



1925-2025

UN AN AVEC HOWARD PHILLIPS LOVECRAFT

#59 | 28 FÉVRIER 1925

It was then that he began that rambling tale which suddenly played upon a sleeping memory and won the fevered interest of my uncle. There had been a slight earthquake tremor the night before, the most considerable felt in New England for some years; and Wilcox's imagination had been keenly affected. Upon retiring, he had had an unprecedented dream of great Cyclopean cities of titan blocks and sky-flung monoliths, all dripping with green ooze and sinister with latent horror. Hieroglyphics had covered the walls and pillars, and from some undetermined point below had come a voice that was not a voice; a chaotic sensation which only fancy could transmute into sound, but which he attempted to render by the almost unpronounceable jumble of letters, *Cthulhu fhtagn*.

C'est alors qu'il raconta cette histoire abracadabrante, mais qui éveilla un souvenir endormi et provoqua l'intérêt fiévreux de mon oncle. Il y avait eu une légère secousse de tremblement de terre la nuit précédente, mais la plus importante qu'on ait ressentie en Nouvelle-Angleterre depuis plusieurs années ; et l'imagination de Wilcox en avait été vivement affectée. En s'endormant, il avait eu un rêve comme jamais auparavant il n'en avait fait, avec de grandes et cyclopéennes cités faites de blocs titanesques et de monolithes tombés du ciel, tout dégoulinant de vase verte dans une horreur sinistre et latente. Des hiéroglyphes couvraient les murs et les piliers, et, à un moment déterminé, depuis un point au-dessous, était venue une voix qui n'était pas une voix ; une sensation de chaos que seulement l'imagination pouvait transmuier en son, mais qu'il tenta de rendre par ce fouillis de lettres confus et quasi imprononçable : « Cthulhu fhtagn ».

L'appel de Cthulhu, rédigé début 1926 au retour à Providence, a été en partie conçu (les synopsis notamment, et les notes du Commonplace Book) à Clinton Street. Le souvenir de la secousse sismique du 28 février aura contribué à la genèse ?

[1925, samedi 28 février]

Up noon — meet SH Pub. Lib. Shew Morgan collection — dinner
automat — back to Bklyn — groceries — home — read & write — GK &
SL call — depart for NM& L — house shakes 9:30 p m — SL call —
write letters SH — retire.

*Levé midi. Je retrouve Sonia à la bibliothèque, je lui fais visiter la
collection Morgan. On dine à l'Automat. Retour à Brooklyn. Courses à
l'épicerie. Maison. Lu & écrit. Appel de Kirk et Loveman, qui partent
pour NM&L. Tremblement de terre le soir à 21h30. Loveman rappelle.
J'écris des lettres pour Sonia. Couché.*

C'est donc la troisième fois que Lovecraft se rend à l'exposition des manuscrits de la collection Morgan, à la bibliothèque de la V^e Avenue. Le soir la ville tremble, compte rendu dans le journal demain : la secousse est assez intense pour que Lovecraft s'en souvienne quelques mois plus tard, écrivant *L'appel de Cthulhu*. Pas trouvé ce que représente ce « NM & L » où s'en vont Kirk et Loveman : lecture dans une librairie ? Et de nouveau l'époux en renfort pour les questions administratives de Sonia : contentieux avec l'ancien employeur après le licenciement, candidatures pour nouvel emploi, prise en charge des problèmes de santé ? Ce sera le menu principal pour les jours venir. Dans le journal : le tremblement de terre ce sera demain alors on triche, le voilà aujourd'hui. L'alcool au volant : eh oui, dès la prohibition. Et puis Borglum retrouvé et écroué : mais il refuse de dire où est la maquette qui permettrait la reprise du monument en chantier.

New York Times, 28 février 1925. Les vapeurs d'un baril d'acide brisé ont fait 16 victimes la nuit dernière, dans la soute du vapeur Lenape de la Clyde Line, en chargement au Pier 36, North River, au pied de Charlton Street. Quatorze d'entre eux ont été emmenés à l'hôpital Saint-Vincent. Deux étaient en condition sérieuse, mais on compte sur leur guérison. L'un est inconscient, on n'a pu savoir son nom. Le dernier est Harry Moore, domicilié 51ème rue Ouest, contremaître de l'équipe qui a été atteint alors qu'il organisait les premiers secours. Le Comité de la Santé Publique a commencé une enquête. La cause exacte de l'accident n'a pu être déterminée, les blessés n'étant pas capables de donner un témoignage cohérent sur ce qui s'était passé dans la cale lorsque les vapeurs ont été émises. Huit hommes y travaillaient à ce moment. Une autre équipe se préparait à les rejoindre. Moore, le contremaître, était sur le pont et commandait la descente de la marchandise dans les cales. Le chargement embarquée comportait des barils de cyanide de calcium, et c'est l'un d'eux qui a causé l'accident. On ne sait pas comment le baril s'est brisé, mais après avoir envoyé la charge aux hommes à l'œuvre dans les soutes, Moore les entendit tousser et appeler au secours, et lui-même sentit les vapeurs. Appelant sept hommes travaillant avec lui sur le ponton, il descendit dans la

cale, qui n'avait pas encore reçu beaucoup de cargaison. Alors que les sauveteurs rejoignaient leurs compagnons dans la cale, ils les entendirent gémir sous l'effet de l'acide. Moore et ses compagnons furent eux-mêmes affectés par l'acide, mais il essayèrent de transporter les victimes jusqu'à l'échelle de secours. Avant que toute opération de remontée ait pu être accomplie, eux-mêmes s'écroulaient. À cet instant, les personnels du port avaient été informés, et une autre équipe d'hommes fut envoyée dans la cale, réussissant à remonter toutes les victimes sur le pont.



Pier 36, East River, années 20/30.

EARTH TREMOR SHAKES A DOZEN STATES; NEW YORK TREMBLES WITH REST OF EAST; SHOCK DISTINCT BUT NO DAMAGE DONE

**Tremor Loosens Pin of Seismograph Here;
Fordham Unable to Fix Its Exact Centre**

Owing to the proximity of the disturbance, which was estimated at 400 miles, Professor J. F. O'Connor, in charge of Fordham University's seismograph, was unable to fix the exact centre of last night's earth tremor. The violence of the tremor caused one of the recording pins of the instrument to fall off.

The seismograph record shows that the disturbance began at 9:21 and its greatest intensity lasted four minutes. The tremor was strongest between 9:21 and 9:23. At 9:25 the violence of the tremor was not so noticeable, but the sensitive seismograph continued to record vibrations in the earth for more than an hour after that.

Special to The New York Times.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 28.—Experts at the Georgetown University Observatory obtained records of the earth tremors, which were described as most severe, for this section of the country. The tremor was most pronounced from 9:24 to 9:28 o'clock, at a point about 500 miles from Washington, in the vicinity of Boston. The instruments were reported as recording tremors of less severity at 11 o'clock. Those in charge of the observations were unwilling to offer any opinions concerning the probable cause of the tremors until more complete reports were obtained.

NEW HAVEN, Conn., Feb. 28.—Dr. Adolph Knopf, Professor of Geology at Yale, said tonight that the extent of the earth tremor felt through the northeastern part of the United States tonight would indicate that it was the greatest in extent and intensity since the earthquake which shook the eastern part of this country in 1755. "Since that time there have been quakes of unusual severity, notably the Charleston (S. C.) quake of 1885 and the California earthquake of 1906," said Dr. Knopf, "but the extent of these was not nearly as great as the reports of tonight's tremor would indicate it to have been, although in both cases there was greater intensity and considerable destruction of life and property."

COMES AT 9:23½ O'CLOCK

**Freakish Quiver Rattles
Windows and Rocks
Furniture Here.**

MOST SEVERE IN HARLEM

**Brings Audience to Its Feet in
Brooklyn—Breaks Fordham
Seismograph Needle.**

CENTRE IS BELIEVED NEAR

**Fordham Scientist Estimates
Origin Was About 400
Miles Away.**

New York City was shaken roughly at 9:23½ o'clock last night by an earth tremor which was felt widely along the Atlantic coast and as far West as Wisconsin and South to Louisville and Richmond. The tremor also was felt in Canada.

The trembling was severe enough to cause alarm in many parts of the city, but there was no damage. An undulating floor and creakings of woodwork brought to their feet an audience of 500 attending an amateur theatrical performance at the Packer Institute in Brooklyn. Rattling crockery, banging windows, swinging chandeliers and overturned furniture in apartment houses in Harlem caused many to flee to the streets.

The tremor was felt in all parts of New York City, but with great local variations in severity, depending partly on the type of buildings in which it was experienced. As usual, the tremor acted freakishly, apparently skipping one block and giving a vigorous shock to the next.

Reports that began pouring in from all sides immediately after 9:23 showed that the tremor had not only been felt by thousands in all parts of New York City but had been experienced distinctly in many parts of New Jersey and generally along the Atlantic Coast.

Clock Stops in Jersey City.

The tremor registered the moment of its occurrence here with exactitude by stopping the clock in the Chief Dispatcher's office of the Erie Railroad in Jersey City.

The duration of the shock varied from half a minute to two minutes, according to different reports of it.

The slipping of a great rock mass deep in the earth's crust somewhere in the eastern part of the United States must have been the cause of the tremor, according to geologists.

As the tremor rippled through the floors and walls of buildings in Harlem, there was a good deal of nervousness which would probably have been whipped into a panic had the cause been known at the time. But elevated trains, heavy trucks on rough streets, blasting for foundations and other causes had produced similar, though fainter results, so frequently that the population was slow to scare. Few

QUIVER IS REPORTED OVER MANY STATES VIBRATIONS SEND HUNDREDS TO STREET

**Cities From Brunswick (Me.)
to Louisville Feel Sway
in Buildings.**

**New Yorkers Tell of Their Ex-
periences and Sensations
During the Tremor.**

SOME TELEPHONES PUT OUT

SHOCK MAKES SOME DIZZY

**Two Apartment Houses Col-
lapse in Schenectady as
Families Flee Into Street.**

**Women and Children, Fright-
ened at First, Laugh When
They See All Is Safe.**

Reports from Boston, Springfield, Mass., Albany, Detroit, Chicago and Louisville indicated that last night's earth tremor had been felt over a wide territory. Buildings were shaken in many cities. Press dispatches said the tremors lasted from thirty seconds to two minutes.

The first seismograph report of the quake came from Canisius College at Buffalo, where the instrument recorded minor shocks for fifteen minutes after the major tremor.

Telephone communication was interrupted in several localities, notably in Springfield, Mass., where two distinct shocks were strong enough to break several trunk lines.

Complete reports as to the boundaries of the earthquake area were lacking last night, but a telephone message from Montreal to The Associated Press said the quake was noticeable there, and that it had also affected Sudbury, Ontario, 300 miles north of Toronto.

Last night's tremor of the earth was felt throughout the metropolitan district, the shock being most pronounced in Harlem, but nowhere was there any report of damage or injury.

The tremors gave the earth a "wavy motion"—something like the billowing of the ocean many reported—shaking pictures on the walls and causing chandeliers to swing.

Those on the upper floors of buildings felt the movement more distinctly than others. The shock seemed to be most severe in Harlem, where hundreds of persons left their homes.

In Times Square theatregoers declared they felt nothing, but several theatrical managers on Forty-second Street said they probably would not have recognized a tremor because of the continued blasting for the new subway in Forty-first Street. Several traffic policemen who were asked if they felt a tremor thought they were being hoaxed.

One hundred persons living in the six-story building at 174-176 Canal Street

*Première fois que je triche : puisque c'est seulement demain 1^{er} mars que le
New York Times racontera le tremblement de terre évoqué par Lovecraft
ce samedi.*

Found Dazed in Auto That Killed an Old Man, Driver Goes Violently Insane When Jailed

Michael Guzzo, a tilesetter, of 93 Stuyvesant Avenue, Brooklyn, was locked in a cell at the Gates Avenue Station, Brooklyn, last night on the charge of homicide after his automobile had killed an aged, unidentified man at Myrtle Avenue and Taaffe Place.

Guzzo's machine crashed an instant later into an elevated pillar and was smashed. Patrolman Frank J. Kupack, who arrested him, found him dazed. He seemed dazed when the cell door was locked upon him.

In a few minutes the jail guard heard Guzzo move about the cell mumbling. Presently he shook the cell door frantically. He shouted unintelligibly a moment and then began shrieking.

The guard ran back and found Guzzo running madly about the cell, striking the wall with his head, falling to the floor and shouting incoherencies about "killing a man."

Dr. Smith of St. John's Hospital, summoned by the police to examine him, ordered Guzzo removed immediately to Kings County Hospital for observation. He said he believed he had become unbalanced mentally from shock.

The man killed by Guzzo's automobile appeared about 70 years old. In his pocket was found a printed card with the name of Dr. Ames, 152 East Twentieth Street. On the other side was written the name of Mrs. E. A. Sterling, 1,068 Broad Street, Newark, N. J. The body was taken to the Brooklyn Morgue.

No Decrease in Drunken Auto Driver Peril; Liquor Costs 355 Their Licenses in 3 Months

Half of the automobile drivers whose licenses have been revoked in New York during the past three months lost their permits because of intoxication, it was disclosed yesterday by Charles A. Hartnett, State Commissioner of Motor Vehicles.

"I am sorry to say that there seems to be no appreciable decrease in the number of intoxicated drivers on New York roads," said Mr. Hartnett at a luncheon of the Motor Truck Association of America at the Café Boulevard yesterday. "Of more than 750 licenses suspended or revoked during the last three months 355, practically half, were due to intoxication. We have made a rule, and are abiding by it, that the driving license of no person which has been revoked for intoxication can be restored for at least one year. That does not seem sufficient, and it will probably be necessary to inflict severe penalties in many cases."

"More severe penalties are also going to be inflicted on the speeder. On this type of violation the bureau has, during the last six months, followed a policy of toleration and education. It has met with considerable success, but hereafter drivers who are arrested and whose records show a wilful disregard for public safety in highway driving

will have their licenses suspended or revoked."

Mr. Hartnett announced that his department intends to make a State-wide survey to learn if many trucks are being operated on licenses issued for lighter vehicles.

"I have been told," he continued, "that many owners have taken out licenses and paid fees for trucks of three to four tons capacity and are using them on vehicles which are qualified to carry double that load. That is a violation of the law and we simply wish to ascertain if such cases exist. The Motor Vehicle Bureau is anxious to protect the roads and public safety as much as possible. It is not the object to burden any one unduly, but we do want honest cooperation in enforcing the law."

The Commissioner said that the new Motor Vehicle act signed by Governor Smith recently gives automobile owners the right to use 1926 license plates five days before the expiration of 1925, and is expected to aid in preventing much of the usual year-end rush in obtaining new registry numbers.

Joseph Husson, President of the association, presided at the luncheon, and those present extended a vote of thanks to L. S. Campbell, who retired recently from the presidency after serving four years.