

day it washes the foot of the wharves, for seven a wide expanse of mud stretches away to Canvey Island in front, and Southend Pier to the east.

At the wells—for Leigh still depends for water on its wells—are, during the hours at which water is permitted to be drawn, lines of twenty women and girls with pails, each patiently waiting her turn. There are not many boys about, for boys require more sleep than men, and a considerable portion of their time on shore is spent in bed.

It is ten o'clock in the day; the bawleys have returned from the fishing grounds, and scores of them have anchored in the Ray—a deep stretch of water lying between the spit of sand that extends from the end of Canvey Island close up to Southend Pier, and the mud-flats of Leigh. The flats are still uncovered, but the tide is rising fast in the winding channel leading up to the village. In a few minutes there will be water enough for the boats, and already these can be seen leaving the bawleys and making for the mouth of the channel. The wind is fair, and each boat hoists its sail, white or yellow or brown, and with the crew sitting up to windward comes flying along the shallow channel, making, as they always do, a race of it home.