POOR DOCUMENT

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A MASTER OF MEN

By E. P. OPPENHEIM

CHAPTER III—(Continued)

"See, I will show you where to sleep; tomorrow you will have forgotten all this, and I will take you home across the fields."

She followed him wearily into the house; afterwards he climbed the hill above the cottage, and smoked there for hours. He was restless and ill-disposed for sleep. For ever there seemed to ring in his ears the passionate unspoken wish of the girl who slept now peacefully enough on his rude oaken bedstead.

CHAPTER IV.

A grey morning, windless, but cold. Strone awoke with a start, sat up, and listened. Surely he had heard light footsteps close at hand, or had he been dreaming? He rose slowly to his feet, stiff, for the woodshed was draughty, and he had not even a rug for covering. A distinct sound now,—the gate leading to the road was softly opened and closed. He hastened to the front, lifted the latch of his cottage, and looked in.

The room was empty, the bed neatly made, and the remains of their supper cleared away. His visitor had gone.

Curiously enough, his first impulse was of vexation. To steal away so was surely ungrateful. Her absence should have been a relief—he was inconsistently disappointed. Then he saw a piece of folded paper upon the table. He opened it and smiled. In plain, childish characters he read:

"My Dear Friend,—Thank you very, very much. I have slept well, and I do not want to bother you any more, so I have gone away quietly. I shall often think of this beautiful place, and good-bye.

MILLY WILSON.

He thrust it into his pocket, and then, without a moment's hesitation, started swiftly for the road. He took a short cut, clambered over a stone wall. She was already in sight, walking with downcast head in the middle of the road. Hestole near on the grass border, watching her gait. She limped slightly. Thert was a curious listlessness in her movements, not altogether, however, devoid of grace. He was almost at her side before the snapping of a dry twig betrayed him. She raised her head and looked at him, startled.

"You're a nice guest," he exclaimed, "to stead away like this. What's the matter?"

She flushed almost painfully. He saw signs of a new nervousness.

"I left a note," she faltered. "I'm such a bother to you—and I don't want to spoil your Sunday. I'm quite rested—I'll get on famous now!"

"You'll come back with me at once and have some breakfast," he said firmly. "The idea of starting for a nine-milk walk like this. You'd faint on the way."

"I thought maybe I'd get a drop of milk at Lingford," she said hesitatingly, "and I think I'd better go."

"Just as you like," he answered gruffly. "I don't want to keep you."

Her eyes filled with tears. His gruffness vanished.

"Better come back."

She yielded at once. They climbed the hill together. The sunlight streamed through the grey vaporous sky, and from a grassy field to their left a lark rose in little circles singing to the morning. Down the long, dusty road, with his feet up and a black bag in front, came John Martinghoe on his way to an Early Celebration. He put on the brake when he saw Strone, and gazed with wonder at his companion.

"Good-morning," he called out, and Strone returned his greeting shortly. Martinghoe looked back at the risk of falling and his face was clouded.

"A stranger," he said. "Very likely a relation. I wish Strone hadn't glared at me so. Hang it, I wish I hadn't seen them."

He turned the corner and rode on. He was a lover of strong men, and Strone, as a type, had fascinated him. He had no desire to see the feet of clay. He put the thought away from him.

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Strone was singularly unversed in women's ways. He knew nothing of their tastes. He was shy and ill at ease under a mask of gruffness. Yet the day slipped on pleasantly enough. After breakfast they sat out on the hills, and what need was there of conversation? To her all things were new and wonderful—the soft, mossy turf, the cloud-speckled blue sky, the endless twittering of birds and chirping of insects against that background of marvellously deep silence. The west wind swept through the wood, and blew softly in their faces, almost it seemed like the murmur of a distant sea. They talked spasmodically. She told him the details of her dreary life simply and without bitterness—he was well able to appreciate the miseries she spoke of. The long hours, the routine work, the squalid slum in which she lived, the absolute hopelessness of any change. So her cramped girlhood must pass into imperfect womanhood, physically and morally she must become in time ground into the likeness of those around her, a parasitical thing hanging on to the heart of the great city. A pity, he thought, raising himself upon his elbow, and looking thoughtfully at her. He, too, was of her class, but a man with brains unhampered with family, a skilled workman. Opportunity had been his—in her position he too must have gone under—and she was certainly pretty. Every hour he was more sure of it. Intelligent, perhaps, receptive without doubt, for in a vague sort of way these hill-top solitudes meant something more to her also than their mere external beauty. Yet he must let her go—back again into the pit. There was no way in which he could help her. Had she been of his sex he might have stretched out his hand, and pulled her up. But then, he admitted swiftly to himself, that in that case she would have been of no interest to him. Strone had in those days much of the selfishness of the home-made man of culture. He kept his eyes from looking downwards and his heart from pity. He had worked out his own salvation—those who could must of themselves struggle upwards into the light. But with this girl it was different. He lay watching her—and thinking.

Often she irritated him—as when she spoke of her friends.

"Me and Charlie has been out in the country once or twice," she said, "but it was never like this. There was generally a public-house where we went to, and Charlie was hard to move when he got inside."

"And who," he asked, "is Charlie?"

"Well, I walk out with him sometimes," she answered simply. "It ain't nothing really, but he's taken me to the theatre once or twice. He's real smart, is Charlie. He don't have to work like us, but he drives about in a trap and sells things."

"Does he want to marry you?" Strone asked.

"No fear," she answered bitterly. "I ain't near good enough for 'im!"

"If he makes you think so," Strone answered, with an energy which surprised himself, "he's a cad."

She shook her head doubtfully.

"His mother lives in a villa," she said, "and he wears kid gloves. He ain't my class."

Strone remained silent. He recognized the hopelessness of speech. A few hours, which the most was all that remained of her visit, was too short a time for him to attempt to disturb the girl's outlook upon life. So he passed away from the fringe of graver subjects, told her of the birds who came hopping close around them, showed her the owl's nest in the eaves, and the pond alive with newts. He caught one deftly and showed her its brilliant orange chest. Te day stole away; they had a frugal dinner, and started to walk to Gascester.

At the bend of the hill she turned round to catch a last glimpse of the low thatched roof and the grey smoke curling upwards. He was amazed to see that there were tears in her eyes.

"It has been such a nice day," she murmured. "I shan't ever forget it. It's like—another world—out here."

So the husk of her materialism had been quickly pierced. A new warmth found its way into his manner. He was pleased to find that she possessed sensibility.

"You must come out and have tea with me again some time," he said.

"When?"

The single monosyllable, almost fiercely uttered, appealed to his sense of humor. He laughed heartily.

"You shall come one Sunday," he said.

"My married sister has a bicycle," she remarked. "I might get her to lend it to me."

He nodded.

"I have your address," he said. "I will write to you."

At Lingford a cheap little trap with yellow wheels and a dejected pony came rattling through the village. A young man in a light overcoat and cap, dissipated looking and pale, with a big cigar in his mouth, was driving, and by his side a girl in a ready-made tailor coat, a collar and tie, a heavy fringe, coarse-faced, bold-eyed. The young man waved his whip, and saluted them with a laugh which was half a jeer.

"Wot ho, Milly!" he sung out. "Got a chap, eh?"

Strone's face darkened—a streak of color flushed in the girl's cheeks.

"It's Charlie," she said, in an odd, smothered tone. "She's the barmaid at the Peacock."

Strone made no remark. At the inn a brake was preparing to start for Gascester. He paid sixpence for a seat and handed her up.

"Good-bye," he said.

She turned her head away. Her farewell was almost inaudible. The brake drove off, and Strone saw that she was crying.

CHAPTER V.

An odd restlessness crept into Strone's life during the next few days. To his amazement he found himself thinking more than once of his strange visitor during his long rides backwards and forwards to Gascester, and in the still nights when he wandered about his curious little domain, smoking and drinking in the sweet, clear air. He forgot her small "gaucheries," even "Charlie" ceased to irritate him. He remembered her pretty brown hair and eyes, her eager appreciation of his belongings, her immense awe of his knowledge of books and living things, that pleasant sense of companionship which somehow invested the memory of that day with a charm which he was wholly unable to account for. She was ignorant, a mere waif in that world within which Strone himself aspired to dwell. He was wholly unable to account for the fact that she did not slip easily out of his memory, an alien thing, kin to him only in her humanity. Surely it could not be her sex alone which kept alive recollections for the existence of which there could be no real reason. It was humiliating. He found himself reading poetry—more thrilled than ever he had been before by the wonderful springtime. His work at Gascester fretted him. He grew silent and irritable.

One day the head of the firm sent for him. He threaded his way through the works and presented himself in the private office, cap in hand. Mr. Dobell nodded pleasantly.

"Good-morning, Strone," he said. "I hear that you are by way of being an inventor."

Strone's face was a study of impassiveness.

"I wasn't aware of it, sir," he answered.

Mr. Dobell smiled as one who knows.

"How do you spend your dinner-hour as a rule?" he asked.

Strone shrugged his shoulders.

"I have a few ideas, now and then, sir," he answered. "I sometimes try to work them out, when everything is quiet in the yard."

"So I understand," Mr. Dobell remarked.

"They are scarcely inventions," Strone continued. "You might put them down as improvements. Where they have come to anything the firm has had the benefit."

"I am perfectly aware of it," Mr. Dobell answered. "Sit down, Strone."

Strone found a chair and drew it up to the desk.

"My desire is," Mr. Dobell said, "to offer you every encouragement. You are a valuable servant, and the firm realizes it. I should like to possess your confidence. Am I not right in believing that you have something more extensive in your mind?"

"I am much obliged to you, Mr. Dobell," Strone said. "In a certain sense you are quite right. You will remember a man named Lansom?"

"Perfectly well," Mr. Dobell answered. "He spent twenty years of his life trying to make what he called the 'Miracle Crane.' He took to drink in the end, and died in a hospital."

Strone nodded.

"He was an ill-balanced creature," he said, "but some of his ideas were good—very good indeed. I used to work next to him, and we talked a great deal about his scheme. He never perfected it—he never would have perfected it. All the same—I think that it can be done."

"I have worked at it myself," Mr. Dobell said thoughtfully, "and I have come to utter grief. I got just far enough, though, to see the thing was possible."

Strone smiled.

"Yes, it is possible," he repeated.

"What I want to say to you is this," Mr. Dobell continued. "There is every scope here for you if you should chance to succeed in putting the thing together. Dont' leave us. If you have anything to offer we shan't rob you. If it's worth it—there's a partnership. I have no sons, as you know, and no one in particular to leave the business to. We don't want to grow fat on another man's brains, but the greatest invention in the world is of no use without capital. Go on working at it. You can have all the power you want, and all the material. If you make the Miracle Crane we'll set our capital against your ingenuity, share and share alike."

Strone betrayed no elation, whatever he may have felt. He was looking past his employer out of the high uncurtained window. His massive forehead was puckered into a frown. He was thoughtful.

"It's fair enough, sir," Strone answered. "There's only one thing. I think I can make it, and I'll not take it elsewhere without talking it over with you. But"—

"Out with it, Strone," Mr. Dobell said. "Let's talk this out like men. We'll understand one another, at any rate."

Strone nodded.

"Certainly, sir. I've a few ideas about labor and capital on which I am afraid we should split. I'm not ambitious to make a fortune. I don't want to draw thousands a year myself and pay thirty shillings a week to my men. It isn't honest."

Mr. Dobell raised his eyebrows. A very faint smile flickered across his face. He had heard this sort of thing before.

"Why not? Brains must earn more than unskilled labor. You can't alter that."

"I can modify it, sir."

"Go ahead then."

Strone hesitated. He was not at a loss for words, but he knew his man. Mr. Dobell was honest enough, but he had prejudices.

"The whole thing, sir," he declared, "seems to depend entirely upon the point of view. You can't submit it satisfactorily to argument. I've a sort of creed—just a jumble of ideas, that's all. You might pulverize me logically, and next morning they'd all be there again."

Dobell leaned back in his chair. It was his policy to humor this man, and he prepared to be bored.

"Go on."

"I think that where we mostly go wrong, sir," Strone continued, "is that we are apt to be too self-centred. We look upon ourselves as separate and individual units instead of one infinitesimal part of a great humanity. Life's all framed that way. Everything encourages it. The struggle for existence, the desperate competition, our system of government, even the marriage laws. You see, life's a big thing and an exciting thing. We're caught up in the maelstrom and we forget."

"But you must believe," Mr. Dobell said, "in the necessity for self-development."

"I believe self-development is our first duty," Strone answered firmly, "but as a means to an end—not an end in itself. Directly we've succeeded, our next duty is to give others a leg up. Even if I've got brains, it's no particular credit to me. I am a selfish beast to squeeze the world dry whilst I fatten."

"This isn't argument," Mr. Dobell remarked.

"It's just one of those subjects you can't argue about," Strone admitted. "It's as though the cipher zero had stolen somewhere into all the formulae which represent humanity. You can argue for ever, and you don't advance a step. It's a matter for individual sentiment. There may be another life and there may not, but I am pretty sure I couldn't walk through the slums of Gascester and live in luxury. The difference between failure and success is generally opportunity. The man who succeeds mostly forgets this—the man who fails, never."

Mr. Dobell tapped upon the desk with his pencil.

"Now be practical, Strone. Show me how this is to affect my offer—to come between you and me. I've heard that you're a Socialist. It doesn't seem to me to be a logical state, but I'm open to conviction."

Strone laughed pleasantly. He was beginning to like his employer. His cynicism was relieved by a touch of geniality—he too was a hater of humbug.

"I'm not a Socialist, sir," he said. "I'm a firm believer in some of their broader principles, but you're right when you say that it isn't a logical state. That's why I rather like Christianity. It pleads that we do as a favor what Socialism would like to convince us must be done as a law. If I were an employer I'd want to run my works on a profit-sharing basis, not nominally, you know—the real thing. I'd like my workpeople to get five pounds a week—enough to live in a clean neighborhood, get into the country on holidays, bring up their kids in a wholesome way. I've no delusions, sir. I should draw a bit more myself if it was to be made, and if I did I bet my most ignorant mechanic would grumble and call me names."

They both laughed. Mr. Dobell rose.

"I hold you to your promise, Strone," he said. "Come and see me if you succeed. Meanwhile, can I help?"

Strone hesitated.

"I'd like to leave a little earlier sometimes now we're slack, sir," he suggested.

Mr. Dobell nodded.

"You are your own master," he said briefly. "You know what has to be done. Come when you like, and leave when you like. Money all right, eh?"

"I'm getting all I want, sir, thanks," Strone answered. "Good-morning."

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Strone made use of his increased liberty to leave early that evening, and on a sudden impulse altered his usual route. He had tea at a village inn, lit his pipe and rode slowly along the hilly, pine-fringed roads. He came at last to Bangdon village, and turned by the church homewards. From the Vicarage lawn Martinghoe espied him and shouted lustily.

"Hi, Strone! Come in, man! You're not going to pass my house, surely."

Strone dismounted and brought in his bicycle.

"I didn't know you lived here, Mr. Martinghoe," he said, with an admiring glance at the grey stone house set against a background of dark cool shrubs.

"Leave your bicycle there," Martinghoe insisted. "I will show you my flowers, and you must have supper with me."

They walked about the pleasantly perfumed gardens until the twilight deepend, and from the open French windows a rose-shaded lamp gleamed invitingly in the centre of a white tablecloth. A gong rang out—the Vicar pulled himself up in the midst of a delightful argument on the influence of Ruskin as an apostle of the beautiful.

"Will you have a wash?" he asked.

Strone assented, and afterwards found his way into a low-ceilinged dining room, quaint but charming. Then came a surprise.

Martinghoe advanced to meet him, and laid his hand upon his shoulder.

"Strone," he said, "I must introduce you to my sister, Lady Malingcourt."

There floated out from the rose-lit shadows of the room a woman such as Strone had never looked upon before. She was fair, and very tall, her dinner dress was of unrelieved black; upon a band of black velvet which encircled her long, graceful neck, gleamed a large, lustrous pearl. In her eyes there was an expression strange to Strone—the bored listlessness of a woman of the world. With a little inclination of the head she passed on to her seat at the table.

"I am not always a bachelor, you see," Martinghoe remarked, as the soup came in. "My sister has tired suddenly of the city of vanities, and has come here to rusticate."

"The city of vanities is—London?" Strone asked.

She raised her eyelids.

"It is my brother's definition of a place which he will never visit," she remarked, in her soft, well-bred drawl. "Don't you think he is very prejudiced, Mr. Strone?"

"I cannot tell," Strone answered, "for I have never been there."

A flicker of amazed interest struggled with the impassivity of her features.

"You have never been to London! You are not a foreigner?"

Strone looked up, and his eyes twinkled with amusement.

"I am even a greater stranger to London and your world, Lady Malingcourt, than a foreigner. I am a working engineer in Gascester, and I do not often get a holiday."

She laughed very softly, very pleasantly.

"You are so much to be envied," she murmured. "The most delightful thing in the world is to have something to do."

"As, for instance?" Strone asked, sipping his claret with wonderful appreciation, considering that the wine was strange to him.

"Oh, I have made many attempts at energy—all failures," she answered. "I tried singing, but my master was so unreasonable, philanthropy, but it was so tiresome; racing, but I lost my money. I am really a most unfortunate person."

Whereupon, feeling that she had gracefully extricated herself from her faux pas, Lady Malingcourt leaned back in her chair and left the conversation to the men. Through half-closed eyes she studied Strone, marvelling at his attire—the contrast between it and his easy, fluent speech was a constant puzzle to her. Without the slightest awkwardness Strone gave many signs of being totally unused to any form of society. The small usuages of the table he took to readily enough—when asparagus tongs were placed by his side he simply asked what they were for in the most indifferent manner, and gravely accommodated himself their use. Martinghoe was filled with admiration of the man. When he had pressed him to stay he had utterly forgotten the presence of his sister and the consequent alteration in his domestic arrangements. Strone, however, was neither flustered nor assertive. Encouraged to talk he talked, when opportunity came he was silent. Lady Malingcourt, who had been for some time speechless from sheer inability to grasp the situation, came back once more into the conversation. She, too, although she would not for the world have admitted it, was a well-read and well-informed woman, and she felt a positive pleasure in breathing once more an atmosphere of intellectual controversy. It was the first of many such struggles between the two men representing in themselves and their two lives the real and the ideal—the one passionately religious, pleading ever for the Christian type as the penultimate ideal of civilization; the other frankly Pagan, fashioning his models of worldly stuff, giving to them a reality and an actual vivid life by this selection of humanly beautiful materials, so carefully and deliberately chosen. They sat talking till Lady Malingcourt yawned, talked over their cigars in the garden till the yew tree shadows were black upon the lawn, talked till the eager words died away on Strone's lips, and he stopped short, fascinated and amazed. Through the opened window came the first notes of a woman's song, and to Strone the air seemed suddenly sweet and vibrate with music. The song grew. Strone thought that never before had he heard anything so beautiful. He was strangely, wonderfully thrilled. All his life his sense of beauty, keen enough, had most easily been reached by sound. The soft swelling of a west wind in the woods; the minor wailing of the night air in the pine grove which overhung his cottage; the singing of birds; even the chirping of insects,—these things had represented a very high type of beauty to him. Tonight, from the lips of this tired woman of fashion, came to him a new wonder in life. His pulses quivered with the delight of it. When the song was finished there was a hoarseness in his throat—he was scarcely conscious of his whereabouts. Upon the threshold of the French windows she stood and looked listlessly out at them, her beautiful slim figure softly defined against the rose-shaded background, her bosom still rising and falling with the swell and triumph of that last wonderful note. For she had sung her best, and she knew it!

"I came hoping for applause," she murmured "and not a word from either of you."

Strone moved out from the shadows. His face was unusually white, and his eyes were on fire.

"There is something better even than applause, Lady Malingcourt," he said, "and which we offer only to the most beautiful things in life, and that is—silence."

Then he rode away with scarcely another word, and Lady Malingcourt laughed softly and was well pleased.

"Your working-man," she said to her brother, "is not far from being a courtier."

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He rode back in a dream, a wonderful dream, through which there seemed ever to beat upon his ears the throbbing refrain of the song which had found its way to his heart. And on his table he found in a bowl of water a bunch of dejected-looking wallflowers, and a scrap of a note underneath.

"We're on half-time at our shop, and I borrowed Nancy's bicikel and brought you these. They faded awful quick coming, but I think the water will revive them. I have waited two hours. I hope I shall meet you riding back.

P. S.—I won't have no time to do with Charlie."

He took the note with him out into the night and tore it up. Little white specks of paper fluttered ghostlike through the darkness.

CHAPTER VI.

It was in those days that Strone's ambition, kindled enough long ago, burst suddenly into full flame. He neglected his reading and his solitary country rambles for a spell of downright hard work. Many nights he remained at the works long after the workpeople had left, locked in his shed, with a single light burning—laboring always at the same apparently confused collection of wheels and strangely shaped pieces of metal. His progress was slow, and a less forceful man would long ago have been discouraged. There was a point beyond which movement seemed impossible. Ever he was hammering away, as many others had done before him, at a problem which seemed insoluble. He rode backwards and forwards like a man in a dream. Ever those wheels seemed flying round before his eyes, and somewhere between them and the piston rod there was a link—but where? He told himself plainly that the thing was possible. Some day it would come to him. He had always told himself that. Only whereas a few months ago he had contemplated the end with a sort of leisurely curiosity, he felt himself impelled to work now with a feverish haste, as though time had suddenly closed in upon him. Martinghoe found him dreaming on his rocks one Sunday, and was surprised at the warm welcome which awaited him. They had tea together, and talked for a while. Strone asked after Lady Malingcourt, and learned that she was spending a few days at a country house close at hand.

"My sister," Martinghoe said, "is a woman of a curious type. Before her marriage she was simple and wholesome-minded enough, but society has done its best to spoil her. Her husband was very rich, and they used to entertain very largely. I am afraid that the simple things of life will never again content her, though just now she is certainly a little bored with existence generally. If she had married a politician or a diplomatist she might have made a name for herself. She has brains, but seems to find the labor of thought too arduous."

"Her husband has been dead for some years?" Strone asked.

Martinghoe nodded.

"Yes. He was an invalid from the day of their marriage. Beatrice has never been the same girl since. I should be sorry to call her heartless, but I am afraid she has imbibed a good deal of selfishness of the world she professes herself weary of. What excellent tea, Strone? May I have some more?"

Incidentally Strone spoke of his finding Milly Wilson, of her life and the life of her class. Martinghoe listened with sympathy. He felt that the story was told him in the light of an explanation, but he never alluded to his surprise at that morning meeting. From the first he had great faith in the man.

"I do not think, Strone," he said, later on, "that women have ever occupied much of a place in your scheme of life."

"They have occupied no place at all," Strone answered. "I find plenty of sentiment in life apart from the sentiment of sex. Marriage is not a state for which I have the slightest sympathy."

"You may change," Martinghoe remarked. "You are young, and for good or for evil the woman has swayed the man throughout all time."

"You yourself"—Strone began.

"Should have been married long ago," Martinghoe interrupted simply, "but the woman whom I loved—died."

Strone said nothing, but his silence was sympathetic.

"You are faithful, then—to a memory," he murmured, after a long pause.

"It seems like that," Martinghoe admitted. "The fact is that I have never cared in the least for any other woman. I do not think, Strone, that a strong man ever cares for two women in his life."

And then they talked of other things. Strone spoke of his inventor's hopes, and Martinghoe was interested.

"Ambition is an angel's vice," he said. "Are you anxious for wealth, Strone?"

He shook his head.

"I would not accept it," he answered. "I want the power which wealth confers without the incubus or the disgrace of riches."

"Disgrace!"

Strone laughed.

"My socialism, you know. I would like the control of a large industrial undertaking, and I would like to have the fronting and altering of many social laws."

"Parliament?" Martinghoe suggested.

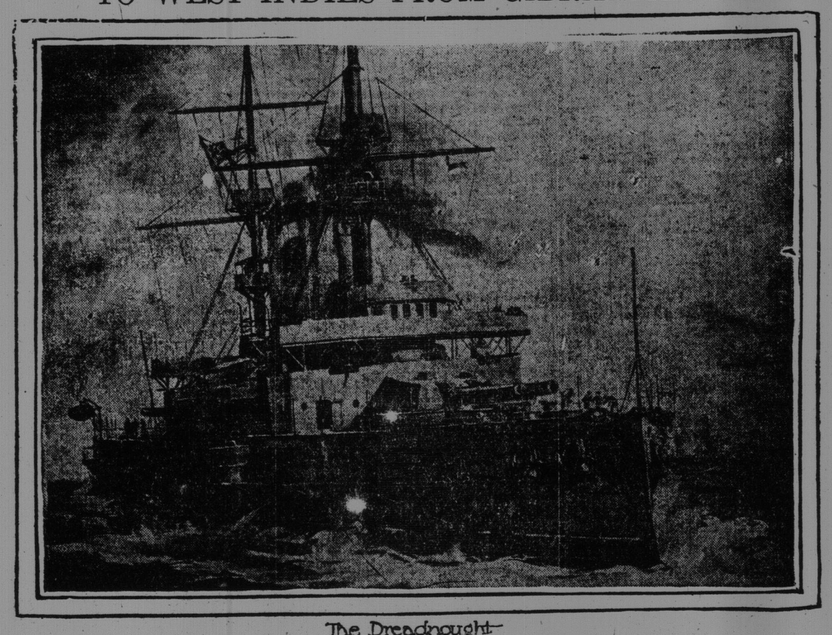
"I suppose so," Strone admitted, without enthusiasm. "Not for its own sake, though. In many ways life even now is very sweet to me, only it is so hard to understand—to know oneself. One goes jogging along—and then an upheaval. There comes a torrent of new emotions, new desires."

Martinghoe sighed.

"If only you had been granted the religious sense," he said, rising, "what a bishop you would have made. By the bye, I wonder would you mind my bringing my sister over one Saturday or Sunday? She is very curious to see your cottage."

(To be continued.)

H. M. S. DREADNOUGHT TO HAVE TEST TRIP TO WEST INDIES FROM GIBRALTAR JAN. 26



The Dreadnought

London, Jan. 8—The British battleship Dreadnought is about to make a notable cruise across the Atlantic, which will take her to West Indian waters at about the time Rear Admiral Evans' squadron would be in the same vicinity, thus affording the American officers a possible opportunity to see the latest marvel in naval architecture.

The purpose of the cruise is to test the seaworthiness of the battleship during the worst of the Atlantic season, and also to test her batteries under adverse sea conditions.

The Dreadnought left England for Gibraltar today, whence she will sail Jan. 26 for Trinidad. The admiralty allows eight days for the ocean trip. The warship will stay about two months at Trinidad, devoting most of the time to gun practice in adjacent waters.

It is understood that the American warships will rendezvous at Culebra, near Porto Rico, at about the same time, which is hardly more than a day's sail from the Dreadnought's rendezvous.

GROWING OLD WHILE YET YOUNG

What a number of women there are who feel that these words exactly suit their case.

There are thousands of females all over our land, broken down in health and dragging out a miserable existence, overburdened with disease peculiar to their sex, apparently growing old while yet young.

From early morn till late at night they have been on the go yet never can attending to the household duties. Is it any wonder then that sooner or later there comes a general collapse? Palpitation of the heart, nervous prostration, smothering and sinking spells, weakness, dizziness, sleeplessness and many other troubles follow. What a woman wants is something to build up the system and for this purpose you cannot equal

MILBURN'S HEART AND NERVE PILLS

Mrs. W. J. Russell, Vasey, Ont., writes: "At one time I suffered greatly from my heart and nerves, and the shortness of breath was so bad I could scarcely do my housework. A friend of mine advised me to try Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills, which I did and I only took them for a short time before I was better.

The price of Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills is 50 cents per box or 3 boxes for 1.25 at all dealers or mailed direct on receipt of price by The T. Milburn Co., Limited, Toronto, Ont.

PROJECT TO DIVERT TRADE FROM ST. JOHN

Montreal, Jan. 8—A New York special says: "With the object of diverting a large part of the import and export freight from and to north continental European ports, which is now handled through Canadian ports and other points outside of New York, a new direct steamship service is about to be operated between this port and Rotterdam and Hamburg.

"The enterprise, whose president was formerly engaged in the German-Canadian steamship service, has the moral backing of the Erie Railway, in which J. Pierpont Morgan is the dominant factor. The line will be known as the New York and Continental Line which, having been incorporated under the laws of the state of New Jersey with a nominal capital of $500,000, is to be increased later on to several millions.

"Several thousand tons of freight now comes into the States from north continental Europe by way of Montreal, from where it is shipped to Chicago. Large quantities also come in via St. John, New Brunswick."

Brick Plant at Beersville.

Charles Polleys, manager of the Imperial Coal Company at Beersville, Kent county, passed through the city Tuesday on his way from New York for Beersville.

Speaking to a Times man, he said the mining operations at Beersville were being carried on as well as could be expected, but there was a great scarcity of labor. The daily output at present is two cars, or about forty tons, but next year they expect to increase the capacity to about five times what it is now. The output of the mines at present is all taken up by the I. C. R. and a number of dealers.

It is also the intention of the company to put in a big brick manufacturing plant next year to utilize the clay that is dug out. This clay will make bricks of a buff color and the company expects to find a ready sale for them in upper Canada. The plant will have a capacity of 20,000 bricks daily.

Mr. Polleys said that they have no trouble in getting their product hauled out from the mines, as the local government had compelled the Beersville Railway to provide accommodation.

Premier Scott Recovering.

Regina, Sask., Jan. 8—(Special)—Marked improvement in Premier Scott's condition continues and his condition is now more hopeful than it has been at any stage of his illness.

G. T. P. ENGINEER HERE

Chief Inspecting Engineer in City in Connection With Line in New Brunswick.

J. Armstrong, chief inspecting engineer of the Grand Trunk Pacific Company for the eastern section of the new transcontinental railway, came to the city Wednesday and is at the Royal. Mr. Armstrong, whose headquarters are in Quebec, is here in connection with the tenders which were recently called for sections of the new railway in this province. He has been with the Grand Trunk Pacific Company since its inception. He said last night that he surveyed the route of the main line through the Yellowhead Pass, which has since been decided on as the most practicable available. He was surprised, he remarked, to see bare ground between here and Moncton as all the way from the New Brunswick boundary to Grand Falls the snow is four feet deep, while at Quebec there is five feet depth.

Albert County Council.

Hopewell Hill, Jan. 8—The January session of the Albert municipal council opened at the shiretown today, Warden Steeves presiding. All of the councillors were present, as follows:

Hillsboro—Jordan Steeves, H. J. Stevens.

Hopewell—W. J. Carnwath, I. C. Prescott.

Harvey—Geo. D. Prescott, David Barbour.

Alma—Wm. Rommel, J. A. Cleveland.

Elgin—W. B. Jonah, W. J. McKenzie.

Coverdale—S. S. Ryan, M. P. P., A. W. Leeman.

Secretary-treasurer W. O. Wright was also present.

The warden appointed the following committees:

Finance—Couns. Rommel, Barbour, I. C. Prescott, Steeves, Ryan, McKenzie.

Bye-laws—Couns. Jonah, Cleveland and secretary-treasurer.

Highways—Couns. G. D. Prescott, Carnwath and Leeman.

County property — Secretary-treasurer, Couns. Carnwath and Stevens.

The report of the auditor, Capt. B. T. Carter, showed the following financial statement:

Assessment ordered for 1906	$11,817.30
Cost of collections	1,105.82
	$10,923.12

The apportionment of the above sum on the several parishes is as follows:

Alma, including 10 per cent	$ 670.84	
Coverdale, including 10 per cent	1,406.87	
Elgin, including 10 per cent	1,211.08	
Hopewell, including 10 per cent	3,557.16	
Hillsboro, including 8 per cent	4,109.37	
Harvey, including 10 per cent	1,967.80	$12,923.12

The above sums are distributed among the different parishes:

Alma—		
Contingencies	$ 233.27	
School fund	212.84	
Railway int.	5.87	
Poor and parish	218.86	
		$ 670.84
Coverdale—		
Contingencies	$ 549.70	
School fund	501.58	
Railway int.	13.83	
Poor and parish	341.76	$ 1,406.87
Elgin—		
Contingencies	$ 454.29	
School fund	414.52	
Poor and parish	342.28	
		1,211.08
Hopewell—		
Contingencies	976.44	
School fund	890.96	
Railways	1,164.38	
Poor and parish	525.38	
		3,557.16
Harvey—		
Contingencies	570.75	
School fund	520.77	
Railways	680.60	
Poor and parish	195.68	
		1,967.80
Hillsboro—		
Contingencies	1,145.53	
School fund	1,045.24	
Railways	1,366.04	
Poor and parish	552.56	
		4,109.37
		$12,923.12

General statement of income for 1906:

Receipts From Collectors, 1906.

Hopewell	$2,462.65
Hillsboro	3,283.67
Harvey	1,320.82
Alma	552.49
Coverdale	1,197.85
Elgin	930.75
	9,748.73

Receipts From Delinquent Taxes.

Hopewell	593.87
Hillsboro	587.42
Harvey	463.51
Alma	84.33
Coverdale	151.22
Elgin	331.31
	2,211.66

Receipts on Account of Road Taxes.

Hopewell	775.30
Hillsboro	1,076.44
Harvey	551.15
Alma	265.10
Coverdale	528.11
Elgin	566.40
	3,762.50

Receipts From Other Sources.

Pedler's license	59.00
Poor acct., Hopewell	140.96
Wharf rent, Alma	21.00
Ferry license	6.00
Jurors' fees	316.50
Scott act fine	50.00
Interest at bank	21.51
Balance from 1905	2,760.97
	3,375.94
	$19,098.33

General Statement of Expenditure for 1906.

School draft, February	$1,638.75	
School draft, August	1,638.75	
		3,277.50
Contingencies and salaries	2,456.36	
Poor account	1,427.31	
Road account	4,288.68	
Hospital account	435.12	
Board of health	70.50	
Scott act	400.00	
Jurors' fees	168.80	
Criminal costs	290.20	
Road damages	20.00	
Refund	2.97	
		9,559.99
Albert Railway bonds paid		2,000.06
Albert Railway coupons		920.00
		$15,757.44
Cash in Bank of N. B.		2,005.24
Cash in hands of secy-treas.		1,335.65
		$19,098.33

Alma was the only parish with a credit balance, but all of the parishes had reduced their indebtedness to the municipality.