

1925-2025

UN AN AVEC HOWARD PHILLIPS LOVECRAFT

#140 | 22 MAI 1925

« C'est une erreur de croire que l'horreur est inextricablement associée à l'obscur, au silence, à la solitude. Je l'ai rencontrée dans la brillance d'un bel après-midi, la pleine rumeur de la grande ville, et la pauvre promiscuité d'un meublé avec à mes côtés deux témoins irréfutables et une femme d'un prosaïque bon sens. Ce printemps 1923, j'avais obtenu d'un magazine de la ville de New York quelques piges médiocres et ennuyeuses ; et, incapable de subvenir au moindre loyer, j'errais d'une pension à bas prix à une autre, essayant de trouver une chambre qui ait au moins la décence d'être propre, un mobilier qui ne soit pas en miettes, et un prix adapté à mes moyens. Il m'apparut vite que je n'avais le choix qu'entre un mal et un autre, mais après quelque temps je trouvai 14<sup>ème</sup> rue Ouest une pension qui me dégoûtait un peu moins que les autres où j'étais passé.

« Il s'agissait d'une maison de pierre ocre, de trois étages, qui devait dater des années 1840, et dont la façade de marbre et de bois d'une splendeur quelque peu maculée plaidait pour qu'elle descende d'une opulence à meilleur niveau de goût. Les chambres étaient grandes et hautes de plafond, décorées d'un papier peint impossible et ridiculement ornées de corniches de stuc, qui y maintenaient un déprimant sentiment de moisi et d'obscurs relents de cuisine ; mais les planchers étaient propres, le linge à peu près convenable, et l'eau chaude pas trop souvent tiède ou carrément absente, et j'en vins à la considérer comme le lieu le plus adapté où hiberner jusqu'à ce que je puisse recommencer à vivre. »

Howard Phillips Lovecraft, « *Cool Air* » (« *Un air glacial* »), *New York*, 1925.

[1925, vendredi 22 mai]

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Up late — meet gang Downing St. — RK MK GK SL — proceed to SL's  
— taxicab — transport to 169 — distribute MK lv. — gang to Scotch  
Bakery — SL lv. disperse midnight. Return & write.

*Levé tard. Retrouvé le gang Downing Street. Kirk, Kleiner, Kamin,  
Loveman. On va chez Loveman. On frète un taxi, retour au 169 et  
on répartit les affaires, Kamin repart, les autres à la Boulangerie  
Écossaise. Loveman s'en va, dispersion à minuit. Retour et écrit.*

Alors c'en serait fini de l'exil cagibi, ou des journées « sans voir aucun visage humain » sous les frondaisons reculées de Fort Greene Park, en lisant son Conrad ? Levé tard, c'est donc directement l'heure du déjeuner, métro pour le Greenwich Village et la petite Downing Street, où ce sera bien sûr spaghettis bolognaise, les autres probablement avec ce verre de vin de pays clandestin qui fait le bouche à oreille de leur petite cantine, mais lui Lovecraft merci non, tandis qu'une fois de plus le chat tigré de la maison s'installe sur ses genoux alors que jamais n'approchant des autres clients — quelle fierté intérieure il en tire ! Et donc ça n'aurait servi à rien, toutes ces manœuvres et stratégies « subtiles » (son mot) depuis dimanche dernier et toute la semaine ? Le voilà de nouveau happé par le « gang » (allez, remplacez par « la gang » les ami·e·s du Québec !), Kleiner, Kirk, Loveman et l'associé de Kirk, Martin Kamin : moins de dix jours avant l'ouverture de leur librairie. Et retour Brooklyn : on finit par s'y perdre un peu dans les déménagements de Loveman, mais là c'est sérieux, et — teasing en bon français — on en verra dans trois jours les conséquences : une fois de plus appel à un taxi pour convoier les bagages, et on va les répartir (*distribute* ?) en partie entre les chambres de Kirk et Lovecraft (son alcôve dressing). Kamin repart, peut-être en convoyant de nouveau des livres stockés chez Kirk, ce qui expliquerait qu'il les ait accompagnés dans la corvée cartons ? Ah oui, on a bien mérité d'un tour à la Scotch Bakery, probablement Loveman qui paye en rétribution du service : toutes les résolutions ont donc volé. Et tout cela sous le nouveau chapeau de paille fièrement porté. Enfin consolation : il n'est que minuit, reste la nuit pour écrire. Dans le *New York Times*, l'annonce qu'Amundsen est le premier à décoller pour survoler le pôle nord, l'ouverture de la première ligne de transport de marchandises par voie aérienne entre New York et Chicago, et, loin en Europe, la guerre du Rif où s'empêtre la France, et, plus près de ces mystérieux et atypiques comportements individuels qui sont ceux des personnages de Lovecraft, cette fuite d'un caissier : et que pour la

première fois on voit disparaître un caissier sans qu'apparemment il emporte la caisse. Et c'est toujours le Paterson de James Morton puis de William Carlos Williams qu'on apprend à découvrir. Beebe continue son exploration des fonds marins inconnus aux Galapagos, et rançon de la prohibition qui envahit au quotidien les colonnes des faits divers : c'est l'Ontario qui sert de cave à bière aux habitants de Buffalo et de la région.

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*New York Times*, 22 mai 1925. De Dumont, New Jersey, le 21 mai. Les collègues et clients d'Arthur H Robertson, caissier depuis plusieurs années à la National Bank, vont vérifier dûment leurs comptes et possessions aujourd'hui. M Robertson est porté disparu depuis mardi dernier. Après avoir dîné chez lui avec sa femme et deux enfants, au moment de rentrer sa voiture dans le garage, il dit à sa femme qu'il lui restait du travail à faire à la banque et qu'il ne rentrerait peut-être pas avant plusieurs heures. Cependant, il ne revint pas de la nuit. Mme Robertson, après plusieurs demandes anxieuses auprès de leurs amis et des collègues de son mari, reçut le lendemain matin une lettre manuscrite, postée à Paterson, dans laquelle Robertson lui annonçait son intention de ne plus revenir. La lettre expliquait que son départ lui causait bien du chagrin, et ajoutait « J'espère que je pourrai m'en guérir ». L'homme disparu disait aussi qu'il avait laissé leur voiture au parking Hamilton de Paterson, et, parlant d'un chèque qu'il avait laissé pour la voiture, il continuait : « J'ai aussi pris mes précautions auprès de la banque pour votre tranquillité financière », et ajoutait : « Ils trouveront tous mes comptes en ordre à la banque ». L'examen fait à la banque l'après-midi même révélait que M Robertson avait laissé moins de 1 000 dollars sur son compte à la banque. Le président de la banque, M Floyd Marshall, a déclaré : « Il avait un libre accès à tous les comptes de la banque et aurait pu se servir tranquillement. Nous pensons qu'il a fait une dépression nerveuse. Il a eu un mauvais hiver, mais semblait aller mieux depuis son retour d'Atlantic City ». On a aussi appris qu'un avis de recherche avait été lancé concernant Mme Thomas Davies, de la même ville, dont le mari avait été transféré il y a quelque temps dans un sanatorium pour une tumeur au cerveau. Mme Davies, qui est la mère d'un enfant de 10 ans, vivait avec une tante à Ridgefield Park, et a disparu soit mardi soit hier.

## AMERICANS INVADE ONTARIO FOR BEER

Hosts Cross Into the Border  
Cities as 800 Resorts Begin  
Selling New Beverage.

### DETROITERS FIND NO "KICK"

Women Go Along Also—To-  
ronto Has Quiet Day, but  
Ottawa Throongs Celebrate.

*Special to The New York Times.*

TORONTO, May 21.—Curiosity rather than thirst prevailed at most of the 800 resorts of the Province of Ontario which began dispensing 4.4 beer today for the first time since the war. None of the dispatches from all parts of the Province admitted any rush for the stronger beverage except in Kitchener, where one hotel having a permit was overwhelmed during its temporary monopoly, and in Ottawa, whose citizens never let the bartenders rest.

In addition to the 800 permits under which beer was sold today, 400 more have been issued, and it is estimated that when all are certified, 1,600 hotels will be licensed. In Toronto alone seventy-five hotels are dispensing the beer.

The border points, notably Windsor, opposite Detroit, entertained many visitors from the United States, although the ferries were not crowded, and there were apparently more spectators than drinkers when the first bottle was opened at 7 o'clock this morning.

The real "invasion" began tonight, however, with every table in all the hotels and restaurants of Windsor and Walkerville and in the roadhouses between the two cities reserved, mostly by Detroiters. The taprooms of the hotels were crowded all the afternoon, chiefly by Americans, and the general opinion was that the new brew was just as represented, a non-intoxicating, palatable beverage.

### Rolling Throongs in Ottawa.

While Toronto took the day philosophically, the news from Ottawa told a different story. "Beer sufficient to flood every street in the Dominion's capital," dispatches said, "has been gurgling down thirsty throats since 7 o'clock this morning in every section of the city."

Despite a drizzling rain, queues lined up at the Ottawa saloons and every one in them seemed anxious to be the first to sample the brew. Some of the more enterprising places gained a full hour's start under the law by reverting to Standard instead of Daylight Saving Time.

A milling, shouting, rollicking throng was to be found in every Ottawa "beverage room," where bartenders of both sexes, even little girls, were frantically filling and refilling the never-ending stream of glasses.

## FRENCH SEND RELIEF TO NEW RIFF FRONT

Two Columns Are Hurried to  
Protect Taounat District and  
Guard Railway to Fez.

### PAINLEVE SEEKS BACKING

French Army of 50,000 Remains on  
Defensive, Pending Outcome  
of Chamber Debate.

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Special Cable to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

PARIS, May 21.—General de Chambrun began operations today against the Riffians in the Taounat district similar to those which he successfully undertook last week at Bibane. With two columns, commanded by Colonels Cambray and Freydenberg, he is advancing to the relief of French outposts which have been more closely invested by the Riffians during the last few days.

With the men at his disposal Marshal Lyautey has found it impossible to maintain anything like a continuous front and has been forced to adopt a system of reinforced blockhouses supported by mobile columns. Thus, after the capture of Bibane Plateau last week and relief of the blockhouse, garrisons of the latter were reinforced, but the main body of troops was withdrawn and reformed so as to be in a position to defend any other part of the line which might be threatened.

With these troops General de Chambrun has now gone to help outposts of the Taounat district while another column is also facing the Riff attack at Kifane, further east, where Abd-el-Krim has massed his artillery in an attempt to reach the Oudja-Fez railway, along which all French reinforcements and supplies are being carried to the front.

### Dual Campaign Is Criticized.

In Paris it is one of the points of criticism of the campaign which is being urged by the Socialists that the dual system of blockhouses and mobile columns may become extremely costly. Thus two days ago the French had to fight again to get back onto Bibane Plateau in order to carry further provisions to their garrisons. The argument of the critics is that it is impossible to continue fighting again and again for ground which has been once won, and they are urging that the whole district north of the Ouergha River be evacuated. In a country easier to deal with such tactics might be wise but the French are faced with the difficulty and danger of the possibility of the spread of the revolt among tribes to the south of the Ouergha should they withdraw their line.

Marshal Lyautey in today's report mentions that in native villages round Fez the report was widely circulated that before beginning his attack Abd-el-Krim arranged with Germany for an attack along the Rhine. Such rumors naturally have an effect on the attitude of the tribes which have also been influenced by dreams of Riffian independence and serve to emphasize the danger which might follow from evacuation of any territory by French troops.

For the present the system of establishing a permanent line of blockhouses with relief columns backing it seems in French expert opinion the only military possibility. Its disadvantage is that tribesmen on every occasion slip through between the blockhouses and surround them as soon as reinforcements are withdrawn and the warfare becomes almost perpetual. This system proved disastrous to the Spaniards, who found they could never get at their mobile and illusory foe, and the French confidence has to be placed in the fact that their soldiers are of sterner material.

Continued on Page 2.

## DUMONT BANK CASHIER VANISHED ON TUESDAY

A. H. Robertson Writes Wife He  
Does Not Intend to Return—  
His Accounts All Right.

*Special to The New York Times.*

DUMONT, N. J., May 21.—Business associates of Arthur H. Robertson for several years cashier of the National Bank here, today sought information regarding his whereabouts. Mr. Robertson disappeared last Tuesday evening, after he had dined with his wife and two children in their home here. As he was about to enter his automobile he told Mrs. Robertson that he had some business matters to attend to which would keep him busy for several hours.

He did not return that night, however. Mrs. Robertson had been making anxious inquiries over the telephone among friends and business associates of her husband the next morning when she received a letter in Mr. Robertson's handwriting postmarked Paterson, in which he announced his intention not to return home. The letter explained that his departure had occasioned him much sorrow, and added: "I wish this cup could pass from me."

The missing man said also that he had left his automobile in the Hamilton garage in Paterson, and, after referring to a check for the car which he had enclosed, continued: "I will also make arrangements with the bank for your financial affairs." The letter concluded: "They will find my affairs all right in the bank."

Mrs. Robertson communicated with Floyd Marshall, President of the bank, who told her that a telegram, dated Albany, N. Y., had been received at the bank from her husband. Mr. Robertson had instructed the bank officials regarding payment to Mrs. Robertson. Bank examiners were called in, and this evening the following statement was issued by Mr. Marshall:

"The examination shows the cashier's accounts in perfect condition in every way, so it was not financial matters that caused him to go away."

The afternoon of his disappearance Mr. Robertson drew less than \$1,000 from his account at the bank. Commenting on this last night President Marshall said: "He had free access to the bank's funds and could have helped himself. This makes me think that he has suffered a mental collapse. He had had a bad winter but seemed much better when he returned from Atlantic City, where he attended the bankers' convention with his wife two weeks ago." Mrs. Robertson said that several years ago her husband had suffered a nervous collapse.

It also became known today that a search was being made for Mrs. Thomas Davies, also of this city, whose husband some time ago was removed to a sanitarium suffering from a brain affection. Mrs. Davies, who is the mother of a 10-year-old girl, now living with an aunt in Ridgefield Park, was reported to have disappeared from her home here either on Tuesday or yesterday. Friends of the woman said they expected to hear from her in a few days.



# AMUNDSEN PLANES HOP OFF ON FLIGHT TO THE NORTH POLE

Leave Kings Bay, Spitzbergen,  
at 5:15 P. M. in Effort to  
Reach Top of Earth.

EACH CARRIES THREE MEN

Veteran Explorer Commands  
One and Lincoln Ellsworth of  
New York the 'Other.

TRIP MAY TAKE 8. HOURS

Several Halts Are Likely and Some  
Time May Be Consumed in  
Locating True Pole.

The North American Newspaper Alliance announced last evening through The Associated Press that it had received a dispatch from Kings Bay, Spitzbergen, stating that the two flying boats of the Amundsen-Ellsworth polar expedition hopped off there at 5:15 o'clock yesterday afternoon for the North Pole. The dispatch said that each plane carried three men.

## Get Full Weather Reports.

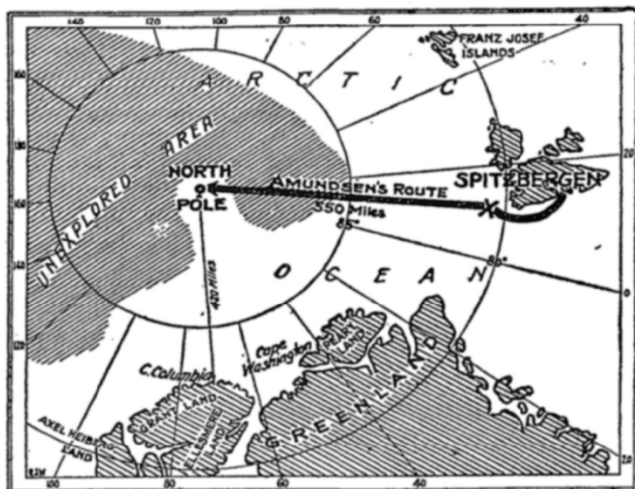
OSLO, Norway, May 21 (AP).—Captain Roald Amundsen's polar expedition, which had been delayed at Spitzbergen because of unfavorable weather conditions, had to hop off late this month or early in June, in the opinion of M. Hesselberg, director of the Oslo Meteorological Station, which collected and forwarded information regarding the weather to the north for the benefit of the explorer.

M. Hesselberg said today that he expected the fog conditions to become appreciably worse after the first week in June and that an attempt after that time might risk disaster to the airplanes.

A meteorological station aboard the expedition steamer Fram received weather reports thrice daily by radio from Oslo, Paris, London, Leningrad and Siberian stations. Reports were also relayed from Canada, the United States, Iceland and Greenland.

The station on the steamer was under the direction of M. Bjerkness, representing the Royal University of Oslo. The Russian and American reports were usually received within a couple of hours. They were immediately decoded and placed in the hands of Mr. Bjerkness, who collated the information for Captain Amundsen.

Even while the flight is on, Captain Amundsen will receive weather reports by radio and his two planes are equipped with instruments by which it will be possible to make observations from high altitudes.



AMUNDSEN'S ROUTE TO THE POLE AND BACK.  
Course to Be Taken by the Veteran Explorer's Two Seaplanes, Which  
Left Spitzbergen Yesterday Afternoon.



## **Beebe Studies Fish at the Bottom of the Sea; Swarms Darken Water as He Sits on Reef**

By WILLIAM BEEBE.

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By Independent Wireless via New Orleans to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

S. S. ARCTURUS, May 21.—The New York Zoological Society's oceanographic expedition has been at anchor for five days off Cocos Island, north of our return course from Panama to the Galapagos. We left Panama, after coaling and revictualing, May 12.

It was the absolutely clear water that brought us here, where we have just about completed our submarine photography. This has been one of the greatest features of our work. We had carefully planned for an under-water study of sea life, but our expectations have been far exceeded by results.

Descending from fifteen to thirty feet among the marvelous coral reefs off Cocos in our diving helmet, we have been able comfortably to watch fish life with greater facility than bird life may be observed ashore.

Professor W. K. Gregory and myself dived all day yesterday, first oiling ourselves thoroughly, as we have found that that permits a longer stay under water. Then standing or sitting among gigantic mushrooms of coral, we do not have to seek out fish, as they come in swarms, in all their brilliant tropical colors, to investigate the diver.

At times the water is literally darkened by the clouds of fish that sweep around one down the coral avenues. We have not yet devised a means for making notes undersea, but the habits of the vast population make such an impression that very little escapes us. Professor Gregory is as enthusiastic as I am, and as surprised that such a

simple method has apparently not been used before for serious scientific collecting. I consider this one of the most important discoveries of the expedition.

Among the strange fish are many sharks, but they are apparently harmless. We take all possible precautions against large sharks and porpoises, but the greatest precaution seems to be to remain motionless. When we descend we often carry with us a wire cage into which we may retreat if sharks or morays become belligerent.

Before anchoring here we trawled in the unsounded waters north of Cocos and made rich hauls.

This island is an extreme contrast to the barren Galapagos, being heavily wooded and sparkling with lovely cascades falling through a thick jungle.

Cocos is the site of buried treasure, for which many exploring parties have searched. Legends even connect the buccaneers with Cocos, and we find abandoned tombs and excavations left by treasure seekers. However, this counter attraction has meant no distraction from our oceanographic work.

Every night the Arcturus is invaded by hundreds of gannets, which fly to our decks and obligingly regurgitate rare fish.

The tension engine, that is part of our trawling and dredging equipment, has again prevented the loss of gear in an emergency, and I extend congratulations to Charles Yates of the technical staff of Harrison Williams (chief patron of the expedition), to whose sagacity we are indebted for this engine.

