

Charles Kingsley (1819-75)

10 *The Sands of Dee*

‘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, 5
 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. 10
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 drownèd maiden’s hair 15
 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, 20
 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.

1849

(From *Poems*. London: Macmillan, 1889)