POOR DOCUMENT

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A MASTER OF MEN

By E. P. OPPENHEIM

CHAPTER XXII—(Continued.)

"What have you done with the cottage?"

"I have left it—exactly as it was," he answered, in a softened tone. "Nothing is altered. Sometimes I go there. It rests me."

She looked away.

"And your wife?"

"She is well."

"Is she—in London?" "Yes."

"Have you—any children?"

"None—thank God!"

She kept her head averted. The last two words had told her much that she was anxious to know.

"And you live?"

"In Kensington."

"Tell me about your wife."

"You have remembered?" His voice hardened. "I have tried to do my duty," he said. "It has not been easy, but I have done my best."

With a relief that was absolutely mutual she abandoned the subject.

"Do you know that all my friends are very uncomplimentary to me since my return home?" she said. "Every one has told me how much older I look."

His eyes met hers steadily.

"I can see no change," he said. "To me that afternoon might have been yesterday!"

"Australia is very trying," she said.

"You must tell me about it."

They talked till the emptying room brought them back to the present. She rose up very beautifully in the dim moonlight, slim and stately as ever, unchanged but for a certain increased womanliness which it seemed to her that this man alone had power to evoke. Those of her friends who had spoken of a certain weariness—almost a hardness—which had come upon her during the last few years would have seen no trace of it at that moment.

"Almost," he said, "this reminds me of the night when it rained white roses—which Colonel Devenhill never found."

She flashed a very sweet sidelong glance at him—an unspoken question trembled upon her lips.

"I have them still," he said simply. "I shall always have them."

Lord Sydenham touched him on the shoulder.

"One word, Strone," he said. "I will not keep you a moment."

Lady Malingcourt bade them good-night gravely, and vanished. The two men stood together upon the balcony.

"The Duke has been talking to me, Strone," he said. "He is anxious that his property should not be alluded to on Thursday night."

"It is," Strone answered, "not to be wondered at."

Lord Sydenham hesitated.

"Strone," he said, "you are a youngster from a parliamentary point of view, and I'm sure you won't think a word of advice out of place from an old hand. Never make enemies—especially such enemies as the Duke of Massingham. His influence is very great, it may become a factor worth your consideration at any moment. I am commissioned to make you this offer. Omit his name, and the whole of his properties shall be rebuilt, and, mark this, your Bill shall go through the Upper House untouched.

Strone hesitated.

"I don't like it," he said. "It's a bribe after all."

"If you want to accomplish anything in this world," Lord Sydenham said slowly, "either for the sake of your own personal advancement or for the sake of a cause which you have at heart, you must broaden your views. Don't be pig-headed. It's fatal. You mayn't like giving in, but mark my words, if you don't the Duke will wreck your Bill."

"In which case, of course, our compact is at an end," Strone remarked.

"I can only do my best," Lord Sydenham answered.

"I will think it over," Strone decided.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Strone pushed his way through the little crowd of servants, who were waiting about the entrance to Sydenham House, and turned westwards on foot. This meeting, always looked forward to, always counted upon as a certain part of his future, had taken place at last. She was unchanged, as beautiful as ever, and her old power over him was not one wit lessened. More vividly than ever he realized how his present position was almost wholly owing to the stimulus of her appeal to him. Step by step he had fought his way doggedly onwards. Difficulties had been brushed away, obstacles surmounted. He had kept his word, he had justified her belief in him. He had taken his place, if not in her world, at least amongst those who had the right to enter it. Henceforth they might meet often. Surely the summer of his life had come.

And as he walked through the quieter streets more daring thoughts even came to him. He dreamed of a friendship which should become the backbone of his life, which should bring him into constant association with her, which should give him the right to offer at her feet the honors he might win—she, the woman, who had first inspired him. He saw nothing of the passers-by; the respectful good-night of the policeman, and the faint importunities of the waifs who floated out from the shadows and vanished again like moths were unheard. The old music was singing in his blood; he walked as one whose footsteps fell upon the air. And then—crash came down to earth again. He was in front of his house in Kensington, unlit and gloomy. He made his way quietly in with the aid of a latchkey, and stood for a moment in the hall hesitating.

From a room on the ground floor came the glimmer of a light. He made his way there softly, and opened the door. A woman was stretched upon an easy chair asleep. He stood over her with darkening face.

Milly had not improved. Her prettiness had vanished before a coarsening of features; she was stouter, and untidy even to slatterliness. Her cheeks just now were flushed, and she was breathing heavily. On the table by her side was a tumbler. He took it up, smelt it, and set it down with a little gesture of disgust.

She saw no signs of waking. After a moment's hesitation he ensconced himself in a neighboring easy chair, and, taking a roll of papers from his pocket, began to read, pencil in hand. For some time he worked; then the manuscript slipped from his hand. He sunk a little down in his chair. With wide open eyes he sat watching the extinct grey ashes on the hearth. The clock ticked, and the woman's breathing grew louder. There was no other sound in the house. He was alone with his fate.

Something woke her at last. She sat up and looked at him.

"Hullo!" she exclaimed. "How long have you been there?"

"An hour—perhaps more," he answered. "You were asleep."

"No wonder," she grumbled. "Enough to make one sleepy to sit here hour after hour alone. You've got home from your fine party, then?"

He rose up.

"It is late," he said. "I will turn out the light."

"Wait a bit," she answered irritably. "I want something to drink."

"I wouldn't have anything more, if I were you," he said. "Come to bed now."

"Oh, indeed! You've had all you want, I know. Pass that whisky bottle."

He poured out a little and filled up the glass with water. She raised it to her lips with a contemptuous little exclamation.

"Whisky ain't good enough for you, I suppose," she remarked. "Been drinking champagne, eh?"

"I really don't remember," he answered. "If you prefer champagne there's plenty in the house. I'd rather that you drink anything than spirits."

It struck him that there were several empty glasses about, and the room smelt of tobacco smoke.

"Have you had visitors?" he asked.

She nodded.

"Yes. Mr. Fagan and his wife."

He frowned.

"I don't see why Fagan should come when he knew I was out," he remarked.

She laughed hardly.

"You'd grudge me even their company, would you?" Well, they came in to sit with me, and Fagan let a hint or two drop. You'd better look out, my man."

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"They ain't none too well pleased with you, these Labor chaps aren't, and I don't wonder at it. What do you want going to lord's dinner parties dressed up like one of them. Fagan says that ain't what you were sent to Parliament for."

"Fagan is an ignorant ass," Strone exclaimed passionately. "I am doing my best for the cause, and my way is the right way. My presence at Lord Sydenham's tonight was no personal matter. It was a recognition of our party, and a valuable recognition. I am surprised that you should listen to such rubbish, Milly."

"Fagan may be right and he may be wrong," she answered, "but he reckons that you're getting too big for your boots. It don't want fine gentleman to speak for working men."

"We won't discuss it, Milly," Strone said quietly. "I will put out the light."

"Hold on a bit," she exclaimed. "Look here! Why shouldn't I have a say sometimes as to what we should discuss and what we shouldn't? Were there any women at your fine party tonight?"

"Yes," Strone answered, "there were women there."

"Then why wasn't I asked?" she demanded, setting down her empty glass. "That's what I should like to know. Just answer me that."

"It is so hard to make you understand, Milly," he said. "I was not there as a private guest at all. Socially every one was of a different rank. I was there as a man who could command votes. You would not have been comfortable, and I am sure that you would not have enjoyed it."

"You mean I ain't good enough," she declared fiercely. "That's what you're thinking. What's the difference between us, I should like to know. You were a mechanic and I was a factory girl. I can behave as well as plenty as calls themselves ladies."

"I have no doubt of it, Milly," he answered. "It happens, however, to have nothing whatever to do with the question. Please to come to bed now."

She plumped down upon a chair, and folded her arms.

"I won't," she said. "Me and you have got to have this out. We're husband and wife, ain't we? I won't be left alone, night after night. What with your Parliament and your meetings and your parties, I don't get a show nohow. You ain't taken me to a theatre for a month. When you're at home at all you've been shut in the study writing, writing, writing, as though your life depended upon it."

"It is my work," he answered coolly. "I have to do it. It is part of my life. You can live at Gascester if you like."

"And have you gallivanting up here with your friends!" she exclaimed scornfully. "Not me. Why don't some of them come and see me? I shan't bite 'em. If you're good enough I am."

"I can't ask people to come and see me whom I only know politically," he answered. "Be reasonable, Milly. The Session will be over before long, and then I will take you to the seaside."

She was a little mollified.

"Will you take me to a music-hall on Thursday?" she asked. "The Masons are coming up from Gascester."

He smiled.

"Not on Thursday. It happens that I am to make a speech in the House that night of some importance. I thought perhaps you would like to come and hear it."

"Not I," she answered bluntly. "I've been there once, and it gave me the blues. A lot of old fossils that want putting in a museum, I call 'em. Make your speech on Friday night instead Enoch. I've promised the Masons we'd take them out."

"It is quite impossible," he answered, with a faint smile. "The date has been fixed for a long time. If you had the least sense of what was reasonable you would not ask such a thing."

Her eyes flashed angrily.

"Come, that's the style. Call me unreasonable now. Bother you and your speech, I'll take the Masons out myself, and I'll write and make sure that Dick comes. Oh, we'll have a good time, never fear."

He hesitated.

"Milly," he said, "don't go out with those people. The young men are cads, and I don't like the girl. Leave it till next week, and I'll take you anywhere you please."

She laughed scornfully.

"I don't want your friends," she said; "don't you interfere with mine. Give me some more whisky."

He caught her arm, and holding her as in a vice with one hand, with the other poured the contents of the bottle into a bowl of flowers.

"You've had all the whisky you're going to have tonight, Milly," he said. "Now—go to bed."

She was suddenly pale. Before he could tell what she was about to do she leaned over and struck him a stinging blow on the cheek with the palm of her hand.

"Beast!"

He did not move. He was numbed with a curious sense of horror. She turned away with a shill little laugh, which sounded oddly in his ears for long afterwards.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Strone had never ranked as an orator even amongst his own party. He was looked upon as a keen and skilful debater, a man of sturdy common sense, marvellously clear-headed and thoroughly earnest. On the night of his great speech, however, he made a new reputation.

His opening phrases scarcely gave promise of anything of the sort. He was unaccountably nervous, over-anxious to do justice to the cause which was do dear to him, and at the same time horribly aware that he was not succeeding. Suddenly, however, after a somewhat prolonged pause a wave of memory swept in upon him. He remembered what he himself had passed through, the under-world of the great cities was laid bare before him. It stretched away before him, a ghostly panorama, its wailing rang in his ears, the deathcries of its children shook his heart. Then, indeed, he straightened to his task. His speech was stilted no longer, his deep voice shook with passion. These rows of unemotional men, some sorting papers, some whispering, some giving him a labored attention—they, too, must see and hear. And they did! It was as though a great canvas were stretched before them, and Strone, with the lightening brush of a great master, was painting with lurid touches a terrible picture, a picture growing every moment in horror, yet from the sight of which there was no escape. "It is like this," he cried, and the wan, starved faces of dead children gleamed pale upon the canvas, "like this," and loathsome vice and unspeakable disease stalked before them, and shook bony fists, which seemed indeed to move on the canvas and threaten the spellbound audience. "See!" And countless forms seemed to throng the canvas, and endless and awful perspective of suffering and death-smitten humanity. "Men and women like you and yours, born with an equal right to taste the sweetness of life, ground into the likeness of parasites and criminals by your accursed social laws. Murder is a terrible crime, but it is not only their bodies which you destroy, but their souls. God help those on whose shoulders the burden of these things must rest."

There were statistics, a plain statement of the practical measures necessary, and a brief but passionate peroration. A thrill went through the House when Strone spoke of himself, only newly come from that world for whose salvation he pleaded. All the sins of the universe, all that was ugly and vicious and detestable sprung from that pestilential undercurrent down which were ever drifting the great stream of lost humanity. Drink was an effect, not a cause. A miserable existence begat despair, despair drink, and drink crime. Let them awake from their indifference, their cynicism or false phisosophies, and strike a mighty blow at the great heart of the hideous monster. Life and freedom were gifts common to all. Those who sought to make them a monopoly for the rich must pass through life to the shadow of death with an appalling burden upon their shoulders. And more than any in the world, those men to whom he then spoke must face this responsibility.

So he pleaded, no longer at a loss for words, passionate, forceful, touched for those few minutes at any rate with a spark of that divine fire which carries words straight to the hearts of men, the gift of true eloquence. When at last, and with a certain abruptness, he resumed his seat, there reigned for several moments a respectful and marvellous silence. Then a storm of cheering broke the tension, cheering from all parts of the House led by the Prime Minister, joined in by the Leader of the Opposition. Strone gained much for his cause that night—his own reputation he made for ever. He had become a power amongst strong men. He was henceforth a factor to be reckoned with. During a debate which followed, pitifully tame it seemed, men craned their heads to look at him, reporters eagerly collected such crumbs of information as they could gather with impassive features but beating hearts, for up in the Discovered gallery he had seen a pale, beautiful face, whose eyes were fixed upon his, who seemed to be sending a message to him through the great sea of space. Presently, indeed as he passed from the body of the House, a note was thrust into his hand, hastily written in pencil.

"Well done, my friend. Some people are having supper with me at the Milan Restaurant: Will you come on there as soon as you can? Do give me the pleasure of telling you what I think of your speech."

Strone crumpled the note up in his hand, hesitated for a moment and turned towards the exit. But he was not to escape so easily. His way was besieged and his hand shaken by many whose faces were strange to him. The Leader of the House spoke a few courteous words, Lord Sydenham patted him on the back. He passed out into the cool night, with burning cheeks and eyes bright with the joy of life. Yet even then the man was true to himself, steadfast to his great aims. It was the triumph of his cause which delighted him; his personal laurels were to him a matter of secondary importance. He had made people feel, if only for a moment, the things which he felt. He had pierced, if only for a short time and for a little way, beneath the surface that marvelous cast-iron indifference with which nineteen-twentieth of the world regard the agony of the submerged twentieth. Good must come of it. Not only was his Bill safe, but the way was paved for other and more drastic measures. The work of his life stretched out before him. It seemed to him then a fair prospect.

He passed through the streets with a wonderful sense of light-heartedness. His own troubles were for the moment small things. He had found the panacea for all sorrow. At the Milan he handed his coat and hat to a liveried servant, and was ushered to a table brilliant with flowers and lights at the head of the room. Lady Malingcourt rose to receive him, and held out both her hands.

"Welcome, master of men," she exclaimed, with a gaiety which seemed intended to hide the deep feeling which shone in her eyes, and even shook a little her voice. "You have given us a new sensation. We are deeply and humbly grateful."

The Duke of Massingham patted him good-naturedly upon the shoulder.

"I can congratulate you with a whole heart," he said, "for you have spared me. Your cause will not be the loser, Mr. Strone. If it costs me a year's income, I will mend my ways."

A chair was brought for him between Lady Malingcourt and Lady Mary Sychester, the Duke's daughter. They filled his glass, and the conversation interrupted by his entrance was resumed.

"I saw you in the House," he said to Lady Malingcourt.

"I would not have missed it," she said simply, "for anything in the world."

He bent over towards her.

"I should like you to remember," he said softly, "that my own presence there—al this—is due to you I should like you always to remember that."

She shook her head.

"No," she said, "I cannot believe that. Your lethargy would have passed away in time."

"I do not think," he said, "that it would ever have passed away. Whatever may come of it, or of me, should be dedicated to you."

"Mr. Strone," said a soft voice at his elbow, "I must tell you that you made me feel very uncomfortable once this evening. You spoke with such bitter derision of the fashionable craze for slumming—you likened it, I think, to the craving of the gallery for the blood and thunder of the melodrama. I think you were a little severe."

"I was, without doubt, too severe," he admitted. "One is led into extremes."

She sighed.

"I am sure I tried to study the problem of how to do a little good amongst the people I visited," she said. "It seemed insoluble. Every one must admit that conditions exist which should not. It is very hard to try and set them right."

"Degeneration," he said, "has been a slow process, and regeneration must also be a weary task. You and I, Lady Sychester, may work every minute of our days, yet we can scarcely hope to see the result of our labors. Generations must go to the remodelling of any corrupt social state. Nevertheless, we should not cease to do all we can. There is scarcely any honest attempt which has not some effect, even if it is imperceptible."

"I wish," she said, "that you would come and see us some day, and help me with your advice."

"I will do so with pleasure," he answered.

"I shall write and remind you," she assured him.

Lady Malingcourt bent over to him.

"You should start a crusade, Mr. Strone," she said. "Half the women in the world are heart-sick for the want of something to do."

He laughed.

"You speak with authority," he said. "Yet I wonder how many women in this room would give the diamonds they are wearing to drag up a single one of their fellows into the light."

She looked thoughtfully around. The room was full—a brilliant study in light and coloring. The shaded electric lamps shed a rosy glare on the little parties of bejewelled and bedecked women—the soft hum of laughter and pleasant voices mingled with the music of the violins. The air was heavy with the voluptuous odor of flowers and cigarettes and many strange perfumes. It was the hour of relaxation. Strone, who, too, had been studying it, smiled softly to himself. Of all the gorgeously dressed women in the room, Lady Malingcourt in plain black net with a single pearl hanging by a pendant from her neck was the most striking and the most beautiful.

"This place," she murmured, "is an education. If only they could contrive to keep out people like those. The women are awful. Hear them laugh."

He glanced carelessly over his shoulder. Then his heart stood still and a sickening sense of shame possessed him. The little party to whom she had pointed were most certainly conspicuous in many ways. It was Milly and her friends from Gascester.

CHAPTER XXV.

Strone's first horrified conviction was a true one. Milly and her friends had had quite enough to drink. Their voices rose with shrill persistence above the pleasant mumur of conversation which floated about the room. The young man was volubly finding fault with the bill. The director of the rooms came up frowning.

"What is the matter here, Jean?" he asked quickly, in French.

The waiter shrugged his shoulders contemptuously.

"Monsieur is not satisfied with his bill," he said. "It is quite correct. They are pigs. They have had too much to drink."

The director took the place of his subordinate. He regarded the young man with disfavor. He wore a made-up tie, and a red silk handkerchief protruded from his waistcoat. His cheeks were puffy and his eyes unwholesome.

"The bill is quite correct, sir," he said. "I must beg you to pay it at once and leave."

"And—what?" the young man demanded.

"And leave! There have been complaints about the noise. At once, if you please."

The young man lost his nerve. He thrust his hand weakly into his pocket. His sister, however, a florid young woman with a huge fringe, and an imitation diamond in her hair, stopped him.

"Such impertinence," she exclaimed. "Pay the man his money, Dick, but we shall please ourselves when we go. We've paid for what we've had, ain't we?"

"For what we haven't had, I should think," the young man answered, plucking up some spirit. "Look 'ere, you, Mr Headwaiter. What do you mean by charging half a crown for one cup of coffee?"

"It was Turkish coffee, and specially prepared," the man answered impatiently. "The bill is correct. Be so good as to pay it, and leave."

"I'll pay the bill, though it's a blooming robbery," the young man answered, "but I shall leave when I'm ready."

The director looked towards the door. "Monsieur should consider the ladies," he said quietly. "If he does not leave at once we shall be compelled to have you all removed."

The young man turned round with a hollow show of dignity.

"Do you know whom you are talking to, sir?" he said. "Here's my card!"

The director did not even glance towards it. He was getting angry.

"I do not want to know who you are, sir," he answered. "I only desire that you leave this room at once with your party. We are not accustomed to having people here who do not know how to behave themselves."

"You can do as you jolly well please," the young man declared loudly. "I shall go when I choose, and the ladies, too. I can tell you this, though. It will be the last time I or my friends come near this place."

"Monsieur will not have the opportunity," the director said dryly, beckoning towards the door, "and his friends we can very well dispense with."

The table had become the focus of attention. Lady Malingcourt set down her lorgnettes with a little shiver. She had recognized Milly. She glanced at Strone, and her face was full of pity. He avoided her eyes, rose, and murmured his apologies. Then he crossed the room and approached the little group.

"Milly!" he said quietly.

She looked up, and recognized him with distinct relief.

"Hullo!" she exclaimed. "You here!"

He took up her gloves and fan from the table.

"Come with me."

She obeyed without a murmur. The director stood back respectfully. Strone passed him a bank-note.

"Take the amount of the bill from that," he ordered. "Come, Milly."

The young man welcomed Strone vociferously.

"How are you, Strone. I say, talk to this Johnny for us, there's a good chap."

Strone took not the slightest notice. He motioned to Milly, and she passed before him down the room. They were the cynosure of all eyes. Strone, though he never turned an eyelid, suffered acutely.

"Have you anything in the cloak-room?" he asked.

She shook her head.

"No!"

The commissionaire called a hansom. Strone handed her in, and took the seat by her sidle. They drove off. Milly burst into tears.

"It's a beastly horrid place," she sobbed. "I never knew such rude people in my life."

Strone made no reply. He was sitting with folded arms, looking fixedly at the lights which flashed across the dark river. She mopped at her eyes, and glanced sideways at him.

"You might have stood up for us a bit, Enoch."

"Unfortunately," he answered, "my sympathies were on the other side."

"We hadn't been doing anything," she exclaimed indignantly.

"You were all three—behaving shockingly," he said. "I saw you roll up and throw a serviette at Mason. Your voices were audible all over the room. The Milan is not a public-house."

"What were you doing there, I should like to know?" she asked suddenly aggrieved. "Didn't I ask you to take me out this evening, and didn't you say you had to make a speech or something? You're a nice sort of a husband."

"I made my speech," he answered, "and then received an invitation to supper. I can assure you," he continued bitterly, "that if I had known what was before me I should not have accepted it."

"Felt ashamed of your wife, didn't you?" she asked passionately.

"I had cause to."

"A fig for what you felt," she cried. "I don't care for you or your stuck-up friends. You can keep 'em. Let me get out. I won't sit here with you. I'll walk! Do you hear?"

He held her firmly in her place.

"Sit still! Listen to me!"

"I won't."

"You shall. I asked you to go to the House of Commons tonight to hear my speech. You declined. If you had come this would not have happened. Let us understand one another. I will give you all the time I have to spare from my work, and you must be satisfied with that. I will not have you going about with people like the Masons."

"I have to put up with such friends as I can get," she said sullenly. "I ain't good enough for yours."

"I will have no friends, Milly, he answered gravely, "who think that. I will do the best I can to make life endurable for you ,only you must do as I ask about these people."

She suddenly turned upon him, pressed her face to his, leaned her head upon his shoulder. He was horrified by the quick impulse of revulsion which seized him. Her hair had been done by a small hairdresser, and smelt of cheap scent. A hideous aigrette brushed against his cheek. Her cloak fell open, and her dress, far too decollete, and of a hideous blue silk, revolted him.

"Enoch," she sobbed, "why ain't you a little fond of me? I'm so miserable."

"I am fond of you, Milly," he answered, lying boldly. "Sit up, dear. We are in the street."

"I don't care. Kiss me, Enoch."

He obeyed. The touch of his lips was like ice. She drew back suddenly and looked at him. Then she shivered a little, and pulled her cloak around her.

"I wish I were dead."

"Rubbish!" he declared. "You shouldn't have such fits, Milly. You must try and be a little more reasonable."

"Enoch," she asked suddenly, "is there another woman?"

"If you ask such mad questions, Milly," he said sternly, "I shall not talk with you at all."

"It is either that," she said in a low tone, "or else it is your stupid work—or else—you never cared for me a little bit. I liked you better at Bangdon. I wish we were back there."

He sighed.

"You mustn't talk like that, Milly," he said. "Remember that it is a man's duty in life to make the best he can of his career, and the woman's duty is to help him."

She laughed oddly.

"Fancy me—helping you!"

"You can! You can help me by keeping away from those people whom you know I dislike, by reading a little every day, by taking some interest in my work."

The cab pulled up. They entered the house together. It was late, and the servants had gone to bed. Strone turned on the electric light. She stood watching him—a dishevelled and unpicturesque-looking woman in her ugly dress and untidy headgear.

"I ain't the right sort of wife for you, Enoch," she said wistfully. "I ain't, am I?"

"Don't be silly," he said, with an attempt at lightness. "There's no reason why we shouldn't get on all right. We'll make a fresh start and see what we can do."

He turned the handle of his study door. She stood on the bottom stair and watched him. Her eyes were full of tears. That hateful room again!"

"Enoch!"

"Well?"

He turned round a little impatiently.

"It's late. Ain't you—coming now?"

He avoided her eyes.

"Not yet. I have some letters to write. Make haste and get to sleep. It will do you good."

She dragged herself upstairs with weary footsteps. Strone passed into his study and locked the door.

(To be continued.)

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RACES AT CLIFTON

Good Sport on the Ice With the Horses Tuesday.

Ice races were held at Clifton Tuesday afternoon and were successful in every sense of the word. Conditions for good racing were ideal, excepting for the sharp cold. Six tracks were made and proved very fast. Each course was half a mile long.

The Farmers' race had three entries and was won by W. S. Saunders with Lee Flewwelling, second.

There were six starters in the 2.40 event which was captured by George Wetmore, of St. John, with Stanley Wetmore, of Clifton, second.

The officials were: R. T. Worden, St. John; E. A. Flewwelling, Perry's Point, and Geo. Smith, St. John, judges; David Love, St. John, patrol judge; S. T. Golding, St. John, starter.

BORDEN WANTS PASSENGER RATES INQUIRED INTO

Moves That Railway Commission Investigate Whether They Are Excessive

Hon. Mr. Emmerson Declares That Body is Too Busy to Attempt Such Arduous Labors Till They Get More Assistance.

Ottawa, Jan. 30—R. L. Borden moved in the house today that it was expedient that the board of railway commissioners for Canada should inquire,determine and report with the least possible delay whether or not the tolls charged in standard passenger tariffs should be reduced so as not to exceed two cents per mile upon any railway in Canada and that the government should take the necessary steps under the railway act for this purpose.

He proceeded to show that the average rate on all the railways in the United States was 2.05 per mile. The rate was somewhat smaller in the east and larger in the west on the Canadian Pacific and in 1902 the average rate per mile was 1.75 and in 1904, 1.84. In 1906 the average rate per mile on the Canadian Northern was 2.59.

His view was that there should be an inquiry. It might be said that the railway commission was too busy. That was a reason for the reorganization of the commission. He believed the commission was over worked.

W. F. MacLean admitted that the speech of Mr. Borden was a valuable contribution to the subject under discussion, but it was in the direction of legislative action, not by an inquiry, that all reductions were made. Wherever the two cent rate was adopted it was railway legislation not through the work of any commission. This was the experience in England as well as in the United States. It was the agreement between the Canadian Northern and the Manitoba government that reduced the Canadian Pacific rate in the west.

Mr. Killam Too Busy.

Hon. H. R. Emmerson, in reply, said that by the act of 1903 the power was delegated to the railway commission to regulate passenger tariffs. The minister read a lengthy explanation from Mr. Killam, the chairman of the board, which had been written to the premier. Mr. Killam said that the board had asked the minister of justice to give legal assistance for the purpose of investigating the position of the railway companies in order to enable the board with as little delay as possible to determine how far they could approve the tariffs, these companies were to submit to them.

Mr. Killam said that it was always his desire that as soon as possible the board should make an inquiry whether the maximum tariff rates on railways were not too high. No principle had been established for the determination of such a question.

The C. P. R. and Canadian Northern asked the board to approve of rates in Eastern Canada at 3 1-2 a mile. The board refused to approve of any higher rate than three cents in Eastern Canada. The Canadian Pacific afterwards asked for the approval of rates at four cents per mile on certain branches in the Northwestern provinces. The board refused to approve of any rate higher than 3 1-2 cents. After an interview between the traffic officers of the board and the company's officials the board gave them to the 1st of December next on the Calgary and Edmonton and branch lines east of that before this rate took effect. In the interval the details could be arranged.

The question of extensive reduction could not well be taken by itself. It would require to be determined as to whether the reduction of the passenger rate would not cause an increase in the freight rates. The board was not in a position to go into that matter so thoroughly, as it would require to be done. The traffic officer was overworked now.

In regard to parliament asking the board to report upon a two cent rate Mr. Killam asked that the board should not be requested to do so this session. It would not be able to do so. There were many important questions waiting the solution of the board. It would not be possible to deal with the question of passenger rates in a short time. The traffic officer had an informal talk with the general passenger agents of the C. P. R. and G. T. R. in Eastern Canada and suggested that the maximum rate be three cents. They replied that their average rate was about two cents. Mr. Killam asked the government not to countenance a proposition that the board should deal with this matter at once, but that the board should exercise its energies unfettered.

Mr. Emmerson proceeded to say that the question was not overlooked by the board and they have been endeavoring to deal with it. They had not sufficient data to proceed upon to deal intelligently with the matter. It might be said that the staff was not sufficient to do the work, and it would take time to strengthen the staff. The question could not be dealt with upon the same lines as in Britain or the United States. The conditions were not the same. Statistics were being completed in his department and they would be available this year. That being so, he moved an amendment that as the board of railway commissioners is now engaged in examining tolls and standard passengers tariffs and in consequence there is no occasion for the government to exercise the power vested in it under the railway act.

The subject was under discussion when the house adjourned at 6 o'clock.

The matter was still under discussion when the house rose at six o'clock.

CASTORIA

For Infants and Children.

The Kind You Have Always Bought

Bears the Signature of Chas. H. Fletcher

Residents of the West Branch valley, (Penn.), claim to have seen a white albino bear twice recently in that section.

How to Quickly Cure Heartburn and Hiccups

They are always caused by fermentation or excessive acidity of the stomach. The distress they cause is relieved like magic by sipping a few drops of "Nerviline" in sweetened water. "Nerviline" cures the conditions that cause the hiccups, just as it does all other disorders of the stomach and bowels. For indigestion, cramps, flatulence and stomach pains, nothing better is known. For a household remedy, for all aches, pains and minor ills, use Nerviline—25c. per bottle everywhere.

BRIAND LEAVES FRENCH CHAMBER READY TO RESIGN

Nettled at Remark of Clemenceau About Church Tangle

Premier Apologizes to Minister of Education and Harmony is Restored--No Compromise With Vatican, Says Premier--New Bill Passed.

Paris, Jan. 30—The chamber of deputies this evening concluded the discussion of and adopted the public meetings bill by 550 votes against five.

During the course of the debate there was a more or less exciting incident. Minister of Education Briand left the chamber and threatened to resign. This came about because M. Clemenceau, the premier, during a reply to criticism voiced by M. Jaures, the Socialist leader, on what he termed the "present imbroglio" admitted that incoherence existed but said that he, the premier, although not responsible therefore, intended to stand by his colleagues.

M. Briand thereupon retired to the lobby fully determined to give up his portfolio, as he considered that the premier's remarks referred directly to himself. After repeated efforts on the part of his colleagues, M. Briand consented to reconsider his decision, and he finally returned to the chamber with M. Clemenceau.

The premier expressed regrets from the tribune for what he called a pure slip of the tongue and declared that he regarded Mr. Briand as indispensable for the carrying out of the great reform undertaken by the government.

The resumption of the rebate afforded the premier opportunity to make further explanation of the government's attitude in the matter of the bishops' declaration which he designated as "an insolent ultimatum." Continuing, M. Clemenceau said:

"If the episcopate consider this a basis for negotiation, we do not respond. The bishops will not obtain anything beyond the common law. We will not concede anything but we will hold the line of battle with unexhausted resources."

The public meetings bill consists of four sections. The first authorizes meeting without previous declaration of intention the second repeals the restrictions contained in the acts of 1881, 1905 and 1907 the third instructs the mayors of France to place the existing meeting places at the disposal of the public and the fourth holds the organizers of meetings responsible for damage.

This law will become operative as soon as it passes the senate.

BRUTAL OTTAWA HOCKEY PLAYERS HELD FOR ASSAULT

Montreal, Jan. 30—The enquete today into the charge of assault laid against three of the Ottawa hockey players for their conduct in the match against the Wanderers, resulted in two of them, Alf Smith and Charles Spittal, being committed to stand trial at the next session of the king's bench.

The case of Harry Smith will be taken up at an adjourned enquete on Feb. 8 important witnesses having failed to appear. Witnesses testified today to having seen Alf. Smith strike Hod Stuart, and Spittal strike Blachford, in each case with a hockey stick.

WANT TWO MORE LADY SCHOOL TRUSTEES

Asked regarding matters to come before the government at its next meeting, the attorney-general said yesterday there was a communication from the St. John W. C. T. U. asking for the appointment of a woman as factory inspector.

Mr. Pugsley said no doubt an opportunity would be offered them to be heard at a government meeting in this city.

A sub-committee from the Free Kindergarten committee, composed of Mrs. H. H Pickett, Mrs. F. E. Holman and Mrs. W F. Hatheway, have sent a communication asking that two additional ladies be appointed on the school board. They will also in all probability be heard at a meeting here.

Invitations to the Forestry Convention at Fredericton next month have been sent out. Among those attending will be Mr. Renshaw, head of the forestry bureau of the United States; Mr. Stewart, of the Dominion bureau, and the minister of railways.

His honor the lieutenant-governor has issued invitations to a state dinner on Thursday, Feb. 14th.. His honor having given up his house in Fredericton,the function will be held in the Queen Hotel.

It is understood that one of the matters which Premier Tweedie is looking into at Ottawa is the question of getting cheap transportation over the I. C. R. for immigrants to various sections of the province, as urged by Mr. Storie, of the Central Emigration Board of London, on his recent visit here.

It takes five union labels to make a strictly union hat. One for the hatters' union and another for the gilders' union for the gilding of the maker's name on the sweatband; a label to show that the leather of the sweatband was prepared by union men, another to indicate that the label inside the crown indicating the size is union, and the label of the International Typographical Union.

The Meaning of a Smile

(S. E. Kiser in Chicago Record-Herald.)

We speak in many tongues, we men
Who do the work that men must do
With sword and spade and plow and pen—
My language may be strange to you;
I may not know when you complain,
Nor comprehend if you revile;
Your preaching may be all in vain.
But we are brothers when we smile.

The Malay may not understand
When I explain to him my creed;
The Mongol, all unmoved and bland,
May think that I am mad, indeed;
To them the words I use may be
A jargon fashioned to beguile;
But they extend their hands to me
And know my meaning when I smile.

We speak in many tongues, we men
Who do the work that must be done,
And if, perchance some morning when
The first beam slanted from the sun
A savage faced you where you woke
Upon the farthest South Sea isle
He might not know what words you spoke,
But he would understand your smile.

The spoken word may not convey
The slightest meaning to our minds,
But from the coldest Lapland bay
To where Magellan's channel winds,
From Ganges to the Amazon,
From frozen Yukon to the Nile
And from La Plata to the Don
There is one meaning for a smile.