

1925-2025

UN AN AVEC HOWARD PHILLIPS LOVECRAFT

#91 | 3 AVRIL 1925

Jeudi matin, New Haven. Juste avant de descendre prendre une douche. Merveilleux pays vallonné, certainement un des plus beaux des États-Unis, de belles maisons coloniales et, en général, des gens agréables et parlant anglais. Je ne me suis pas beaucoup amusé pendant ce voyage. Le meilleur en fut le bus de Springfield à Hartford, quelques-uns des plus beaux paysages et de ces maisons d'Amérique ; tranquille, tu l'imagines mais du genre qui touche le cœur sans le pétrifier, du genre dont on ne peut jamais se lasser. Je suis revenu plus tôt que prévu parce que New Haven n'avait rien à m'offrir sur le plan professionnel et que j'ai décidé que les étapes intermédiaires étaient trop proches de New York pour être importantes. La tour Harkness à New Haven est le plus beau bâtiment que j'aie jamais vu.

J'ai lutté, jusqu'à présent en vain, pour quitter le Kalem et les réunions du dimanche à cause du temps qu'elles prennent sur les lettres et le travail (bien que j'aie travaillé jusqu'au moment d'assister aux plus récentes et que j'aie été, jusque récemment, incapable d'assister au KK lorsqu'il se réunit ailleurs qu'au 169). Demain, je vais aller entendre Rachmaninov.

Oh, j'aimerais tant que ce soit avec Lucy, maintenant que le mois d'avril est arrivé.

George Kirk, lettre à Lucile, début avril 1925.



*À New Haven, la toute récente Harkness Tower (construite entre 1917 et 1921, en style gothique assumé) domine fièrement la Yale University, forcément étape d'importance pour Kirk le bouquiniste.*



*Et voyage de Kirk encore : les 56 km au long de la Connecticut River, de Springfield à Hartford avant de rejoindre New Haven puis New York, cartes postales de 1925.*

[1925, vendredi 3 avril]

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Up late GK books arr. — write & read here & GK room — dinner — up  
with GK — out to Johnsons back & read & retire.

*Levé tard. Les livres de Kirk arrivent. Écrit et lu chez moi puis chez Kirk.  
Déjeuné. En haut chez Kirk. on sort dîner au Johnsons puis retour, lu et  
couché.*

Ô lecteur bienveillant, comme commençait Rabelais, au sens fort du mot *bienveillant*, on n'aurait donc une fois de plus que cela à te proposer, monter chez le voisin du dessus, lire des livres, descendre prendre un sandwich ou un plat de spaghettis à 5 cents au bistrot du bout de la rue et recommencer le cycle ? Le biographe se démène comme il peut, il voudrait bien télégraphier à Lovecraft de faire un peu plus l'écrivain. Il enrage des documents perdus : pas de lettre aux tantes de Providence, Annie et Lilian, conservées depuis la mi-mars jusqu'à celle du 26 avril prochain. Et pire encore dans ce qui a été rassemblé bien plus tard, une fois Lovecraft devenu légende, par la fille de George Kirk : il ne date pas ses lettres. Et pourtant, pendant que Lovecraft vautre chez lui se rencogne dans ses livres, lui il écrit à sa fiancée de Cleveland qu'il n'en peut plus de ce Kalem Klub, que Lovecraft prend si au sérieux qu'il en note tous les déplacements, lui mange tout son temps et l'empêche — précisément — d'écrire des lettres. Et que cela lui mange aussi l'espace intérieur. Non pas qu'il ne les aime pas, ces échanges avec son « Howard » comme il le dit affectueusement et respectueusement, où ils « refont l'univers depuis le début jusqu'à la fin ». Mais Lovecraft ne se rend pas compte des fils qui lâchent, ou ne veut pas les voir. Dans un mois d'ici jour pour jour, Kirk aura déménagé et Lovecraft va devoir se réaffronter lui-même. Tu en as assez de la vie de quartier, ô lecteur : comme un couple qui cherche des prétextes pour durer, Lovecraft et Kirk s'en vont partir en excursion à Washington et Baltimore. Ensuite, en plus des lettres aux tantes et à Sonia, le carnet de Lovecraft mentionnera parfois : « écrit à Kirk ». Et Kirk, à Lucile : « impossible pour moi de me rendre aux réunions du Kalem, à moins qu'elles ne soient ici au 169. » Et il s'en va à un concert de Rachmaninov : ah non, pas pour Lovecraft, ça, il restera lire. Quant à la reproduction sociale, en liaison avec celui qui se surnomme lui-même Grand'Pa, qu'on nous autorise à relayer très complaisamment la lettre de grand-père Rockefeller à son petit-fil (provisoirement) ouvrier — les tracteurs et moissonneuses McCormick enchantent toujours nos campagnes. Dans le journal : rafle de la police au coin de Broadway et de la 46<sup>ème</sup> rue, on coffre l'ensemble des musiciens ambulants et ils improvisent une fanfare jazz avec chien, non mais voyez-vous ça. Peu de

chance que Rachmaninov, qui joue devant George Kirk et quelques autres spectateurs son deuxième concerto avec le London Symphony Orchestra y ait assisté, mais de ça aussi on rend compte (de Rachamaninov, et non de George Kirk humble et solitaire spectateur).

*New York Times*, 3 avril 1925. De Milwaukee, 2 avril. Fowler McCormick, héritier de l'empire d'Harold McCormick, directeur de la société internationale Harvester, qui travaille comme ouvrier dans une des usines de son père pour « apprendre le métier depuis ses bases » a reçu les félicitations de son grand-père, John D Rockefeller. La lettre qu'il a reçue de son parent, lequel lui-même a commencé par les premiers barreaux de l'échelle, lui est parvenue aujourd'hui de Palm Beach, et dit : « Mon cher petit-fils, je suis bien heureux du choix que tu as fait d'apprendre les affaires de Harvester en commençant par la base. En faisant ainsi, tu en recevras un savoir de première main et ce sera d'un bénéfice immense dans les années à venir. Je renouvelle de grand coeur mes encouragements à ce que tu entreprends. Ton grand-père, John D Rockefeller. » La lettre est de la propre main de M Rockefeller. Fowler McCormick a été inondé de lettres d'admiratrices et de chasseurs de héros depuis on a découvert qu'il travaille dans cette usine de faucheuses et tracteurs et moissonneuses. « Vous savez, dit-il, j'ai besoin d'une secrétaire avec un coeur grand comme une baleine à bosse de Floride. La plupart de ces lettres, dit-il en haussant les épaules à leur odeur de parfum, émanent de dames qui se disent toutes, jeunes, belles et bien pourvues. D'autres émanent de personnes qui éprouvent un soudain intérêt pour moi à cause de la méthode que j'ai choisie pour apprendre les affaires de mon père... » Les belles lettres parfumées finissent dans la grande corbeille à papier de la pension dans laquelle vit le jeune homme.

### **Rockefeller Praises McCormick Grandson For Starting at Bottom in Harvester Plant**

*Special to The New York Times.*

MILWAUKEE, April 2.—Fowler McCormick, heir to the estate of Harold McCormick, head of the International Harvester Company, who is working in one of his father's plants here as a laborer to "learn the business from the ground up," has received the congratulations of his grandfather, John D. Rockefeller.

The letter from the relative who himself started at the bottom rung of the ladder was received by the youth here today. It came from Palm Beach and read:

My Dear Grandson:—

I am very pleased by the manner in which you have chosen to learn the harvester business by starting at the bottom. By doing this you will glean

the knowledge first hand that will greatly benefit you in later years.

I extend my most hearty approval of your efforts.

Your grandfather,

JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER.

The letter was in Mr. Rockefeller's own handwriting.

Fowler McCormick has been flooded with letters from girls and hero hunters since he was discovered to be sorting out casting in the harvester factory.

"You know," he said, "I need a secretary with a heart like a Florida whipping boss. Most of these letters," pointing at a heap in which many bore an odor of perfume, "are from ladies who describe themselves as young...pretty and bobbed. Others are from persons who have become interested in me because I have chosen this method to learn my father's business."

Perfumed and tinted letters go into a waste basket in the rooming house where the youth is living.

**TAKE BELL-ANS AFTER MEALS**  
for Perfect Digestion.—Adv.

**COOK'S MEDIT. SUMMER CRUISE.**  
See today's Travel Page.—Adv.



## MUSIC

By OLIN DOWNES.

### The New York Symphony.

There is a marked difference, at least in many cases, between the interpretation of a composition by its composer and the interpretation of the same composition by one who is only a virtuoso. This is not always the fact, but it is the fact quite often, and it was the fact when Mr. Rachmaninoff played his third piano concerto with the New York Symphony Orchestra, yesterday afternoon in Carnegie Hall. Almost did Mr. Rachmaninoff persuade us that this was great music. If the third concerto did not rank among his poorest music he would have convinced us to the point of admanity of its worth. But the concerto as a whole is long-winded and without freshness of invention. The beginning is unusual and promising in its simplicity. The poetical ending of the first movement has a refreshing freedom from the customary virtuoso bombast. And Mr. Rachmaninoff played like the past master of his instrument and the musical giant that he is, with profound feeling, electrical excitement and rhythm, with sensuous melancholy in the treatment of lyrical themes and a passionate achievement of climax. We would far rather hear him play a poor concerto than many other pianists playing good ones. But we would still rather have heard Mr. Rachmaninoff play his own Second concerto or a worth-while concerto of another composer.

The orchestral compositions were a novelty by Louis Aubert, "The Dryad," and Vaughan Williams's "London" symphony, which opened the concert. In former works of Aubert which we have heard he imitated Debussy. These, however, were works of earlier vintage than the one performed yesterday. In the one performed yesterday Aubert is haunted by Stravinsky.

The "London" symphony has been played frequently by Mr. Damrosch, but no one who has fallen under the spell of the music will grudge that. The symphony is deeply impressive of the fact that not theories or esthetics or even high intentions make a composer. Other composers than Vaughan Williams have sought inspiration in London streets and by rivers that flowed at least as beautifully as the Thames. Other aspirants to fame have apostrophized the historic city. At last a composer with genius came along; he felt deep in his heart the eternal tides of life, sweeping by and under existence like the silent flowing river; he knew the unutterable melancholy of poor, deserted streets; the folly of youth and the loneliness of age; the brief, uneasy existence that is the greatest illusion of all, while Big Ben tolls for the passing of all mortal things—and he wrote a noble symphony.

## MUSICAL PRISONERS PLAY FOR THE POLICE

### A Dog in a Cell Breaks Up a Concert After a Raid on Broadway Loiterers.

An orchestra from "Musicians' Corner," the northwest corner of Broadway and Forty-sixth Street, held a concert last night in the back room of the West Forty-seventh Street Police Station. The director was Policeman William Taylor, cornetist of the Police Band, who could not go with the band on the present tour. The soloist was a little brown dog held in a cell for the S. P. C. A.

The musicians, together with several who insisted that they could not play a note, were hastily recruited by Policemen Lannigan, Crehan and Maher. Acting on orders from Acting Captain Fry, who had received many complaints about musicians congregating at the corner, blocking traffic, they descended about 6:30.

"Fall in," said Lannigan. "Bring your instruments with you. Two by two to the station house."

The policemen placed thirteen men who had been standing at the corner in the line and filed them over to the police station. After they had been booked they were placed in the rear room, where they met their director. Some of them had instruments.

Policeman Taylor, the doorman at the station house, suggested that they play. The prisoners were more than willing and in a short time Taylor was bringing them through the rhythms of the latest jazz tunes. Even those who protested that they were innocent bystanders joined in the concert by keeping time with their feet.

After several numbers had been rendered, the dog soloist, who had been found along Tenth Avenue by two small boys and put in the cell, broke in. He sang lustily, but discordantly. Upstairs, policemen on reserve became restless. The howls of the dog, mingled with the music, were too much. They hurried downstairs.

"Enough is enough," one said. By order of the desk lieutenant two police wagons took them away and later brought them to Night Court, where Magistrate Bernard J. Douras suspended sentence on all with a warning to loiter on no more corners.

## SERIES OF RAIDS MADE BY THIEVES IN HARLEM

### Jewelry Store, Pharmacy and Garage Net Gems, Cash and a Car to Active Band.

Robbers were active in Harlem early yesterday and Wednesday night. They raided a jewelry store, a drug store and a garage and escaped with several thousand dollars in cash and jewelry. The police believe that the same band was implicated in all three robberies.

After Samuel Feldman had closed his jewelry store at 1,702 Madison Avenue, Wednesday night and had gone to his home across the street at 1,703 Madison Avenue, he looked out of his window and saw a man in his store. The thief was removing a tray from the show window. Feldman ran to the store while his wife called the police. The robber fled with several trays of rings valued at \$800. He had entered by forcing a rear window.

George Golden was talking to Rabbi Henry Rosenfeld in the rear of his brother's drug store at 1,820 Lexington Avenue shortly before midnight Wednesday, when two armed men came in. They took \$30 and a watch and chain from the rabbi; \$10 and watch and chain from Golden and his brother's watch and chain which they found in a drawer. They also took \$100 worth of safety razor blades and \$196 from the cash register.

"So long, girls! Don't worry! These guys have cars!"

Two armed men raided the Peer Garage at 65 West 198th Street early yesterday. They locked the manager and several other employees in closed automobiles after they had searched them without finding any money. The manager had thrown several hundred dollars in collections in another car at the entrance of the robbers and they did not find it. The pair disappeared in a new sedan which had been stored in the garage.

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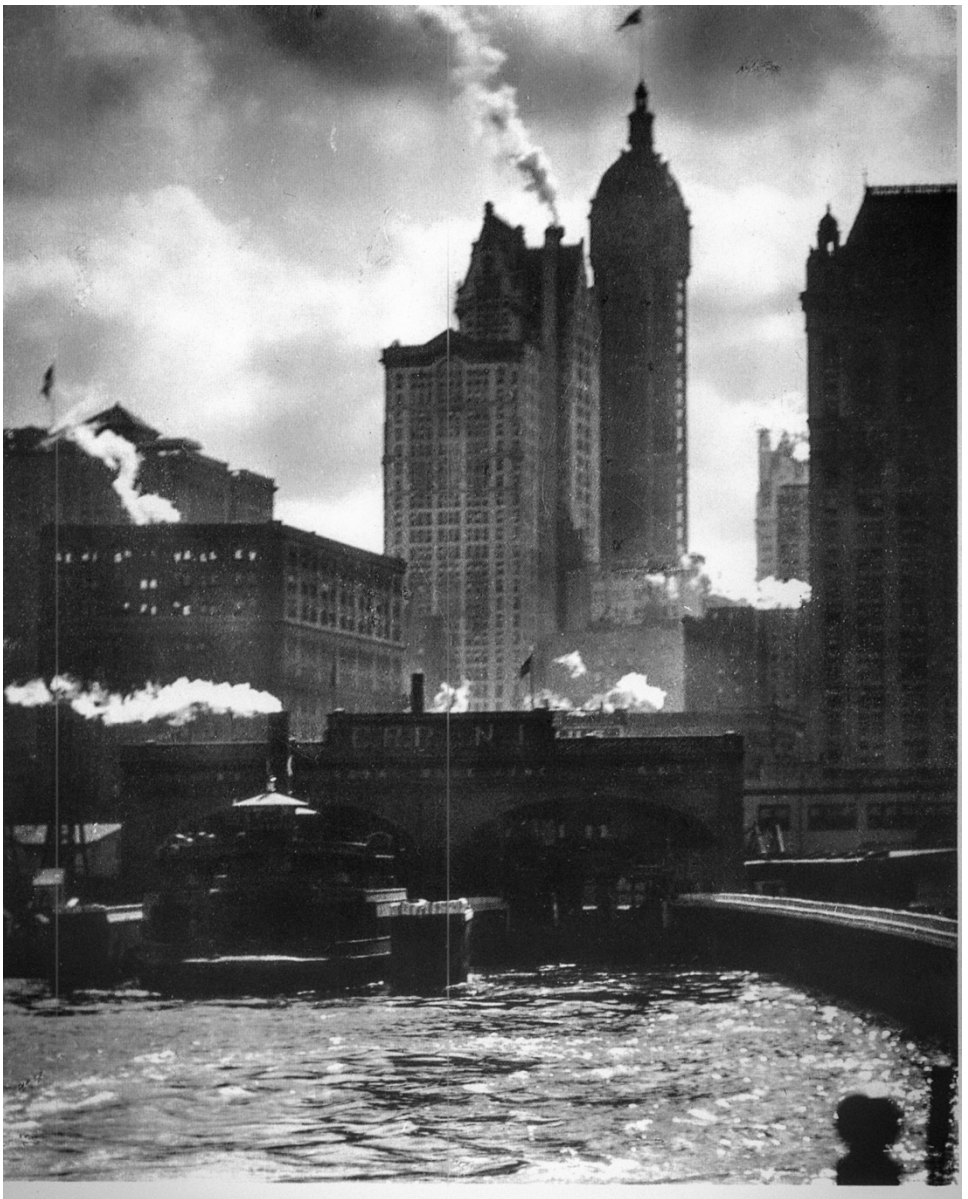
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*Ou : de comment la fortune des Rockefeller surgit du travail de la terre !*



*Alfred Stieglitz, « The city of ambition », 1910.*