

1925-2025

un an avec Howard Phillips Lovecraft

#210 | 31 juillet 1925

Le grand dieu Pan. De manière occulte, une femme voit Pan et engendre une fille. L'enfant élevé dans la réclusion — anecdotes cauchemardesques — grandit — conduit des hommes au suicide et à la folie — à la fin exhibée et mise à mort. Sombre atmosphère — entrelacée avec des allusions à l'antiquité britannique romaine.

Le peuple blanc. Une petite fille introduite par sa gouvernante dans un culte de sorcellerie infernale. Découvre plus tard des choses sinistres dans le paysage et murmure des noms étranges. Devient à la fin une statue dans les bois qui apporte horreur et suicide. Atmosphère.

Le sceau noir. Les petites gens qui vivent dans les montagnes galloises racontent d'étranges horreurs commises sur les mortels. Le professeur Gregg engage un jeune idiot victime d'un tel sort. Assiste à une horreur dans sa bibliothèque — une crise d'épilepsie avec d'étranges odeurs et la preuve de présences surnaturelles. Laisse une note s'en va dans les montagnes à la rencontre d'une terrible découverte. On retrouve plus tard ses habits enroulés dans un parchemin portant l'inscription en caractères cryptiques du sceau. Les notes du professeur Gregg s'interrogent sur la similarité des symboles du sceau babylonien et de l'inscription galloise.

La poudre blanche. Un jeune absorbe une drogue par erreur — Vinum Sabati — hideuse et secrète transformation qui s'en induit — de plus en plus souvent absent de chez lui — reçoit de terribles révélations — une tache noire sur sa main — qui grandit — devient reclus chez lui — horreur à la fenêtre — écoulement sur le plafond d'en dessous — on tue l'horreur liquéfiée qu'on y trouve.

Terreur. Des bêtes se révoltent contre l'homme.

Lovecraft, carnet de 1933, « compressions » de nouvelles de Machen.

[1925, vendredi 31 juillet]

Up noon — wrote letters — out to library — dinner at Automat — return, write, & retire.

Levé à midi. Écrit des lettres. Sorti pour la bibliothèque, déjeuné à l'Automat. Retour, écrit & couché.

Est-ce que précisément l'enjeu ne serait pas de comprendre de plus près, pour une fois qu'on nous le donne temporellement à mesurer, quand l'écriture pousse là comme certitude, qu'on sait désormais qu'elle aura lieu, mais que non, pas aujourd'hui, pas encore aujourd'hui. Écrire des lettres : comme si jamais pouvoir tirer une croix définitive sur les corvées de la direction du *United Amateurs*, ou bien, parce que dans ses codes personnelles et son infinie et très ampoulée politesse, on se doit de répondre aux réponses, et donc n'en jamais finir encore, alors qu'il suffirait de ? Et descendre à Manhattan (en métro, très longtemps qu'on n'a pas eu mention de la traversée piétonne du Brooklyn Bridge, qui l'enchantait tellement il y a quelques mois) : les journées à traîner dans Manhattan, c'était laissé à Sonia, tandis qu'elle partait tôt le matin, bien avant qu'il n'émerge à midi, et ne revenait qu'après 18 h, ayant acheté le dîner au passage, et quand bien même monsieur l'écrivain n'avait fait que lire, ou continuer l'infinie corvée de la gestion associative pour le *United Amateurs* ? Hier à Prospekt Park il avait craqué pour une barquette de frites : est-ce que descendre manger à l'Automat, même maintenant que Kirk et Loveman sont à Cleveland, Kleiner à son travail d'employé de bureau, ce n'est pas comme un genre de vacances ? Alors bien sûr, il va à la Public Library, il y a déjà passé tellement d'heures. Et, tant qu'à être dans les projections subjectives : est-ce que ce n'est pas une de ces manœuvres, une de ces ruses qui nous sont légitimes dans ces moments de la fiction qui se refuse ? Prospekt Park il n'y est certainement pas allé sans son écritoire, mais il a lu Machen. Gommer les distractions ? Combien de fois, tiens à la bibliothèque Gabrielle-Roy de Québec, en 2009-2010, dans ces premières heures à se lancer chaque soir (on était quitte de nos obligations à l'UdeM comme à Laval, mais on devait attendre la fin de l'année scolaire, c'étaient chaque jour de très longues marches côté port ou côté Lévis, sans se douter que c'était comme encore marcher dans un texte de Lovecraft), traduire *La maison maudite* c'était dans ces mauvaises heures du soir mais venir

s'asseoir à la bibliothèque avec le petit Mac portable c'était juste dans l'idée d'enfin écrire et non, ça ne reprendrait qu'au retour, mais brutalement, et depuis toute une masse de notes prises dans ces dix mois entre Montréal et « la vieille capitale », ou encore mieux dans l'Orleans Express qui les rejoignait dans un sens puis dans l'autre) — est-ce que donc Lovecraft ne s'engouffre-t-il pas dans la Public Library, avec ses feuilles et son crayon, dans l'idée que ça y est, elle est prête à venir, elle va surgir, la fiction ? Et puis non, à la bibliothèque ce sera reprendre ce un gros ouvrage sur l'histoire coloniale de Providence (le livre de Gertrude Sehvyn Kimball, déjà évoqué) et le soir au retour, s'il y a encore le mot *write*, ce n'est pas encore le *write fiction* (on a cependant, dans le carnet 1933, ces « compressions » où il résume, comme celles de Poe, de Bierce, de Montague Rhode James ou d'Algernon Blackwood, des nouvelles de Machen, et combien de ces échos de lecture de Machen dans le *Commonplace Book*, en bonne part rédigé les deux années new-yorkaises ? Dans le journal : l'équipage de l'expédition MacMillan chante en direct, à la radio, depuis l'autre côté du cercle polaire. William Beebe est de retour et on peut commencer l'étude de ce qu'il rapporte. Un tremblement de terre à San Diego, ressenti depuis Honolulu jusqu'au Texas. Si les Américains ont du mal à digérer que Dayton soit surnommé Monkeyville par le monde entier, est-ce que cet instituteur qui a osé dire qu'Adam et Ève étaient une allégorie, dans la ville de Bottle (Angleterre) suffit à consolation ou vengeance ? Nouvelle publicité Pathex : ce poisson attrapé par le pêcheur à la ligne sautera hors de l'eau à jamais.

New York Times, 31 juillet 1925. De Washington, le 30 juillet. Un message radio, reçu aujourd'hui de l'expédition arctique de MacMillan, a annoncé que premier test d'émission de voix et musique depuis le Cercle polaire aurait lieu samedi. À 10 heures, samedi soir, le commandant MacMillan prononcera un discours. Un orchestre composé de l'équipage de Peary jouera, un Esquimau chantera un des étranges chants indigènes, et un trio vocal de l'équipage du bateau chantera. L'émission sera uniquement reçue par le millier ou plus de radio amateurs équipés pour recevoir les ondes basses fréquences. La bande passante utilisée sera de 40 mètres. En cas de bonne écoute, on a demandé aux radio amateurs de le transmettre au quartier général de la Société géographique nationale à Washington.

Santa Barbara Is Shaken by New Tremor; Shocks Felt From Honolulu to Kansas

SANTA BARBARA, Cal., July 30 (P).—Santa Barbara and vicinity experienced a sharp earthquake shock at 1:50 this morning, followed by a lighter one a few hours later. There was no damage and most persons slept through the shocks.

VENTURA, Cal., July 30 (P).—Two slight earth tremors were felt here early today. The first was noted at 1:30 A. M. and the second between 4:30 and 5 A. M. No damage was done.

HONOLULU, July 30 (P).—A slight earthquake shock was reported in several districts of Honolulu about 9:20 o'clock last night. There was no damage.

ALBUQUERQUE, N. M., July 30 (P).—Earth tremors severe enough to rattle dishes and shake windows and doors were felt at Clovis, N. M., at 5:18 this morning. Tremors also were felt at several other places.

DENVER, July 30 (P).—A heavy earthquake shock lasting three minutes was recorded on the seismograph at Regis

College here early today. Its centre was estimated to be about 300 miles south of Denver.

KANSAS CITY, Mo., July 30 (P).—Earth tremors of moderate intensity were felt in Kansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Texas today, but no property damage has been reported. The quakes occurred between 6 and 6:15 A. M. Reports from over Kansas stated that the shocks were felt in a number of cities.

Cities in Northwestern Oklahoma also reported an earth disturbance.

Amarillo and surrounding towns in the Panhandle of Texas reported tremors lasting thirty seconds. Buildings were swayed noticeably. No damage was reported.

WASHINGTON, July 30 (P).—Sharp earthquake shocks were registered on the Georgetown University seismograph today, beginning at 7:15 A. M., Eastern Standard Time, and lasting until about 8 o'clock. The centre of the disturbance was placed as about 1,700 miles from Washington.

England Has its Dayton, Name Is Bootle; Wittner Withdraws Suit, Another Planned

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Special Cable to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

LONDON, July 30.—England, which has been laughing for a month at the United States over its "Monkeyville trial," awoke today to the fact that she has a "Monkeyville" of her own.

It is the Town of Bootle, where, in the future, it will be as perilous as in Dayton for any schoolmaster to breathe the word evolution.

Councillor Warburton it was who called the attention of the Bootle Town Council to the fact that in a local school a teacher had suggested that the story of Adam and Eve was mythical and allegorical rather than a literal account of the actual happenings in the cradle days of the world.

A special investigating committee was appointed which recommended that religious observances in the secondary schools be confined in the future to hymns, prayers and Scripture readings

and the teachers instructed to train the scholars to habits of reverence for God and religion.

The Council adopted the resolutions unanimously.

Special to The New York Times.

WASHINGTON, July 30.—Loren H. Wittner, the Treasury clerk who sought to cut off the salaries of school officials who permitted evolution to be taught, withdrew his suit today in Equity Court. The case was to have been heard tomorrow before Justice Frederick L. Siddons.

A new suit will be filed in the near future and the plaintiff will be a municipal taxpayer instead of a Federal taxpayer, as in Wittner.

CALBA JEWELS—IMPORTED CIGARS.
2 for 25c. United Cigar Stores Co.—Adv.

BEEBE AND ARCTURUS HOME WITH MARVELS

Floating Laboratory Brings in Myriad-Lighted Fish and Bejeweled Crabs.

SARGASSO LEGEND A MYTH

Explorers Found No Wrecked Ships Caught in Weeds—The Humboldt Current Gone.

All dressed up in flags, trailing a long home-coming streamer from its mast, the great ocean-going scientific laboratory Arcturus arrived in New York harbor yesterday with its hold full of rare marine specimens, alive and dead, including a fish with a thousand lights, a fish that walks with eight hands and a fish that has vastly less privacy than a goldfish. This latter is a deep-sea fish which has a transparent pane over its stomach, a huge bay window which permits the spectator to see everything that it has eaten and its whole internal mechanism in operation.

The Arcturus docked at the foot of West Seventy-ninth Street, where a large party was in waiting to welcome William Beebe, the leader of the expedition, and the thirteen specialists who accompanied him to study the strange fish, of which about fifty new species were taken by the expedition.

The Arcturus completed its expedition 100 miles out by fishing during the last week at the foot of the cliff over which the Hudson River once thundered in a greater waterfall than any now existing on earth. This was about two million years ago, before the glaciers and other great forces had gerrymandered New York State to its present proportions.

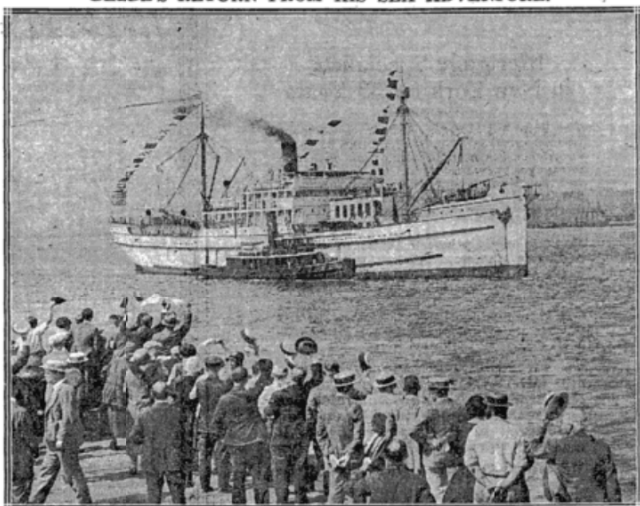
Old Riverbed Still Distinct.

"The old riverbed is plainly marked on the ocean bottom," said Dr. Beebe. "The cliff over which it fell now exists and shows a fall of 930 feet, greater than any river waterfall on earth. We dredged about the foot of the cliff within 100 miles of the City Hall and found a rich deep-sea life."

Several brightly lighted fish were hauled up to the surface, indicating that a white light district exists at the mouth of the Hudson. Fish that are thought to belong to thitherto undiscovered species were dredged from the bottom of the extinct waterfall. Asked what was the most remarkable thing they had caught in the whole trip, Dr. Beebe said:

"The last. I mean there were so many surprising things that the last one to be found always struck us as the most remarkable."

BEEBE'S RETURN FROM HIS SEA ADVENTURE.



THE ARCTURUS APPROACHING HER PIER AT WEST 9TH STREET.

BEEBE AND ARCTURUS
HOME WITH MARVELS

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caught at various levels from the surface to a depth of 2 miles in order to show in progressive series the changes by which a surface fish of ordinary structure becomes elaborated and specialized until it is now one of the fantastic nightmares which inhabit the ocean bottom.

Lights Go Out as They Die.

Some of the fish which live in darkness appeared to be studied with glowing encephala and saprophytes when they were first caught, but the lights always disappeared after the death of the fish, and those from great depths usually died almost immediately of a form of "bends" or calcium sickness, the change from the pressure of great depths to the feeble pressure at the surface, causing compressed or dissolved gases in their interiors to burst out as gas again.

"Their lights often looked like tiny jewels," said Professor V. K. Gregory of Columbia University, one of the scientists of the Beebe expedition, whose specialty on this trip was the study of the development by fish of various methods of locomotion. "Their lights apparently serve two uses, one as respiration lights, the other as lures. The type and pattern of light enables them of one species to find each other, either for mating or for travel in schools. The second use is that the light attracts the small life on which they feed."

One of the surprises is the study of the mysterious use of different lights to announce their sex.

"The males carry one light and the female two, or it may be the other way around," said Dr. Gregory. "This was the only case we found where the sexes of the fish were distinguished in this manner."

Some Lighted by Bacteria.

Dr. Lillian Segal, a chemist, went along on the trip for the specific purpose of studying the methods by which the light was produced—whether the fish had its own chemical or physical plant for producing light, or whether the fish entertained colonies of light-giving bacteria to produce their light by the kindness of micro-organisms like those which cause the phosphorescence of dead mackerel and other fish. Some fish have developed complicated modifications of their own structure in which they rear cultures of luminous bacteria in regular patterns controlled by certain like crystals in their bodies.



WILLIAM BEEBE AFTER HIS 20,000-MILE VOYAGE.

toles. Each current carries along a mass of life which has no power of locomotion of its own, and these drifting things are concentrated along the line where the two tides meet, so that birds and fish of every size come there for food. Every drop of the net here brought up tensing masses of life, from micro-organisms to sharks. We obtained vast quantities of specimens here. It has been impossible to number them or study them."

Death masks of many of the strange fish were made in plaster of paris by Dwight Franklin, as an aid to accuracy when their skins are mounted later. Portrait busts were made of some and life-size casts of others. In order to obtain the exact dimensions of the living fish over which his skin will be stretched later when it is prepared for exhibition at the American Museum of Natural History.

Thousands and thousands were picked in formaldehyde and brought back in glass jars and tubes. Because the colors and features of life disappear quickly,

was a fish which rides, eats and lives on the ray. It resembles a sharp sucker, having a suction plate on the back of its head by which it can attach itself or release itself from the ray's back. It eats at the second table, consuming fragments of what the ray kills. This parasite fish is living in one of the large aquariums on the Arcturus. Yesterday it was asleep, with its suction plate attached to one of the glass walls of the tank. Among the living specimens are a large variety of the suckers which plaster themselves on sharks, obtaining free transportation and meals and protection from their enemies, which are afraid to pick them off the backs of sharks.

Watched Drama Under Water.

Some of the brilliant sketches of life below the surface were made with the aid of the diving helmet, an ornate structure of metal and plate glass resembling a Fifth Avenue traffic tower.

M'MILLAN TO RADIO
VOICES FROM ARCTIC

Explorer Will Test Short Wave Length Tomorrow With Songs of Eskimos and Crew.

NOW CAUGHT IN ICE PACK

Message Says Ships Are Wedged In Melville Bay, Waiting for Fog to Lift.

Special to The New York Times.

WASHINGTON, July 30.—A radio message today from the Macmillan Arctic expedition announced that the first official test of broadcasting the voice and music from inside the Arctic Circle will take place on Saturday.

At 10 o'clock Saturday evening Commander Macmillan will give a talk. An orchestra made up of members of the "Peary's" crew will play, an Eskimo will sing one of the weird, native chants and a vocal trio and chorus made up of the ship's crew will sing.

This test will be heard only by the thousand or more amateur radio operators equipped to receive on low wave lengths. The wave band to be used will be forty meters.

If the test is successful, it is probable that broadcasting stations will arrange to "step up" the programs of the "Bowdoin" and the "Peary" to their customary wave bands and thus broadcast talks and music from the Far North so that the laymen "listeners-in" of the country will hear them.

Radio amateurs have been requested to write to the headquarters of the National Geographic Society at Washington whether they are able to hear this program.

A dispatch to the National Geographic Society from the "Bowdoin," the flagship of the Macmillan expedition, dated July 29, said:

"We are wedged in the Melville Bay ice pack. It was fine running until midnight. Then a thick fog necessitated a stop. At 3 o'clock this morning there was brilliant light, but a haze hid the land. Our first attempt to break out halted after about a mile."

"After noon until 1 o'clock we wove a tortuous cruise through light land ice, but were again stopped by fog which left us beside a huge pan at the spot where a polar bear with fifteen-inch pads had recently slid off to the water."

"Kenneth Rawson shot a fine specimen of ivory gull which, with the little auks that have whirled about us in swarms, are the only exclusively Arctic birds so far encountered."

"Crews from both ships staged a spirited snow fight for a time this afternoon. A breeze may dispel the fog at any minute and both ships are all set to continue their course to Etah. All well."



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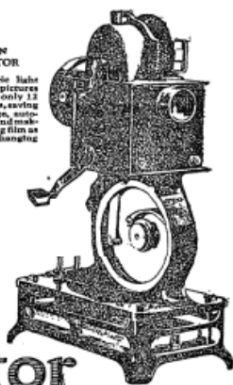
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