



1925-2025

UN AN AVEC HOWARD PHILLIPS LOVECRAFT

#95 | 7 AVRIL 1925



Un conservateur de musée obtient d'un marchand une gravure à l'eau-forte en provenance d'un vieux manoir, et découvre qu'elle n'est pas la même selon le moment où on la voit. Une silhouette encapuchonnée traverse la pelouse devant la maison. Plus tard elle n'y est plus, mais une fenêtre est ouverte. Encore plus tard, on découvre une sorte de squelette aux habits en lambeaux emportant un enfant. Plus rien ensuite. Il parvient à identifier le manoir d'après une vieille inscription mi-effacée, et trouve que le dernier hériter a disparu en 1802. Le père était un graveur amateur mais plutôt doué. Retrouvé mort le troisième anniversaire de la disparition de son fils — juste après avoir terminé cette gravure. Il avait la réputation d'être dur avec les braconniers, et était très fier d'en avoir pendu un qui avait tué un garde-chasse. On murmurait qu'un ami du braconnier pendu avait enlevé l'enfant. La gravure ne changea plus jamais — son secret avait été déchiffré.

H.P. Lovecraft, *Carnet de 1933*, compression de la nouvelle *Eau forte* (*The Mezzotint*, 1904) de Montague Rhodes James (1862-1936) et son portrait, Lovecraft disposait chez lui d'au moins quatre de ses recueils, dont ce *Ghost Stories of an Antiquary*, ou son *A Warning to the Curious*, qui paraît en 1925 et qu'il citera dans son *Histoire de la littérature surnaturelle*.

[1925, mardi 7 avril]

Write SH — word SH coming — POSTAL AEPG////out with Kirk —
met SL for dinner & bookstall all back to 169 — SL leave — HP descend
& investigate Washington. Retire.

*J'écris à Sonia. Elle m'annonce son retour. J'envoie ma lettre à tante
Annie. On sort avec Kirk. On retrouve Loveman pour dîner puis
bouquinistes, on rentre tous trois au 169. Loveman s'en va, Lovecraft
redescend et rouvre ses guides de Washington. Couché.*

Il écrit quoi à ses tantes, le cher et affectionné neveu, leur serviteur (*Yr most aff'nephew & obt Servt*) ? Il les remercie de la ponctualité du chèque, on sait par Sonia qu'elles lui envoient chaque semaine un peu d'argent. Qu'elles joignent à leurs lettres des articles découpés de journaux, et les mots croisés de ceux de Providence, qu'il remet scrupuleusement à Frank Belknap Long. Et version « dépliée » de cette journée du 7 (mais, si on a la lettre à Lilian du 11, on n'a pas cette lettre à Annie postée aujourd'hui) : « Le lendemain — mardi 7 — ai reçu la nouvelle de l'arrivée prévue de S. H. l'après-midi suivant, écrit un peu, puis je suis sorti avec Kirk pour retrouver Loveman et dîner à l'Automat de la 14e rue, après quoi nous sommes allés ensemble par *l'elevated* à la librairie O'Malley's de la Columbus Ave. Nous y avons flâné une bonne partie de la soirée, nous arrêtant plus tard à nouveau dans une cafétéria avant de revenir au 169. S L est parti tôt, et un peu plus tard je me suis excusé auprès de Kirk, préférant redescendre pour étudier mes guides de Washington. A E P G vous montrera l'itinéraire que j'ai élaboré à la suite de mon étude. Puis couché. » Les deux versions correspondent, on gagne en précision. Dans le journal, illumination nocturne de la Public Library : qu'en pense le buste de Gertrude Stein juste à l'arrière ? Ah non, il n'a pas encore été érigé. À la Columbia, conférence d'un savant allemand sur la psychologie du singe et celle de l'homme, et de leur appropriation d'outils simples : mais est-ce que la nouveauté n'est pas qu'il filme ses expériences ? Noter comment la typographie de la rubrique publicitaire des enseignements privés utilise une police différente des autres articles. Publicité pour les stylos-plume Waterman : c'est le modèle qu'utilise Lovecraft, conservons-en donc l'image. Et cette fois c'est au tailleur pour hommes d'Andrea qu'on reprendra sa commande d'un dessin avec traversée de la Ve Avenue, fragment de pare-choc et calandre d'une voirure en mouvement et aperçu à l'arrière-plan d'un bus à étage découvert pour l'ambiance époque.

New York Times, 7 avril 1925. Les deux lions à la porte de la Bibliothèque publique ont attendu en vain, la nuit dernière que les lumières s'éteignent et à force d'attendre ils en ont perdu leur beau sommeil. Les lumières ont brillé toute la nuit sur la terrasse de la bibliothèque au lieu de s'éteindre comme d'habitude à 22 h, d'aussi loin que les lions pouvaient se souvenir. Dans le but d'illuminer un des rares points sombres de la Vème avenue, devant le bâtiment principal de la bibliothèque, entre la 40ème et la 42ème rue, il a été décidé hier de garder l'éclairage jusqu'au matin, et la décision aussitôt exécutée ? Il y a vingt de ces réverbères tout autour de la bibliothèque, dont huit sur la façade. La lumière est diffusée par des ampoules à l'azote de 200 watts, auxquelles la bibliothèque fournit le courant, les câbles partant de la propre génératrice de l'établissement. Des lampes supplémentaires doivent être installées sous les arcades à l'entrée du bâtiment. Les lampes à azote de 200 watts ont été installées dans les vingt réverbères pour remplacer les ampoules à tungstène de 100 ou 150 watts. Tandis qu'était maintenue la version officielle d'une continuité de l'illumination de l'avenue pendant la nuit, il a été suggéré que non seulement le voisinage de l'établissement sera ainsi plus attractif et plus sûr, mais que cela découragera les amours nocturnes et autres trafics.

Library Lights Start All-Night Vigils To Discourage 'Spooners' on the Terrace

The two big lions in front of the New York Public Library waited in vain for the lights to go out last night and in waiting they lost their beauty sleep. The lights burned brightly all night on the terrace in front of the Library instead of being extinguished promptly at 10 o'clock, according to the custom as far back as the lions can remember.

With a view to illuminating what has been a dark spot on Fifth Avenue in front of the central building of the Library, between Fortieth and Forty-second Streets, it was decided yesterday to allow the lights to burn till morning. No sooner decided than done.

There are twenty of these lampposts surrounding the Library, eight of them in front. The light is diffused by 200-watt nitrogen lamps, for which the Li-

brary supplies the current, the wires running from the institution's own generating plant direct to the lampposts. There are none of the regulation arc lights on the Library side of the avenue in that block.

Additional lights are to be put in the arches in front of the building, it was said at the Library yesterday afternoon. The 200-watt nitrogen lamps have been put in the twenty lamppost lanterns to replace 100 to 150 watt tungsten lamps.

While no official reason was assigned for the increase in candle power and continuance of the illumination throughout the night, the innovation, it was suggested, will not only make the vicinity more attractive and safer, but will discourage "petting parties."

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TELLS HOW THE APE RESEMBLES MAN

Dr. Koehler Says Anthropoids
 Can Recognize What They
 See and Use It.

INTELLIGENCE SURPRISING

1,200 Hear German Professor Lec-
 ture at Columbia and See Pic-
 tures of Monkeys' Ingenuity.

Dr. Wolfgang Koehler of the Uni-
 versity of Berlin spoke on the lives and
 habits of anthropoid apes before an
 audience of more than 1,200 persons in
 the MacMillan Academic Theatre at
 Columbia University last night.

Dr. Koehler, who is recognized as a
 leading authority on anthropoids, has
 been barred from giving his lectures at
 the University of North Carolina and
 the University of Tennessee, because
 of their opposition to the teaching of
 evolution.

"When animal behavior approaches
 human behavior, there is every reason
 for investigating it," he declared.

"There is an enormous difference be-
 tween the intelligence of the ape and
 the intelligence of the lower animals,"
 he said.

"Animal psychologists were very much
 surprised when they found that apes
 and chimpanzees did not imitate hu-
 mans," he continued. "An ape or a
 chimpanzee in the depths of the Afri-
 can forests, where he has never seen
 man, will exhibit the same behavior
 that a captured ape exhibits. Organiza-
 tion of what you see is a necessary fac-
 tor in imitation, and the ape shows that
 he can organize what he sees."

Dr. Koehler said that he had proved
 by experiments on his own chimpanzees
 that they could invent without the help
 of a model. In one experiment he placed
 a chimpanzee in a cage, and placed
 some fruit outside the cage, just out of
 the chimpanzee's reach. This chimpan-
 zee had used sticks to procure food
 beyond his reach many times, but there
 was no stick in his cage. There was,
 however, a tree growing in the cage,
 and the problem Dr. Koehler set before
 his chimpanzee was the problem of or-
 ganizing the tree into possible sticks.

Without any outside help the chimpan-
 zee broke off a branch and reached the
 fruit with it, thereby proving Dr. Koeh-
 ler's theory that the animal is capable
 of organizing what he sees to obtain a
 definite end.

"Chimpanzees vary in the degree of
 their intelligence just as human beings
 do," said Dr. Koehler. "I have experi-
 mented with intelligent apes and stupid
 apes, and the peculiar thing about the
 behavior of the stupid ones is that they
 never forget a process once it is
 learned."

Dr. Koehler exhibited some motion
 pictures which he had taken of his ex-
 periments. In one experiment, he tied
 some fruit on the ceiling of the ape's
 cage about twenty-five feet from the
 ground. He left a long bamboo pole
 in the cage, and the ape soon learned
 to place the pole on the ground, in an
 upright position, and climb to the top,
 where he reached the fruit before the
 pole fell. The purpose of this experi-
 ment was to show the ape's ability to
 organize the materials which he had to
 work with.

"A logical theory of every field of
 psychology is necessary before we can
 thoroughly explain anthropoid be-
 havior," he concluded, "and as yet, we
 have not arrived at a complete set of
 theories."

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