

# WHEN THE BOAT HAS TOUCHED SHORE

It is related that two Scotch fishermen, "Jamie" and "Sandy," belated and befagged on a rough water, were in some trepidation lest they should never get ashore again. Finally Jamie said:

"Sandy, I'm steerin, and I think you'd better put up a bit of a prayer."

"I don't know how," said Sandy.

"If ye don't I'll chuck ye overboard," said Jamie.

Sandy began: "Oh, Lord, I never asked anything of ye for fifteen years, and if ye'll only get us safe back I'll never trouble ye again, and—"

"Whisht, Sandy!" said Jamie, "the boat's touched shore; don't be beholden to anybody."

This is not the only instance where prayers have ceased when "the boat has touched shore." In the midst of plenty and prosperity and away from dangers and vicissitudes, men become wonderfully puffed up. But a great transformation takes place as soon as adversity comes upon them. It is all important that we remember our helplessness and give thought to the arm upon which, during our peril, we quickly leaned, even though "the boat has touched shore."

In this year of 1905 we have the greatest crop in history. The granaries are to be full to overflowing; the cattle are sleek and well-fed; and in the counting room and in the factory, as well as on the farm, the beneficent results of a bounteous harvest are already felt. So far as the crops of 1905 are concerned, "the boat has touched shore."

Is this not a good time for men to remember the years of drouth? Perhaps some of The Commoner readers have never been brought face to face with the terrors, the heart-aches, and the pathos of the drouth-stricken period. Many of them have a lively recollection of those days, and, please God, may they never come again! During one of these seasons of drouth the writer spent two weeks at the home of an aged farmer. In that year the corn had obtained a fine start and as though to mock the husbandman, had grown to fine proportions only to be burned day by day before his very eyes. Great fields of what with the aid of a little rain would have become magnificent grain, were being literally burned up by the sun's merciless rays. The creeks had gone dry. The farmer was required to economize on his cattle's food as well as in the provision for his own table. Turn in whatever way one would, the eye rested upon great fields of blasted crops, and one could see men, women and children on their knees, praying for rain. It happened that during the two weeks referred to, many promising clouds filled the sky. For several days the thunder rolled, the lightning flashed, but no rain fell. It was one of the most pathetic sights imaginable when, in the presence of one of these black clouds, the farmer would gather his family and his visitors around him, and with his fine gray hairs uncovered, drop upon his knees, appealing earnestly—and yet as it de-

veloped ineffectively—that the God he had for so long faithfully served might hearken to the prayers made by his helpless creatures.

At one time while the members of that little gathering were upon their knees in that farmyard, a few drops of rain fell from a black cloud. No more dramatic scene has ever been placed upon the stage than when that fine old farmer, confident that his prayers were about to be answered, sprang to his feet, and extending his long arms toward Heaven, shouted, as though he wanted the world to hear: "We thank Thee, O God, for Thy bounty. We knew You would hear our prayers!"

And no more pitiable sight was ever offered for the eyes of pitying men than that presented by this faithful old farmer when the black cloud passed over, after having given but a few drops of rain. It would be by no means correct to say that this particular old farmer never lost hope. In a short time his crops were blasted, and they finally ceased to pray for rain, but it was characteristic of this man that he found no fault. "He bore it calmly, though a ponderous woe, and still adored the Hand that gave the blow."

A few days ago the writer happened to meet that same farmer. He had crops in abundance, and was in every way prosperous. He was reminded: "It wasn't necessary for you to pray for rain this year." He replied: "No, not for rain, but to give thanks for the strength that carried me through the trials of former days, and gratitude for the ability to appreciate and put to proper use the manifold blessings now bestowed upon me."

In the sight of our inventions, of our railroad building, of our ocean enterprises, of our search for gold, of our struggle for territory, of our efforts to become a world power, not by example, but by force of arms, we have come to imagine that man is an all powerful creature.

He has perfected inventions for the planting and the harvesting of grain, and for the convenient disposal of it after the harvest has been made. In some quarters and on a comparatively small scale, man has devised processes of irrigation. But in the presence of a threatened disaster that involves the destruction of the crops of the country, men realize their helplessness, and whatever their theologies, their creeds or their notions may have been, they are forced to the conclusion that, after all, we may be necessarily dependent upon some power higher than that of man. In the presence of a threatened disaster man's hope may find voice, and yet in the contemplation of his weakness in dealing with the great forces of nature, he is forced to employ the words of the poet: "But what am I, an infant crying in the night, an infant crying for the light, and with no language but a cry."

It is nothing new that in the time of a great calamity, in the presence of a threatened disaster, men become more tolerant of the faith of the mothers. The story is as old as the hills, and from the beginning men, who in prosperity have been inclined either to indifference or to sneers, have in disaster come to realize, though only for a moment, that they are dependent upon

a superior power. The old time religion that in the busy marts has been swept aside by those too practical to give thought to the future, has in the midst of trouble re-impressed itself upon helpless men; and all the theologies and the creeds and the notions erected by so-called "progressive" men are as mere baubles at such a time in comparison with the faith of Paul and Silas.

We may have heard a man in the vigor and freshness of youth sneer at the faith of his mother, but when the oats have been sown, when the mad race has been run and age and decrepitude come upon him, how often have we seen that same man demonstrate that he realizes the completeness of human frailty.

We may have heard a man sneer at the faith of a neighbor; and yet how often have we seen that same man when death has threatened his own household, kneeling beside the cot of a beloved child and mingling his prayers with those of a devoted mother, invoking for his home that which he is powerless himself to give, pleading for relief from a source whose very existence he has sometimes questioned.

In the moment of peril human frailty leans instinctively toward divine strength. The privilege of the "sweet hour of prayer" that brings one "from a world of care" has been the greatest boon to mankind. It has smoothed the pillow of many a dying man; it has quickened the conscience of many a thoughtless woman; it has given inspiration to many a simple child, and it has brought surcease of sorrow to many a heart-broken parent.

The mother praying for the wayward son is encouraged to new efforts in behalf of her child; the soldier praying for guidance on liberty's battle field is inspired to more skillful struggles; the statesman, invoking divine aid in dealing with the problems of government, is brought nearer to his God and hence nearer to his conscience.

In the days of tribulation some give audible expression to their prayers, others pray no less earnestly, though silently.

As down in the sunless retreats of the ocean  
Sweet flowers are springing no mortal can see,  
So deep in my soul the still prayer of devotion,  
Unheard by the world, rises silent to Thee.

As still to the star of its worship, though clouded,  
The needle points faithfully o'er the dim sea,  
So dark when I roam in this wintry world  
shrouded,  
The hope of my spirit turns trembling to Thee.

Who will say that in the presence of today's prosperity it is not the part of wisdom for men to remember their helplessness by recalling the days when the rains fell not upon the earth? But in this year of magnificent crops it does not seem difficult to believe that the man or woman who finds relief in cultivating "sweet flowers" that spring "deep in the soul" will, even in the very shadow of disaster, share Browning's sublime optimism: "God's in his heaven; all's right with the world."

RICHARD L. METCALFE.

## DARK LANTERN METHODS BY THE "DEFENDERS OF NATIONAL HONOR"

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exponent of publicity. The New York Life believes in the widest and fullest publicity of its affairs."

Comment unnecessary.

### FALSE AFFIDAVITS

Aside from the false statements made in the circular referred to, Mr. McCall and his associates have not hesitated to become responsible for false statements in other forms. Immediately after the election of 1896 Governor Culberson of Texas called upon President McCall, demanding that in conformity with the Texas law, President McCall give the amount, if any, paid by or on behalf of his insurance company for political purposes during the presidential campaign. Replying to that demand, Mr. McCall caused to be sent to Governor Culberson an affidavit by T. M. Banta, cashier of the New York Life Insurance company, to the effect that "no moneys were directly or indirectly paid by this company to the republican campaign fund during the recent presidential election." Hugh S. Thompson, comptroller of the New York Life also made affidavit to the same effect. John C. Whitney, audi-

tor of the New York Life, made a similar affidavit.

In his testimony, before the New York Insurance committee Mr. McCall testified that the company had paid in the presidential campaign of 1896 the sum of \$50,000 to the republican national campaign fund, thus showing that the sworn statements which Mr. McCall caused his subordinates to make to the governor of Texas, were false.

These men who traffic in the money of their policyholders, who rob the widows and orphans whose interests are intrusted to their care, who publish false statements concerning the methods pursued by their company, who cause their subordinates either to commit perjury or, because of crooked book-keeping, to innocently swear to statements which the superiors know to be false—these are the men who, in the campaigns of 1896 and 1900 posed as the faithful defenders of national honor, and the vallant champions of the business interests of the country!

What is to be done with these well dressed rascals? Are they to be permitted to escape with their plunder? Or should they not, as is the practice toward common rogues, be driven from their positions of trusts and held strictly to account in the criminal courts of the state?

## TIRES OF SOCIETY

The Denver Post reports the case of a young lady of that city who tires of society and wants to work. She says: "Society wearies me. What is there in it but empty form, and what do you gain? I want to do something worth while in the world—to feel the joy of good hard work well done." It is a laudable ambition. Society when it means rivalry in expensive entertainments which pamper the body and overlook both mind and heart, is empty. No wonder that an earnest person finds it tiresome. Society, when it describes the association of congenial spirits where the animal in man is subordinated to the delights of the mind and the growth of the affections—such society is in every way helpful; and such society is entirely consistent with work. In fact, such society is only possible among those who find pleasure in service. It is of society in this better sense that the poet speaks when he says: "Society, friendship and love bequeathed by God unto man. O, had I wings of a dove how soon would I taste them again." But the fashionable society into which so many young men and women seem anxious to enter deadens the morals, rusts the intellect and at last destroys the body. Fortunate are those who tire of it early.