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THE SANDS OF DEE (1)

" O MARY, go and call the cattle home,
 And call the cattle home,
 And call the cattle home
 Across the sands of Dee ; "

The western wind was wild and 'dank with foam,
 And all alone went she.

The western tide crept up along the sand,
 And o'er and o'er the sand,
 And round and round the sand,
 As far as eye could see.

The rolling mist came down and hid the land :
 And never home came she.

" Oh ! is it weed, or fish, or floating hair—
 A tress of golden hair,
 A drowned maiden's hair
 Above the nets at sea ?

Was never salmon yet that shone so fair
 Among the stakes on Dee."

'They rowed her in across the rolling foam,
 The cruel crawling foam,
 The cruel hungry foam,
 To her grave beside the sea :
 But still the boatmen hear her call the cattle home
 Across the sands of Dee.

C. KINGSLEY.

NOTES

- Dee*..... A lovely river in the north-west of England, with a very wide mouth, and a long stretch of sands.
- 1 *Cattle*..... Beasts which feed on grass in the fields, and which are eaten for food.
- 4 *The sands*..... When the tide goes out, the sand at the mouth of the river is left bare.
- 5 *Dank with foam*..... Moist or damp with the froth, which the wind blew towards the land from the sea.
- 11 *The rolling mist*..... A kind of fog from the sea which hides everything from sight.
- 13 *Weed*..... Sea-weed.
- Floating*..... Moving gently on the top of the water.
- 14 *A tress*..... A curl or lock of hair.
- 17 *Was never salmon yet*..... There never was a salmon yet.
- Salmon*..... A large fish.
- Shone so fair*..... Shone so bright. The salmon is a beautiful fish, with a shining body.
- 18 *Stakes*..... Strong posts to which the fishing-nets are fastened.
- 20 *Crawling foam*..... When the tide flows over flat sand, it seems to crawl, instead of coming up in great waves.
- 21 *Hungry foam*..... Called so, because it had drowned Mary.