written
Over my head.

ANSWERS

"Sails on the Ocean"

B. B. VALLENTINE, New York.—The poem asked for by "E. G. B." in your issue of Jan. 11 is "Distance the Enchantress," and is anonymous. It attracted attention from its being one of the 840 poems contributed in the \$10,000 prize contest initiated by the National Magazine of the Chappel Publishing Company of Boston in 1904 and 1905. Senator Allison and Admiral Dewey signed the certificate of award. The poem is to be found on page 215 of "Heart Throbs." Mrs. H. W. Jones, Waterville, N. Y., and Miss Louella D. Everett, Boston, Mass., supplied copies of the poem in full, as follows:

The sails we see on the ocean
Are as white as white can be;
But never one in the harbor
As white as the sails at sea.
And the clouds that crown the mountain
With purple and gold delight,
Turn to cold gray mist and vapor
Ere ever we reach thy height.

The mountains were crowns of glory
Only when seen afar,
And the sails lose all their whiteness
Inside of the harbor bar.

Stately and fair is the vessel
That comes not near our beach,
Stately and grand the mountains
Whose height we may never reach.
O distance! thou dear enchanter,
Still hold in thy magic veil
The glory of far-off mountains,
The gleam of the far-off sail.
Hide in thy robes of splendor,
O mountain! cold and gray;
O sail! in thy snowy whiteness,
Come not into port, I pray.

Miss Jones writes that the author is Carlotta Perry, and says that the poem was published in THE NEW YORK TIMES some fifty years ago. "Heart Throbs" give the poem practically the same as it is quoted above, but omits the third and last verses.

"Our Lives Are Albums"

B. B. VALENTINE, New York.—The stanza quoted by "Dens" in your issue of Jan. 4, "Our lives are albums written through, with good or ill, with false or true," is by John Greenleaf Whittier. It was written in a lady's album and is in all editions of Whittier's poems.

E. M. Hendrickson, Brooklyn, N. Y., also answered this query.

"Salutation of the Dawn"

C. L. TREMMEL, Albany, N. Y.—Referring to the query of "J. G. L." in your issue of Jan. 4, I beg to say the following lines are from the Sanskrit: Listen to the Exhortation of the Dawn. Look to this day! For it is Life, The very Life of Life. In its brief course lie all the varieties And Realities of your Existence: The Bliss of Growth, The Glory of Action, The Splendor of Beauty. For yesterday is a dream And tomorrow is only a vision.

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