
**Reviewed by** Donna Drucker (Colorado College)

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**Commissioned by** Daniella McCahey (Texas Tech University)

*Friend Beloved* is an edited collection of letters between Marie Carmichael Stopes (1880–1958) and Charles Gordon Hewitt (1885–1920) between 1907 and 1914. They were the two youngest recipients of doctorates of science from University College London (ages twenty-five and twenty-four, respectively) in the early twentieth century. They became friends through their overlapping interests in paleobotany (Stopes) and economic entomology (Hewitt) and corresponded over long distances on scientific topics along with more personal reflections on romantic love and friendship. Their relationship shifted dramatically in spring 1910 when Stopes, who had learned of Hewitt’s second broken engagement, proposed marriage to him via letter. Hewitt declined, and they both subsequently married other people. The book provides insight into the early lives of two hardworking and ambitious scientists, who both became famous in their own right and whose works are still well known in the present.

Editor Laura Jean Cameron structures her commentary around the letters (most of which are in the Stopes Papers at the British Library Archives or in the Stopes-Roe family collection) around the concept of *oikos* (the Greek word for “home”) and the various ways that *oikos* threads through Stopes’s and Hewitt’s correspondence, lives, and work. Two themes in the book loosely connected to *oikos* thus emerge: the first is how their romantic lives and relationship changed over a seven-year period, in which the meaning of “home” played a significant role. In the early years of their letter writing, Stopes was romantically involved with the Japanese professor Kenjiro Fujii (1866–1952), until Fujii ultimately decided not to leave his wife, leaving Stopes heartbroken. Stopes and Hewitt developed a long-distance friendship that turned intense. Hewitt’s second fiancée, Edith Mary Garner, wrote to Stopes that their engagement was broken because “your friendship for Charlie was ruining my future happiness” (p. 108). After Stopes proposed to Hewitt, he declined because she could not provide him with the “home life” that he wanted (p. 90). The raw feelings expressed in these letters illustrate the emotional pain of people who created idealized versions of each other that did not reflect reality—not to mention their incompatibility as husband and wife.

The book’s second theme centers on how their personal experiences affected their intellectual achievements. The book includes facsimiles of a meeting of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society in October 1908, which both at-
tended, and their only coauthored article, “On the Tentbuilding of the Ant Lasius niger Linn. in Japan,” published in the society’s journal in 1909. It also includes an excerpt of a chapter of Stopes’s unpublished novel, “A Man’s Mate” (1910), which was a reflection on idealized heterosexual friendship. In the 1910s, Stopes authored books and articles on several different themes, including Ancient Plants (1910), A Journal from Japan (1910), Botany (1912), and, most famously, Married Love (1918). Hewitt authored House-Flies and How They Spread Disease (1912), got a job as the head of the Entomological Branch of the Canadian Department of Agriculture, and became a chief architect of Canada’s early twentieth-century entomological, avian, and wildlife management policies. Though there is no record of their communication after 1914, their shared commitment to thorough scientific research remained evident in their publications.

One unnecessary inclusion in this book is the chapter containing letters to Stopes from Dr. Helen MacMurchy (1862–1953), who hosted Stopes in February 1909 at her home in Toronto, when Stopes was journeying to England through Canada after two years in Japan. Only MacMurchy’s letters to Stopes survive, and while they are effusive and border on romantic, whatever relationship they had petered out due to distance. These letters show that Stopes attracted men’s and women’s attentions but do not advance the Stopes-Hewitt narrative.

For environmental historians and scholars, the last two chapters of the book will be the most valuable, as they contain Cameron’s outlines of Stopes’s contributions to Canadian geology and Hewitt’s posthumously published book, The Conservation of the Wild Life of Canada (1921). As part of the 1913 International Geological Congress, Chief Geologist Reginald Brock asked her to check the date of some plant fossils found in the Fern Ledges of Saint John, New Brunswick. She dated the fossils later than her predecessors had, angering members of the Canadian geological establishment and delaying the publication of her book, The “Fern Ledges” (1914), until after the congress. Hewitt’s book paid little attention to the hunting and gathering needs of First Nations peoples but contained a relatively forward-thinking approach to wildlife conservation, particularly birds and northern mammals. Both Stopes and Hewitt made their separate marks on Canadian environmental history.

Cameron is careful not to overread their professional and romantic relationship into these later texts, rather depending on the concept of oikos to bookend her analysis of their scientific contributions. Both of them were broadly concerned with finding patterns in the natural world in order to master them for human benefit, and that interest was revealed in sexuality and contraception for Stopes and wildlife management for Hewitt. Both scientists operated in a framework of colonialism, imperialism, and white supremacy, and Cameron does not romanticize or explain away Stopes’s reliance on eugenic arguments to promote contraception or Hewitt’s support of the federal decision to drain the Sumas Lake in British Columbia for farmland.

Readers who know Stopes’s and Hewitt’s later careers and impact on global contraception and Canadian ecology have the most to gain from this book, as it provides nuance to the interpersonal relationships, scientific writing, and decision-making processes that shaped who Stopes and Hewitt would become later in life. However, their struggles with love, friendship, and work address themes important to most individuals across time, and this book will thus resonate with a wide audience.
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