



1925-2025

UN AN AVEC HOWARD PHILLIPS LOVECRAFT

#106 | 18 AVRIL 1925

En ce qui concerne les échecs, le tennis et le bridge, je dois admettre que je n'ai pas le moindre intérêt pour aucun de ces trois jeux, ni pour aucun autre jeu, sport ou casse-tête connu de l'humanité. C'est curieux, mais je ne possède absolument pas le trait psychologique qui pousse à s'intéresser à la compétition. Et sur le plan intellectuel, je ne m'intéresse à aucun problème artificiellement préétabli ou régi par des règles artificielles. Mon seul intérêt pour l'intellect concerne sa fonction de révélateur de faits concernant le monde naturel. Ainsi, la lutte de l'esprit humain pour découvrir davantage sur la structure de l'univers et les lois de la matière, ou pour reconstituer des phases de l'histoire et définir des types de pensée et d'humeur, me préoccupe intensément, tandis que l'utilisation tout aussi complexe du cerveau pour résoudre les problèmes artificiels des échecs ou du bridge me laisse absolument indifférent. Je n'ai jamais joué au tennis ni au bridge, et je n'ai aucune idée des règles qui les régissent. J'ai appris les échecs à trois reprises, pour les oublier complètement à chaque fois. J'étais un joueur médiocre pendant chacune de ces périodes où j'ai essayé de jouer (toujours sous la pression extérieure). Je n'avais pas le moindre intérêt pour ce jeu maudit et je me moquais bien de gagner ou de perdre. Je suppose que mon aversion pour les jeux est due en partie à la médiocrité de mon intellect. Comme je n'ai pas d'énergie cérébrale excédentaire à dépenser, je regrette qu'une partie de celle-ci soit utilisée de manière inutile ou artificielle. Je pense probablement, inconsciemment, que chaque once de la puissance cérébrale humaine devrait être consacrée à la résolution des *véritables* mystères que la nature nous présente constamment. En conséquence, j'ose dire que j'offre à mes connaissances habituelles et intérêts si variés l'impression d'un vieil ennuyeux vraiment très ennuyeux. Vous serez probablement très déçu et lassé par mes goûts étroits lorsque vous m'aurez vu trois ou quatre jours de suite. Mais quoi qu'il en soit, je vous en préviens à l'avance !

En cherchant quelles étapes fera Lovecraft pour se rendre de New York en Floride, cet échange avec Bbob Barlow qui, pour finir de le convaincre, lui dit tout ce qu'ils pourront faire ensemble ! (Lettre du 19 mars 1934.)

[1925, samedi 18 avril]

See Russell off — Sonny here — wake Kirk, elec. shop — htr. — write —
up to meet FBL — up to Bronx Park — zoo — Bot Gar — elevated —
home — write — up to GK, SL — Tiffany home.

*J'accompagne Russell qui repart. Visite de Sonny Belknap Long. Je réveille
Kirk pour qu'on aille chez l'électricien déposer le chauffage. Écrit. Je
retrouve Sonny en ville, on va zoo du Bronx, puis au jardin botanique.
Retour par le métro aérien. Écrit. Je monte retrouver Kirk et Loveman, on
va boire un café au Tiffany puis retour.*

Au revoir John Russell, bon retour à Tampa (bateau jusqu'à Jacksonville, train jusqu'à Palatka, et autobus ensuite via Orlando ?). En avril 1934, pour se rendre à De Land (près Orlando) chez Barlow, Lovecraft partira en bus de New York à 23h45 et arrivera à Charleston à 6h25 le surlendemain. Pause d'une semaine, et redépart de Charleston à 5h25 pour arrivée à 9h05 à Savannah, attente puis redépart à 17h25 de Savannah pour arrivée le lendemain à 21h45 à Jacksonville, attente (il fait déjà nettement plus chaud, on peut rester à la gare routière sur un banc avec un livre), et redépart à 9h pour Palatka une heure plus tard et De Land à midi — je tiens à mentionner Palatka parce qu'une heure non pas de coup de foudre mais de très silencieuse affinité liée justement aux transits six fois de Lovecraft. Mais peut-être Russell est-il plus fortuné et a-t-il pu prendre une liaison Jacksonville (ou même Miami, quoiqu'improbable) par bateau. Quant au fait que Lovecraft ne cherche pas à le voir dans aucun de ses deux voyages en Floride et celui qui le mènera un peu plus tôt à Mobile, l'hypothèse (totalement gratuite) que Russell soit revenu en Angleterre ? Peu à dire sur cette journée de Lovecraft, sinon qu'il lui faut réveiller Kirk avant d'aller faire réparer son radiateur électrique (les souris ont mangé le cordon ? possible !). Et l'attrance de Lovecraft pour les animaux étranges derrière leurs grilles, récurrente. Pas de lettres conservées aux vieilles tantes de Providence avant le 20 mai, alors autant en profiter pour faire bref et retourner aux traductions des récits et fictions, on trouvera. Dans le journal, entrefilet concernant les pendules de Penn Station, la même gare où sont passés Lovecraft et Kirk pour leur voyage à Washington, l'autre bulle vers le dehors de la grande ville avec Central Station. On sait comment Einstein a commencé l'histoire qui le mènerait à la relativité, travaillant alors au bureau des brevets de Zurich, lorsqu'il s'était agi de vérifier l'exacte synchronisation des horloges de Paris, Francfort, Genève et Zurich compte tenu du temps de propagation du courant électrique qui transmettait les

informations de réglage — Lovecraft cite souvent Einstein, dont il lit les travaux depuis l'époque journalisme amateur. Que se passe-t-il donc dans une gare aussi géante que la Penn lorsque les douze horloges s'arrêtent pour deux heures ? Et si ce qui restait de l'article c'étaient ces gens qui couraient pour en informer les passagers : on n'a pas inventé les haut-parleurs dans les gares, et soudain c'est tout le bruit de la ville qui change. Dans le journal aussi : le célèbre dirigeable géant, le Los Angeles (on se souvient de son vol au-dessus de New York pendant l'éclipse) traque les bootleggers en bateau depuis le ciel, tandis que le 5-33, après 30 heures de déroute entre l'Angleterre et la Hollande, a enfin pu s'amarrer au sol. Nouvelle affaire de bigamie au tribunal : on sait que telle sera la situation de Sonia lors de son troisième mariage, en Californie, par la faute de son ex-mari futur écrivain de légende, qui ne finalisera pas les dernières formalités en 1928. La version originale concernant ce hold up pour 2 dollars et une perceuse électrique (zut, un peu de désordre dans ma pourtant scrupuleuse organisation, voir à date d'avant-hier), et cette dame qui poursuit son mari, dépensant toutes les ressources du ménage dans ses nouvelles voitures. À Washington on confirme le droit des femmes à disposer à l'étranger d'un passeport sous leur nom de jeune fille. Et pourquoi pas un catcheur dans ce relevé : *please meet* Mr Stanislaus Zbyszko.

New York Times, 18 avril 1925. Le temps et plusieurs trains bondés ont attendu la nuit dernière à Penn Station quand les douze grandes horloges de la gare se sont toutes ensemble arrêtées pour deux heures. Les horloges sont alimentées par un circuit électrique unique, et quand le problème s'est déclaré peu avant 7h30 toutes leurs aiguilles ont cessé d'avancer. Tous les employés disponibles ont été alors envoyés dans les différentes salles d'attente, attirant l'attention des passagers sur l'interruption et leur demandant de se servir de leurs propres montres pour surveiller l'heure, ou de la demander à leur voisin. Et on a rédigé en toute hâte des affiches expliquant la situation, tandis qu'une équipe d'urgence s'attaquait au système de contrôle. Plusieurs trains ont été retenus pour une légère période, le temps de s'assurer que tous les passagers étaient à bord. On rapporte quelques cas de personnes qui n'ont pu être prévenues et ont manqué leur train. À 9h30 le système fonctionnait de nouveau et tout revenait dans l'ordre.

LOS ANGELES MAKES RUM ROW PICTURES

Dirigible Soars Over Liquor Fleet While Scared Crews Dump Cases Overboard.

TRIES TO KEEP IT SECRET

Wilbur Refuses to Discuss Photographing, Though He Is Said to Have Ordered It.

The return of the gigantic Navy dirigible, Los Angeles to her station at Lakehurst, N. J., yesterday led to the disclosure that naval photographers aboard the airship had taken photographs of the rum fleet off the Atlantic Coast during her trial flight on Thursday.

Information that the dirigible had been used as a scout for the dry fleet came out when members of the crew discussed their flight with newspaper reporters. The news no sooner became known, however, than an official attempt was made in Washington to put on the lid of secrecy.

Although Captain George W. Steefe, commanding the naval air station at Lakehurst, said that the orders to photograph the rum fleet had been given to him by Secretary of the Navy Wilbur three weeks ago, Secretary Wilbur in Washington maintained extreme secrecy about the innovation yesterday.

Refuses to Discuss Incident.

Secretary Wilbur said that all he knew about the incident was from press reports. He would not say whether he had given the orders for the use of the Los Angeles as part of the rum-hunting fleet of the Coast Guard. The Secretary said he had not received copies of the pictures and would make no statement until he had been officially advised of the results of the latest exploit of the new airship. He said he expected to receive an early report concerning it from Lakehurst.

Other navy officials and the heads of the "dry navy" in the Coast Guard office also declined to tell why the pictures were made or to what uses they would be put.

Coast Guard officials said they had had no advance notice that the Los Angeles was to make photographs of the rum fleet, but that they would be glad to examine the pictures and the accompanying report when they were received by the Navy Department.

It was learned from authoritative naval sources that the Navy Department has cooperated with the Internal Revenue service in the past to prevent smuggling of narcotics off the Pacific Coast, where Secretary Wilbur comes from. Naval aviation units based on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, have aided the Internal Revenue service in the prevention of opium smuggling with marked success. Ships bound from the Orient and touching at Honolulu have been apprehended by the use of seaplanes and surface ships and in some cases narcotics have been confiscated in San Francisco as the result of information cabled from the Hawaiian Islands.

R-33 RETURNS HOME, BADLY SMASHED UP

British Dirigible Lands Safely 10 Hours After Being Torn From Mast and Carried to Holland.

BOW OF AIRSHIP WRECKED

Crew Made Repairs and Kept Control of Craft All During the Trip—Praised by Air Officials.

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LONDON, April 17.—The dirigible R-33 was safely housed at the Pulham Aerodrome shortly before 4 o'clock this afternoon, just thirty hours after she broke loose. During the whole time she had been fighting for life against most adverse weather conditions and the success of Flight Lieutenant Ralph Sleight Booth, her commander, in bringing the airship safely home is enormously enhanced by her crippled condition.

When the airship tore away the arm of the mooring mast she broke completely the first and damaged severely the second of the eight sections in which her framework is built. The outer envelope was rent badly for one-sixth of the distance along the hull and hung in great folds as far aft as the beginning of the letters painted on her hull.

Moreover, as the airship went adrift she carried with her two pairs of artillery wheels used to ballast her as she swung at anchor, each of which weighed half a ton. Yet with all these handicaps, Booth had the R-33 under some sort of control within two minutes of her breaking away, kept her going in a wind that sometimes drove her backward and finally brought her safe across the North Sea to her own home.

Air Vice Marshal Sir Geoffrey H. Salmond wirelessd Booth: "Your efforts are splendid. They redound to the credit of you all."

One Gas Bag Flattened Out.

From information received from the crew it is learned that when a great gust broke the arm of the mooring mast a mass of iron fell on the first of the gas bags within the outer envelope and flattened it out. At once the airship was down by the head and in a precarious position. Nevertheless, within two minutes Lieutenant Booth had one gas bag running and in four minutes another. He then considered the ship under control and managed to turn her head to the wind.

It was necessary, however, to set about repairs immediately. The envelope was dented in for about two-thirds of its length; the bow was hanging in shreds, and there was danger. In the fierce wind, it would rip still further and the vessel would collapse. Men went aloft and, lowering a rope ladder over the bow, gathered up the loose ends of the flapping silk and bunched them and tied them together. They made untidy balls, but prevented the silk from ripping further.

It was still impossible to turn the R-33, and stern first she was driven over Lowestoft and over the North Sea.

It was here that the gun carriage wheels carried away with her proved to be of great value. They were connected with the ship by long ropes passing through the water ballast vents and could have been cut away at any time, but it was found they were doing much to steady the ship. She was rolling in a heavy wind and, with her foremost gas bag gone, was trying to pitch head first into the sea, and the heavy wheels trailing astern acted as ballast to keep her on an even keel.

WOMEN WIN POINT ON PASSPORT RIGHTS

Kellogg at Hearing Says Ruby Black, Married, Can Use Maiden Name Abroad.

GENERAL RULE UNAFFECTED

But He Will Consult Coolidge—Woman Party and Englishwomen Urge Change.

Special to The New York Times.

WASHINGTON, April 17.—The right of American married women to obtain passports to go abroad under their maiden names was argued today before Secretary Kellogg by a delegation representing the National Woman's Party. Helena Normanton, barrister, whose husband is Gavin E. Clarke, and who was the first English woman to have a passport issued by the British Foreign Office in her maiden name, also spoke.

The speakers presented the case of Ruby Black, a newspaper woman, who applied for a passport in the name she bore before marriage, and was informed that the State Department required married women to sign their own Christian name or names and the surname of their husbands. Miss Black refused to make the change in her application, declaring that she "did not want to travel in Europe under any assumed name." She took an appeal to the Chief of the Division of Passport Control, and the hearing before Secretary Kellogg was the result.

The issue raised by Miss Black was argued today by Burnita Shelton Matthews, attorney for the National Woman's Party, and Margaret Whittemore, Isabella Kendig, Olive Lacy and Millie Roehrer, all members of the party, as well as by Miss Normanton. In a preliminary interview Assistant Secretary MacMurray refused to recommend the change in the regulations.

In their argument his callers maintained that no woman should be forced to take her husband's name against her will. They added that a regulation, depriving a woman of her own name without her consent was contrary to the supreme law of the land as well as the English common law and that the rule should be vacated forthwith.

It was recalled in the course of the hearing that Miss Normanton, in her fight in England to carry on her professional legal work under her maiden name, carried the case to the Joint Council of the Four Inns of Court, which decided in her favor. The Joint Council is a judicial body with large powers in the regulation of the legal profession.

ZBYSZKO WAS SURPRISED.

New Wrestling Champion Did Not Think He Could Beat Munn.

PHILADELPHIA, April 17.—Stanislaus Zbyszko, newly crowned king of heavy-weight wrestlers, was as much surprised at his victory Wednesday night over Wayne (Big) Munn, dethroned champion, as the big crowd of fans who sat for an instant in silence after the second and deciding fall before they started to cheer the veteran matman, Zbyszko admitted today. He also said he had noticed during the bout that the giant westerner was weak and apparently ill.

"I never expected to beat Munn so decisively and quickly," said Zbyszko, whose age variously is placed between 43 and 58 years, "and my victory was as much of a surprise to me as it apparently was to the spectators. Munn threw me when we met not long ago, and I really never thought I could beat him Wednesday night."

"I had been training three months and was in good condition, but did not figure to get better than a draw. I thought I might be able to keep from being thrown and that was my goal when I entered the ring. I soon found that something was wrong with Munn. He didn't seem to have one-third of the strength he had when I wrestled him the first time."

Zbyszko, who twice previously has held the world's wrestling championship, said he would defend his title, "here in America against the best opponents."

CHICAGO, April 17.—The \$60,000 purse for a Decoration Day heavy-weight championship wrestling match at Michigan City had almost vanished tonight because of the surprising defeat of the title holder, Wayne (Big) Munn, by Stanislaus Zbyszko in Philadelphia Wednesday night. Strangler Lewis, the former champion, had signed for the return match with Munn, who threw him out of the ring in Kansas City, and Munn was holding off while he tried to land a \$100,000 European tour contract. Efforts to sign the new champion with Lewis in place of Munn for the match have met with little success so far.

ZBYSZKO MAY SEE BOUT.

Champion Expected to Attend the Stecher-Gardini Match.

Stanislaus Zbyszko, veteran Polish wrestler, who recently regained the world's heavy-weight championship, is expected to be a spectator Monday night at the Seventy-first Regiment Army when Joe Stecher, who formerly held the title, engages Renzo Gardini, Italian, in a match to a finish. Stecher has challenged Zbyszko to a title match and expects through the medium of a decisive victory over Gardini to establish himself as a formidable challenger for the honor.

Bill Leon is scheduled to tackle Frank Judson, and Georges Deslongchamps will engage Dan Koloff in two other matches.

nery fire when the snips go into action.

SELDOW BIGAMY TRIAL IS BATHED IN TEARS

Two Wives, Latest Mother-in-Law and Defendant All Weep, and the First Wife Faints.

Many tears were shed by the first and latest wives of Jack Seldow, by the mother of the latter and by Seldow himself at the opening of his trial for bigamy yesterday in General Sessions.

Seldow was indicted about a month ago, when serving thirty days in the workhouse on his plea of guilty to an old assault charge. He had served previously a term in Sing Sing and is suspected of having even more than two wives, but only Augusta Redenack and Mary Woodson, daughter of Mrs. Ada B. Woodson of Washington, D. C., thus far have claimed him as a husband. Records at the Marriage License Bureau are said to have revealed that he also married an Annie Mitchell.

Assistant District Attorney Maloney called Augusta Redenack as his first witness. She said she was 30 years old, and admitted she had married another man without obtaining a divorce from Seldow, believing him dead. She said she was married to Seldow in May, 1918, but that he deserted her during an illness two weeks later.

Seldow began to weep when she told of his deserting her, and continued while his lawyer was cross-examining her. Augusta wept and fainted. Judge Collins stopped the trial temporarily, and told Seldow there was no necessity for his tears.

Later in Augusta's testimony Mrs. Woodson, who was seated in one of the spectators' seats, gave way to tears. Then her daughter, the defendant's latest wife, began to sob. Outside the court room she had said she still loved Seldow, and would continue to love him "no matter how many wives he might have had before."

The first wife joined Mrs. Woodson when she left the witness stand, and buried her head in the arms of Seldow's latest mother-in-law when Judge Collins adjourned the trial until Monday.

SAYS HUSBAND SPENT \$37,000 FOR AUTOS

Mrs. Cooke Charges That He Slapped Her When She Asked for Household Money.

That her husband, who, she says, enjoys an income of \$30,000 a year, had spent \$37,000 for automobiles of various makes but had slapped her face when she asked for money for household expenses, was charged by Mrs. Johanna C. Cooke in her application yesterday to Supreme Court Justice Haggerty in Long Island City, Queens, for alimony and counsel fees pending trial of her suit for separation from her husband, George W. Cooke of Derby Place, Whitestone, Queens.

The Court granted Mrs. Cooke \$250 a week alimony and \$750 counsel fees. The defendant, president of the George W. Cooke Corporation, with offices at 505 Court Street, Brooklyn, and is a member of the Bayside Yacht Club.

The complaint charges extreme cruelty. It states that the Cookes were married in Hoboken on November 28, 1916, and that during the winter of 1921 they began to disagree. Mrs. Cooke charges that at that time her husband used such terms in addressing her as "illiterate fool" and "big fat cow," and that subsequently he humiliated her when her daughter, now three years old, was born. She said her husband discharged her nurse while she was in the hospital and that later he beat her when she refused to give the child certain medicines he suggested. The Cookes have one other daughter, Georgia, who is 7 years old.

His conduct with women on his yacht in White-stone Harbor in July, 1924, and various acts of physical violence toward his wife are also cited in the complaint. On one occasion, Mrs. Cooke alleged, her husband tore a telephone from the wall of their home in Whitestone and hurled it at her when she attempted to call for the police to protect her from him.

5 BANDITS NET \$2 IN PAYROLL HOLD-UP

Snatch Brief Case From Wrong Man at Factory Door, Then Take Friend's Wallet.

SLUG BOTH WITH GUN BUTTS

One Gives Chase in Auto Across Queensboro Bridge, but Thugs' Car Eludes Him.

Five bandits, three of them armed, blundered yesterday when they mistook John J. Dr. Bodan of 8431 123d Street, Richmond Hill, a salesman of the Anchor Cap and Closure Corporation of 22 Queens Street, Long Island City, for the paymaster of the corporation. They struck him on the head with the butt end of a gun and snatched a brief case from him containing an electric drill. Eugene A. Smyth, another salesman, went to Dr. Bodan's aid and was held up by one of the men, who took his wallet containing \$2.

"You're a cheap bunch of crooks," shouted Smyth. One of the bandits struck him with a revolver on the jaw. Smyth fell to the floor. The attack was in the vestibule at the factory entrance. Regaining his feet, Smyth ran along Queens Street to Jackson Avenue in pursuit. The five bandits jumped into an automobile and went north to the Bridge Plaza.

Smyth gave chase in a heavy truck, and then in a faster car, to the Manhattan side of the Queensboro Bridge. But the bandit car eluded him.

Detectives from the Hunter's Point Precinct immediately began an investigation. Dr. Bodan said he was struck from behind and only caught a glimpse of two of the bandits.

He and Smyth will visit the Regue's Gallery in Police Headquarters today to look over the pictures.

I am requested by Mr. Charles Dickens to
 inform you that he is coming to Columbus
 by the coach which leaves this city on
 Wednesday morning next, and reaches your
 town on Thursday—and that he purposes
 resting that day, and night, at your house
 preparatory to going on to Sandusky on
 Friday morning. He will be greatly obliged
 to you if you will have the goodness to
 prepare comfortable quarters for him,
 and if you will have the kindness to say,
 (in case any inquiries should be made
 on the subject) that he will not be able
 to have the pleasure of receiving any
 visitors in Columbus, as his short stay is
 one of rest: of which both himself and
 Mrs. Dickens are in need.

A MEMENTO OF DICKENS' FIRST VISIT TO AMERICA, AND OF DOUBLE ASSOCIATION INTEREST. On the fly-leaf of Vol. I in pencil, Dickens has drafted the following letter, afterwards copied, no doubt, and posted: "Sir: I am requested by Mr. Charles Dickens to inform you that he is coming to Columbus by the coach which leaves this city by Wednesday morning next, and reaches your town on Thursday—and that he purposes resting that day, and night, at your house preparatory to going on to Sandusky on Friday morning. He will be greatly obliged to you if you will have the goodness to prepare comfortable quarters for him and if you will have the kindness to say, (in case any inquiries should be made on the subject) that he will not be able to have the pleasure of receiving any visitors in Columbus, as his short stay is one of rest: of which both himself and Mrs.

Merci nos enquêtrices & enquêteurs (et une fois de plus L.B. ! — et lien dans le dossier complémentaire) pour avoir trouvé en ligne le catalogue de la deuxième partie des enchères de la collection de George Barr McCutcheon, manuscrits, lettres et premières éditions de Dickens et Thackeray. On comprend l'enthousiasme de Kirk pour la première vente, ce 17 avril 1925, quelquefois l'absence des lettres de Lovecraft ses tantes se fait plus cruelle.