

Twilight and Dawn

IT IS the hushed and holy hour of evening and although the sun has disappeared below the horizon yet its last golden glow tinting the western sky with a soft mellow light, seems to linger in loving benediction. The birds having chirped their evening hymns betake themselves to their leafy shelters and no sound disturbs the tranquility of this lovely summer evening. Now at twilight is nature's sweetest hour with the languor of its witching spell and calm drowsiness.

The sea too as if under the influence of nature's magical wand is reposing quietly and contentedly, and no billow or ripple disturbs its placid surface. Evening is deepening and the stars coming out peep at their reflections in this watery mirror. The last flush has faded from the west. Another day is dead and another night is ushered in.

With the coming of night a rower pushes out his boat over the pebbly strand and into the water. With the dexterity of a practised boat-man he adjusts the rollock, and oars, and then pulls out with the long, steady stroke that characterizes so well the skilled oars-man.

His figure though well-knit is slight, bespeaking youth, as his ready stroke indicates. From a heart overflowing with happiness a song bursts forth keeping time with the sound of the oars and the lapping of the water on the sides of the boat. The boat-man goes out into the night with a heart glad and gay and with no shadow of a care on his young brow. The moon comes up shedding everywhere its sweet effulgence and surrounding the rower with a halo of brightness.

Soon the shore is left behind and the wide, moon-lit sea seems to challenge his voyage upon its treacherous breast. What is that? The rising wind, first a whispering zephyr, then a mournful sighing moan, predicting a storm. "I must needs prepare," said he to himself. "I do not like the tune of the wind, the stars have vanished, the moon looks sick and the home shore is yet far off." He begins preparations for the task which he knows is in store for him. First he throws off his jacket, then opens the front of his shirt and rolls up his sleeves so that nothing will impede his stroking, then pulls boldly out as the

clouds roll over the moon and the wind begins to whistle and the boat to rock on the waves.

The storm bursts upon him with all its fury. The thunder crashes, and the clouds forming an inky pall over the face of the heavens seem to rend themselves asunder in raging awfulness. The lightning flashing zig-zag athwart the sky, illumines the scene with an eerie and spectral light that serves to intensify the darkness between the flashes. To the threnodic roaring of the sea the wind laughs and shrieks with the glee of a demon and delightfully blows the frothing spray into the face of the boatman. With increasing vehemence it urges the waves to fall upon his frail craft

The rower bends at his oars and pulls with all his might, but his stroke is slower and lacks its former regularity. His muscles stand out like cords in his efforts to keep the boat before the seas. The song no longer comes from the gladness of his heart but a look of haunted despair is stamped upon his face. He is stooping lower and his breath comes in gasps for his strength is well nigh exhausted. Can he hold out against the fury of the elements? The sea yawns and opens its awful jaws in preparation. Has he the strength to hold out against the storm that assails him from every side? The strokes are growing slower and still more slow, his face has become pinched and drawn and the aching shoulders bend lower and lower. For one brief moment he raises his eyes to heaven and murmurs a prayer to the Heavenly Father for assistance in this his hour of need. Away in the distance the light house sends a feeble streak of light out on the stormy sea. O how welcome is that faint ray, for it tells and points out the home shore, which when reached is his goal and haven of rest.

But the storm is ceasing. The thunder no longer crashes but as if loth to be gone keeps muttering and growling in the distance. The lightning too has lost its sharp vindictiveness and now is but fitfully playing in the western sky. The wind has changed its tune from a savage glee to a moaning chant to the accompanying dirge of the waves. The light-house sends its encouraging beams upon the sea, which beckoning to the rower seem to say, "I am the goal, the haven of rest. Do not lose heart but hold out for I am not far off."

The storm has ceased and the treacherous sea has calmed its fury. The wind has blown itself away and has not left even the lightest of zephyrs behind. Again the stars have come out

and seem to twinkle more merrily with every stroke of the oars that brings the rower nearer the home shore.

Morning is breaking in the eastern sky, for Aurora having put the stars to flight is flooding the heavens in that soft rosy tint, the precursor of day. With the first rays of the rising sun the boatman is seen kneeling upon the sands of the home shore, his hands are clasped in prayer and his eyes raised to heaven with a look of grateful thanksgiving. The light-house shines its last beam upon the kneeling boatman and then goes out, for day has come and its mission is over.

L. L. C.



"In England rivers are all males,
For instance Father Thames;
Whoever in Columbia sails
Finds them mamsells or dames.
Yes there the softer sex presides---
Acquatic I assure you;
And Mrs. Sippy rolls her tides
Responsive to Miss Souri."

James Smith.

"How does the water
Come down at Lodore?
Rising and leaping,
Sinking and creeping;
Dividing and gliding and sliding,
And falling and brawling and sprawling,
And bubbling and troubling and doubling,
And rushing and flushing and brushing and gushing,
And flapping and rapping and clapping and slapping,
And thumping and plumping and bumping and
jumping,
And dashing and flashing and splashing and clashing,
All at once and o'er all, with a mighty uproar---
And this way the water comes down at Lodore."---
Southey.