POOR DOCUMENT

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# "At the Last of the Ebb"

## By Henry C. Rowland

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When the quick-rising tropic sun had cleft the velvet darkness into long, thin shadows, the Baronet and the Banker found the Countess and the Mate. Already the inquisitive ripples of the rising tide were washing back and forth the skirts of the Countess' pongee gown, now wantonly uncovering the graceful limbs, now deftly smoothing the silk-lace trimmings over the dainty feet, uncertain whether the filmy garment was to be regarded as a vanity or a shroud.

She was lying on her side, with one rounded arm half hidden in a tangled mass of hair that matched the sunrise; the other was clenched in the cold, iron grasp of Jordan Knapp, the mate, whose massive frame was sprawled face downward, his forehead resting on his other hand. Strewn along the beach were fragments of wreckage and the stove-up whale boat, and all around was the soft, warm desolation of a South Sea isle. A few hundred yards off the beach the giant combers, opalescent in the early dawn, thundered across the reef and were shattered into wavelets of fairy hues. Half way between the reef and the beach the broken water swirled around a slender tapering topmast, from the truck of which was flying a torn burgee. When the bubbling spume of a breaking wave had passed, there suddenly rose to view the splintered stump of another mast and slack ends of shrouds that writhed around it like sea-snakes.

The Baronet carried a thin plank whittled shovelwise, the blade of which was frayed and splintered from contact with the hard-packed sand. The Banker carried a large sailor's bandanna, caught up at the corners, and bulging from the personal effects that he had taken from the drowned sailors whom they had just interred. When he saw the Countess, a corner of the kerchief slipped from his fingers, and the pitiful little trinkets rolled unheeded across the shining sands.

They tried to pry the Mate's stiffened fingers from their grip, and as they were doing so he suddenly gasped and awoke.

The Baronet handed him a little flask, and the Banker took the woman by the shoulders and dragged her above high-water mark. When he laid her down an eyelid fluttered. The Banker, with a beating heart, filled the hollow of his hands with sea water. The Mate, leaning on his elbow, watched him sleepily—and divined his intention.

"Good Lord! she's had water enough; try a little sunshine and whisky!"

"We thought, of course, you were both drowned," murmured the Baronet.

"Thought almost right," said the Mate, "might have been, so far as you were concerned. Why didn't you wait for her?"

"I don't know. I don't remember a great deal of what did happen. The boat was sinking as it was—did sink, in fact, before we had taken a dozen strokes," replied the Baronet, holding the flask to the Countess' lips.

"Is he dead?" she asked feebly.

"No, dearest; I am here, safe and sound," said the Banker, soothingly, as he chafed her hands.

"Oh, you! I do not mean you. I mean that gran' man who plunge after me as I struggle in the sea. You—you go an' leave me to perish."

"You are unjust, dear. I thought that you were in the boat."

"Ah, yes—when I call to you from the vessel. But I do not ask you this; I ask you if he live?"

"Yes, Celeste, here he is—and none the worse for his ducking," said the Baronet.

"What happiness—mon Dieu! je suis tres fatiguee. Why, I have the so great wish to sleep?" The long lashes drooped drowsily over the deep violet eyes, and a gentle little sigh was lost in the soft breeze that fanned in from the sea.

The Mate, watching her apathetically, roused himself from his lethargy. "Let her sleep right where she is. Give me your coat." The Banker slipped it off, and the Mate folded it and placed it under the Countess' head. She smiled drowsily and reached out a fluttering little hand.

"Ah! it is you—my preserver—mon cher ami!"

"There, there; you're all right now. Take a little nap; that's a good girl!" He rose stiffly to his feet and stretched both great arms above his head.

The Baronet looked at him quizzically and smiled.

"Don't you think that you are a little proprietary in your manner, Knapp?" asked the Banker in a sulky voice.

The Mate brought down his arms, threw out his chest and stared at him a moment. The deep lines on his face threw darker shadows, and the heavy brows came together.

"Who's got a better right?" he growled.

"It seems to me that as I am her fiance——"

"You're a jim dandy fiance. What made you leave her on the yacht?"

"Oh, well, we won't argue that point. But inasmuch as I am the owner and you——"

"Yes; I am not disputing that the schooner was your schooner, nor the mate your mate. But you've got no schooner left, and therefore no mate. Savvy?"

"But your pay goes on just the same," said the Banker.

"Oh, does it? Well, I'm no sea lawyer, and I don't know whether I'm entitled to any more pay or not; but it seems to me that I am entitled to some salvage on this little craft that you abandoned in a sinking condition," and the Mate jerked his thumb at the Countess.

"Oh, you do, eh? Well, you'd better stick to your pay, young man; it's more negotiable."

The Mate studied the sand at his feet thoughtfully. "Got anything to eat?" he asked presently.

"One can of biscuits," said the Baronet, "and there's a spring back from the beach a way."

"Good! That's worth more to us than coin—or countesses, just now."

The Mate took a survey of as much of the island as he could see. Then his eyes inventoried the fragments of wreckage along the beach.

"Uninhabited, of course. Wouldn's support a jack rabbit so far as chow goes. And just about enough flotsam to ferry one away! Gentlemen, the situation has its drawbacks."

"Aw—we have observed that already," drawled the Baronet. "The island goes about as far as you can see in each direction. There is saved from the wreck of the yacht one lady, five men, one can of biscuits, one boat compass, one hatchet, one dipper, a jar of marmalade and about a dozen matches—besides such uninventoried articles as may be scattered along the beach. Have you—aw—anything to suggest?"

"Darned little," said the Mate, who had finished his survey. "There isn't enough material to work on."

"Shall we carry the Countess to the camp?" asked the Banker.

"Better carry the camp to the Countess," said the Baronet. "It's more portable, and won't be disturbed by moving."

"How much of a camp have you got?" asked the Mate.

"An artist, a Jap mess boy and the articles before mentioned," replied the Baronet.

The Banker sat on the sand, and with his shovel shielded the Countess' eyes from the sun rays. The Baronet led the Mate to the camp, where they found the Artist breakfasting on the sunrise tints over the sea, while the Jap, true to his professional instinct, was boiling some water in a biscuit tin. There seemed to be nothing beside the water to boil, but presently the Jap departed, and returned later with half of a very dead fish, some mollusks and a large crab. Jordan Knapp eyed the crab with animosity.

"Don't cook that thing. The others may be safe, but that fish doesn't look like a good convalescent diet!"

"Maybe we can boil the ptomaines all out of him," said the Baronet; "and when the Countess wakes up she'll want something more nourishing than wet biscuits."

"Well, since she hasn't been present at the autopsy, it may be good for her," answered the Mate, doubtfully. "Boil up the whole business, barring the crab, and then thicken the mess with biscuit crumbs."

"Is the Countess hurt?" asked the Artist, languidly.

"No," answered the Mate, shortly. "She's sort of dissolved, but otherwise all taut."

The three men sat down and watched the preparation of the chowder in silence, Knapp meanwhile munching a biscuit. Presently he arose.

"I'm going to take a pascar around the island. Want some exercise" he asked the Baronet.

"Thanks, awfully; but I've had enough for one day, I fancy. It doesn't take long to do the place. You can walk all the way round it in twenty minutes."

Knapp picked up the cover of the biscuit tin, and, going to the water's edge, filled it carefully, and placed it in the sun.

"What's that for?" asked the Artist.

"Salt."

The Baronet nodded. "What are the chances of being taken off, Knapp?" he asked.

"Darn slim. Accidental, you might say. Everything passing gives this island a wide berth on account of the others on either side of us. Now, if we could manage to get to the next island—but I don't quite see how we can." He wandered off down the beach.

When he returned an hour later, the Countess and the Banker had joined the group around the fire. There were dark shadows under the eyes of the Countess, but her face was almost childish in its animation.

"Nevaire have a taste' a dejeuner so good!" she cried, as she set down the shell which contained the last of her "chowder." "Ah! here is my preserver. Bonjour, m'sieu. Before I am so fatiguee I cannot express my thanks!" She rose to her feet and dropped a courtesy, while the vivacity of her features softened for an instant. "And what it is that you have in the panuela?" She gathered her skirts in both hands, and thurst out her pretty head inquisitively.

"Something to bring back your strength again, Countess—fresh-laid from our farm," said the Mate. He set down the bundle, out of which rolled seven large, round eggs.

"Right you are—turtles' eggs, by Jove!" exclaimed the Baronet.

When the eggs were cooked and eaten, a better feeling seemed to pervade the castaways. In the hunger none but the economical Jap observed that the Mate ate but one egg.

The Countess dropped off into a doze, and the others soon followed—all but the Mate, who arose and searched the horizon with a cold, gray, anxious eye. Soon he stole away from the others, and prowled the beach, dragging fragments of wreckage away from the reach of the tide, searching shell heap and riffle for objects of use. His hard face lightened as, wading waist deep, he dragged from the water the sail of one of the boats and spread it out to dry. Three oars and a bucket were the next treasures. Later, he almost howled with joy as his eye fell upon a mass of cordage and a hatch tarpaulin.

When the others awoke, he set them all to search for turtles' eggs and anything else the grudging sea might give up. The Banker got most joy from finding a waterlogged cask than even the negotiation of a loan had given him, and the Baronet would not have exchanged the sailor's dunnage bag he found for a quarter's rent-roll. The Artist, who said that he did not feel equal to joining in the search, amused the Countess by modeling the wet sand into profiles of the others.

Only the little Jap, turn by turn and twist by twist, unraveled long cotton cords from the sail cloth, wove them cunningly into a plaited line, bent a nail from a washed-up box, baited it with a piece of moilusk, and, wading into the sea, soon hooked a large fish of shining hues.

Far away on the horizon a hazy bluish cloud marked the location of an island to the eastward, and later in the day another appeared to the north. These gave foothold to the imagination and robbed the sea of its apparant loneliness. The Countess felt that but for these islands she would go mad from fear and desolation. But she prattled joyously, and praised the others for their finds.

When the shoal-green of the sea turned to deep ultra-marine, and the golden sands began to purple, they dined upon the rest of the eggs—and cautiously upon the fish, for tropic sea food is sometimes better to admire than to eat. The little Jap appeared with two ripe palm-nuts, gleaned from the half dozen trees upon the island, and none but he appeared once more to notice that the Mate's appetite was not in proportion to his efforts. A lean-to was constructed of the tarpaulin, and the dried sail furnished a common coverlet to all but the Countess, for whom the Mate cut off a separate generous slice. The Mate sat with his back to a tree, and fed the fire with tiny scraps of brushwood.

When all were sleeping, the Countess suddenly awoke, chilled to the bone from contact with the cold sand which the sun-warmth had long since left. The fire was almost dead, and beside the smoldering ashes lay Jordan Knapp, face downward, and sleeping heavily. His great shoulders were outlined against the moonlit sky, and as he breathed deeply and silently she could see them rise and fall against the white horizon. As she watched, too cold to move, a shudder shook the great frame; he turned partly on his side, and drew in his limbs to warm his body.

The Countess crept softly out, and threw a few sticks on the fire. As she slipped from beneath the edge of her coverlet a dark object across it caught her eye. It was the Mate's coat, and another glance showed her that he slept in his thin shirt, open at the neck.

She picked up the coat and held it over the coals of the fire. When it seemed that the heat had penetrated every fibre she spread it gently across the shoulders of the Mate, noticing as she did so that the cotton shirt was clammy from the dew. Almost as the garment touched him the Mate was broad awake, up on one knee, and tense as a forestay.

"Oh! it is you," he whispered, recognizing her in the moonlight. "I thought that I was in China again with Boles, and that the river pirates—pshaw! I'm half asleep still. What's the matter, Countess?"

"Dieu! I have so cold I may not sleep. Perhaps I have sleep enough in the day. What pity, I arouse you, cher ami! But you shiver in your sleep, and you have put your coat across my knee," she added reproachfully.

"I don't mind the cold," said the Mate almost roughly; "and I ought to have kept the fire up, but I was sort of sleepy; I guess." He was building the feeble flames as he spoke. "I'll make you a comfortable bed tomorrow, Countess, built up off the ground and thatched out with palm leaves. Seems like I might have thought of it before, but I was busy saving junk that we may need."

"How long you think we must remain on this islan'" asked the Countess, holding her palms to the growing blaze.

"Not long, I reckon," he answered reassuringly. "We'll start to knock the pieces of the boat together tomorrow, and then we'll work our passage along this chain of islands until we strike an inhabited one. Maue can't be more than three hundred miles to the eastward, and the natives there are friendly."

"But the boat—how without tools may you make him sea-deserving?"

"Seaworthy? Oh, there are nails in the wreckage, and I can chip these shells into tools; and I have my knife."

"It will be a task like 'The Toilers of the Sea.' You have read that book?"

"Yes; but there are several of us, and we have a sail and can wait for a fair wind. It will be easy enough. Don't worry, Countess, you'll be in Frisco in a couple of months."

"I do not worry when you are near, J—Jordan Knapp," she added softly.

"That's a brave girl," said the Mate, patting her hand. "Now you must go to sleep again."

The Countess made no reply, but gazed out over the still, moonlit sea.

The Banker awoke with a gasp. "Are you awake, Knapp?" he asked queruleously. "I'm as cold as death. Can't you build up that fire?" He raised himself on his elbow and saw the Countess.

"If you're going to sit up by the fire, Celeste, do you mind if I take your piece of canvas? Who'd ever think that it could be so cold down here in the tropic?" he grumbled. "You know my lungs aren't very strong, Celeste, and the first thing you know I'll be having pneumonia!"

He tugged the scrap of sail partly off the Baronet. "I say, Knapp, just tuck that thing around my feet, will you? I believe I'm going to have a chill. Heat up the rest of that chowder for me, Celeste. D—— the luck, anyway! You bet that the next time I hire any officers for a yacht I'll get men with the proper licenses, and who know their business. It's all your fault, Celeste. If you'd only been content to go right back this never would have happened. Why don't you heat up something, Celeste? Do you want me to have a——"

"Shut up!" growled the Mate.

"Eh! What's that?"

"Shut up, or I'll come over there and twist your neck! Savvy?"

"What do you mean? Is that the way——"

"Shut yer mouth, d'ye hear? The Countess 's got enough to bother her without your drool!"

The Banker glared across the firelit space, then grumbled off to sleep again. The Countess gazed pensively at the moon, and then turned to the Mate.

He rose suddenly, picked up the Countess' poor little canvas coverlet and held it to the blaze, then wrapped it gently around her and drew her up to him.

"Put your head on my lap—so. Now turn your back to the fire—so."

The fire was behind her, and the broad chest of the Mate sheltered her from the night breeze.

"But you—Jordin Knapp—you cannot sleep so!"

"Never fear, child; go to sleep." His voice was kind, but imperative.

"Ah, mon ami, nevair was I comfortable." She gave a little sigh, and the eyelids fluttered down. The flames grew brighter.

Soon she slept, and after a little the Mate's chin sank on his chest, and he, too, slept. So until the morning, when the Baronet awoke.

He looked at them keenly in the early dawn, and the smile that parted his patrician lips was not altogether ironical.

### CHAPTER II.

A week passed, and no errant sail clove the distant sky line. The supply of turtles' eggs was gone, and the fish caught by the Jap seemed a very lonely member of his species. The castaways at but twice a day, and then scantly. The lines under the Countess' eyes deepeened, and new ones appeared in the rugged face of the Mate. He made a bold pretense of eating, and only two of the party saw the deception; but as he grew daily more cadavorous his energy seemed to increase. With infinite toil he had chipped some of the broad sea-shells into the semblance of tools—a saw, a chisel, and an adze. Nails were drawn or dug from box or cask, and smashed ends of the boat neatly spliced and caulked with cotton fibres.

On the ninth day a bright idea suddenly seized the Baronet. He called the Banker, the Artist and the Mate aside.

"I say, you chaps, I've been thinking that the grub is getting jolly low, and that the Countess is not getting enough to eat. She's a game little thing, and never whimpers; but she's going downhill fast. We men have got to cut down our rations—what?"

Knapp smiled a tired smile.

"Women don't need as much food as men, anyway. You'll find it in the physiologies," began the Banker.

"You're right, Sir Henry," interrupted the Mate; "we'll make you commissary officer, and let you dole out the chuck."

The Artist nodded a moody assent, and walked off up the beach.

When they had trimmed down the fore and after fragments of the boat all that remained to splice was about four feet of the after and about the same length of the forward section. At the most, with the greatest economy of their scant material, the boat when completed would not be more than eight feet over all. The peculiar design, after they had pieced the fragments, brought a smile to the lips of the Mate, although its size gave him food for reflection.

"Looks like a bait car," he remarked to the Baronet, "or a punch-bowl!"

"Knapp, if you mention that word 'punch' I will attack you with this prehistoric weapon!" replied the Baronet, weilding his neolithic stone maul, made of rounded rock lashed in the end of a cleft stick.

While they worked wearily the Artist suddenly fainted. They carried him into the shade, and the Countess bathed his forehead until consciousness returned. He gazed dreamily up at the sunlight that filtered through the palm leaves over his head in green and yellow bands.

"Countess," he asked, presently, "do you believe in God, and heaven and all that?"

"Certainement, mon cher," she answered in surprise.

"So do I, and I think that God must have the artistic spark. No one but a great master could get such wonderful symphonies of color. Just see the play of color in the surf as it breaks, and consider the accuracy in the values of blues and green over our heads. Who ever saw a clash or chromatic discord in a sunset? Or in wild flowers, or the leaves in the autumn Yes; God is a great artist and a musician, and all that is broad and comprehensive. Do you suppose that the mind that conceived such wonders could misjudge a motive or direct the destiny of souls by a rule of three?"

The Countess' violet eyes grew round.

"Ah! but you must not try to think of such mysteries now. Rest, mon, cher; sleep, and rest your tired brain!"

"I will, soon," drawled the Artist, and lazily closed his eyes.

That evening the Artist was the life of the whole party. The Mate, who had never approved of him, listened in amazement and joy to his sudden flow of wit and gaiety. Then, to the astonishment of all, just as they were about to prepare for sleep, he suggested prayers.

"Ah, yes; let us supplicate le bon Dieu;" exclaimed the Countess.

"What rot!" grumbled the Banker.

"I say, it can't do you any harm, you know!" said the Baronet, as one inspired by a sudden new idea.

Knapp rose slowly to his feet and took off his cap.

"Our Father—" he began, and the others joined in; all but the Banker, who took the opportunity to clean the Countess' unfinished shell of chowder.

"The Lord's Prayer doesn't seem to fill all of the requirements," cheerfully remarked the Mate when he had finished, "but it's the only one I know; and, after all the 'daily bread' part is the most important for us."

When they awoke in the morning the Artist was missing. The Countess was the first to find his writing in the sand.

"Dear friends," it read, "this is to apologize for leaving you so abruptly; but I've lost my nerve. Knapp says the boat can only safely carry four—possibly five. The grub is getting low and I'm sick of chodwer; besides, my demand is greater than my supply. Love to all. May God bless and get you safely out of the mess! Au revoir."

The "au revoir" was no sarcasm. Late in the afternoon the Artist returned—from the sea—and they found him with his black hair full of sand, and a sea gull on his chest.

The next day the Mate, with a smile at the Countess, pronounced the boat to be "sea deserving." Then they spent three days in catching fish, which they dried in the sun. It was easier to catch the fish, now that they had a boat. Several bottles that had washed ashore, and the biscuit tin, were filled with water from the spring, which day by day was dwindling as the dry season advanced. Another day was spent in waiting for a fair breeze and recaulking the boat.

They towed her to the leeward side of the island, where the Countess, the Banker, the Baronet and the Jap embarked. The Baronet kept his face averted, and when he tried to answer a question of the Countess' his voice choked.

"Is it that you have grown fond of this beautiful islan'?" she demanded, half jokingly, half in surprise. "J-J-Jordin, what do you make? Get in the boat!"

"No," said the Mate. "I'm going to stop here until you send a schooner for me. It won't be very long. This tub wouldn't be safe with my extra weight in her when it breezes up this afternoon." He was wading behind the boat, shoving her through the shallows ahead of him. The Countess could not see his face as he was leaning over, the better to throw his weight against the stern.

"You're all right now. There's nothing more that I can do. Sir Henry understands about the courses, and as soon as you get clear of the island you can hoist your sail and get a fine fair wind. When you get to Maue you can send a schooner ——"

"Celeste, sit down!" snapped the Banker. "You'll upset the boat if you don't look out!"

"Yes; sit down, Celeste," said the Baronet. "We've arranged it all, and it's the best way——"

Splash! The Countess had leaped nimbly into the water and was wading waist deep back to the beach before the Mate could intercept her.

At the edge of the water she turned.

"And you would leave J-J-Jordin Knapp so—alone desolated—even as you left me on the vessel! Mais non! He have stay by me an' I will remain with him. Think, mes amis, what it would be—alone on this terrible islan' at night, with the moaning of the sea!" She burst into a storm of tears.

The mate turned to her fiercely. "Celeste, do as I tell you! Get in that boat; do you want to make me—. Oh, go, for heaven's sake. Can't you see that you're only making it worse?"

The Banker said nothing.

"I say, do be reasonable; why do you want to make it so hard for us, Celeste?" cried the Baronet, with a queer vibration in his voice.

The drooping head came proudly up. The bare, gleaming arms flashed down and outward. She turned and faced them defiantly, her back to the man she would not desert, her bosom rising and falling. Before her stretched salvation and the sea; behind, the green walls of her prison. Her thin, tattered gown hung in rags, while at her feet the glowing sands pressed hot kisses where the frail satin slippers had worn away. The rising trade wind blew her tawny hair about her face.

You ask me why I remain? I tell you. It is because that if I go I am the base ingrate. This man have risked his life for me when his blood run quick, an' when his life is low he give me his blood, drop by drop. Day by day he starves himself—an' he think I do not see. Ver' many times he bring me food an' say he have eat plenty, but I know it is only his dinner which he save. When I am cold he cover me with his coat an' shiver; when I am triste he tell me the droll story, an' how soon I will be home. An' now he have put everything of food an' shelter in the bateau, an'—an' you ask me that I leave him—"

Her voice choked, and she covered her face with her hands.

The Mate dug his foot in the sand, and gnawed the end of his new bristling moustache.

"Is there any other reason, Celeste?" he asked in a voice like the echo of the surf.

She raised her head, and the sunlight shone on her face. The little hands were tightly clasped.

"Ah, yes; there is more. I have known many men in many country, many who have the wit, the resource, the courage, the heart of gold. But never have I known a man who have them all, as this gran' man; and he has, beside—" she turned and covered her face with her hands—"mon coeur!" she sobbed softly.

"Oh, h—!" growled the Banker; "let's go!"

"Good-bye, children," called the Baronet. "We'll have a schooner here for you in a fortnight!"

He dug his oar blade in the hard-packed sand, when suddenly a feeble spark of decency flared up from deep in the Banker's sordid soul.

"If Celeste's not coming, we might leave her ration," he muttered.

"I say, by Jove! that's so—what? There's some hope for you yet, old man," said the Mate genially to the Banker.

"Who's going to chaperon you two until the schooner comes?" asked the Baronet jocosely.

"This!" said the Mate, in a deep-toned voice. He snapped a cord about his neck and drew forth a heavy golden ring. The blue eyes of the Countess opened wide.

"It was my mother's, Celeste. Will you wear it for me—always?"

She put her hand in his. "Yes, J-J-Jordin Knapp."

The busy little Jap, who had been swabbing the boat dry, leaped to his feet so quickly that he almost had a capsize.

"Eeees—yah!" he squealed, pointing seaward.

The Mate's keen eye was the first to follow the boy's.

"SAIL, O!" he roared in a voice that sounded like a cry of pain. Suddenly he threw his hands above his head.

"They've come for us! The other boat's been picked up! What?—what? He did a beach dance that would shame a cannibal.

The Banker stared out to sea as if uncertain of his part of the play.

Close to the shore the placid waters lay gray, still unawakened in the shadow of the palms. Beyond, the sparkling waves danced sun-kissed and joyous with the life of the growing day. Far on the low horizon a widening band of ultramarine marked the advent of the trade wind, and over the sky-line a pink puff rose steadily over the ocean's brim.

Larger it grew, coarsing in the wake of the breeze, and soon the darker speck that marked the hull appeared. On she came, her topsails shot with the flaming crimson of the sunrise, and soon a snowy streak beneath her fore-foot showed each onward rush.

Close grouped, as if to concentrate their sight, they feasted with their eyes until the Countess grew so that she could not see. A little sob struggled to escape, but at the sound the Mate and the Banker turned to her. The eyes of the two men met in a look different from that thrown seaward.

"Well," said the Banker, "there's no need for heroics after all. We'll all go together, and let's try to forget this chapter. I say we call everything that's happened on this blooming island off. Celeste, don't cry, my—"

The Mate's arm encircled the Countess. She turned to the Banker.

"Ah, yes, mon cher; it shall be as you wish. Everything is off—but the ring!" she added softly, turning to the Mate.

*"She turned and faced them defiantly, her back to the man she would not desert."*

## Digby News.

Digby, N. S., Jan. 22.—It is said that a special temperance movement will be undertaken in the near future.

James L. Strickland, of Westport, has patented a rotary engine.

Tiverton fishermen report haddock and lobsters very scarce. Nearly all the Digby fleet have gone into winter quarters. This has been caused largely by the scarcity of fish in the Bay of Fundy as the weather continues very favorable.

Work is progressing rapidly on the repairs to the Italian brig Due Sokilla, on the marine railway in Meteghan. This vessel is the largest brig rigged vessel afloat at the present time and is said to be the largest vessel ever rigged in this manner.

E. R. Reid, contractor, of Parrsboro, is carrying on large lumbering operations in the woods back of Meteghan.

J. Ainsley Henshaw and son, John, of Bear River, are both in the Victoria general hospital, Halifax, the former for treatment of a bruise on his hand and the latter for tuberculosis of the shoulder joint.

In the sudden death of Sarah Ann Miller, who dropped dead in the street near her home, Bear River, loses an aged and much respected resident. She was 89 years of age and had been a member of the Baptist church 77 years and was a faithful Christian worker.

## Harvey Station News.

Harvey Station, Jan. 22—Mrs. William McCulloch went to Waltham (Mass.), on Friday evening, she having received a telegram informing her that her daughter, Miss Rena McCulloch, was seriously ill there of pneumonia.

The weather is very mild and springlike and what little snow there is is wasting away. The thermometer stood at 44 above most of the day yesterday.

Miss Bessie Mowatt, who has been residing at Stockton Springs (Me.), for some time, has returned home. She is not in good health. She was accompanied by her brother, Ernest Mowatt.

Considerable quantities of spruce pulp wood are being hauled to the station for shipment by parties in Acton, and St. Allen Robinson, of this place, is engaged getting pulp wood on Robert Grieves' land on the hill to the south of the station.

Fred Little, of York Mills, caught a valuable otter in the northeast Magaguadavic stream a few days ago.

# S. S. CONVENTION AT HAMPTON

### Attendance Not Large, But Much Interest Manifested—Encouraging Reports Read.

Hampton, Kings county, Jan. 22.—The annual convention of the Rothesay, Hampton and Norton District of the N. B. Sunday School Association opened this afternoon in the Methodist church, Hampton Station, at 2.30 o'clock, with a devotional service led by the Rev. Allen Spidell, pastor of the Hampton village Baptist church, who, after the singing of hymns and prayer by James W. Smith, read a scripture lesson and commented upon it.

The president, Rev. R. G. Fulton, (Methodist) then took charge and welcomed the delegates, expressing the hope that they would all enter freely into the discussions and gather many ideas which will prove helpful in their work through the present year.

The attendance, though not very large, was quite representative of the schools included in the organization. A roll of these schools was called.

Miss Helen Thomson, who had been chosen secretary pro tem, reporting for Rothesay Presbyterian. No school is held in the winter, but a very successful guild has been sustained weekly in which the Sunday school lesson is regularly taught.

Leonard Hill reported for the Nauwigewauk Christian school. Although not large they were doing good work and good interest in Bible study is kept up. He hopes to start a home department this year.

Smithtown school was not reported on.

The Rev. Mr. Spidell reported briefly for the Hampton Village Baptist school, but said no delegates had been appointed because so proper official notice of the convention had been sent to them.

Mr. Fulton explained that he had personally informed the pastor last Wednesday, but as the list of schools placed in his hands at the last annual meeting did not contain the name of the school it had been overlooked when the postal cards were sent out. The trouble arose from the removal of the secretary from the district.

The Rev. Mr. Glover reported for the Presbyterian village school Though small in number it is prosperous, with an average attendance of 24. There is no home department or cradle roll.

Mrs. John March reported for the Station Baptist school. Attendance was not large, but the interest in the Bible lessons is well sustained, and their good influence cheerfully acknowledged by those who take part. There is no home department, but temperance army roll numbers 46. There is also a cradle roll, but the lady in charge had removed to Salisbury, and so no special report on that could be given.

The Station Methodist school was reported on by J. W. Smith. A loss of four teachers had greatly interfered with the attendance, but they were able to report an average of about 25. They had no home department or cradle roll.

Mrs. Floyd spoke for the Central Norton Baptist school, which has an average of nearly thirty scholars and the work is successfully carried on.

Bloomfield and Norton Station were unreported.

The following committee was appointed to nominate officers for the ensuing year: J. W. Smith, Leonard Hill, Mrs. Floyd, Miss Helen Thomson and Mrs. John March.

The field secretary, Rev. Mr. Ganong, laid down a series of standards for organization, the Rev. B. H. Nobles, of Sussex, spoke on The Written Question and Review; the Rev. B. Glover, Hampton, on the Home Department, with a Round Table Talk, and the afternoon session closed with an able presentation of the financial and statistical conditions of the association by the Rev. F. Baird.

The nominating committee reported at the evening session the following list of officers:

President, Rev. B. Glover, Hampton Village.

Vice-president, Rev. Mr. Perry, Norton Station.

Secretary—Miss Helen Thomson, Rothesay.

Director of home department, Rev. A. Spidell, Hamptos Village.

Teacher of normal class—Rev. R. G. Fulton.

Director of temperance work, Mrs. John March.

The evening session opened with a service of song, after which the nominating committee submitted their report, which was adopted, and the Rev. B. Glover took charge, and expressed his thanks and asked for co-operation in the work in which they are engaged.

The Rev. Mr. Noble then delivered a strong and instructive address on the Bible Class, Its Aims, Demands and Methods. It was full of valuable hints as to the conduct of a Bible class so as to bring about the best results.

Field Secretary Ganong followed with an address on the training of teachers, which he treated from the intellectual standpoint, showing the changed conditions of today, which demanded better material and better prepared material to accomplish the designed purpose.

A round table talk on school management and the home department, in which many of the delegates took part, closed a session of more than ordinary interest.

The next annual session will be held at Norton in June, the precise date to be fixed by the executive.