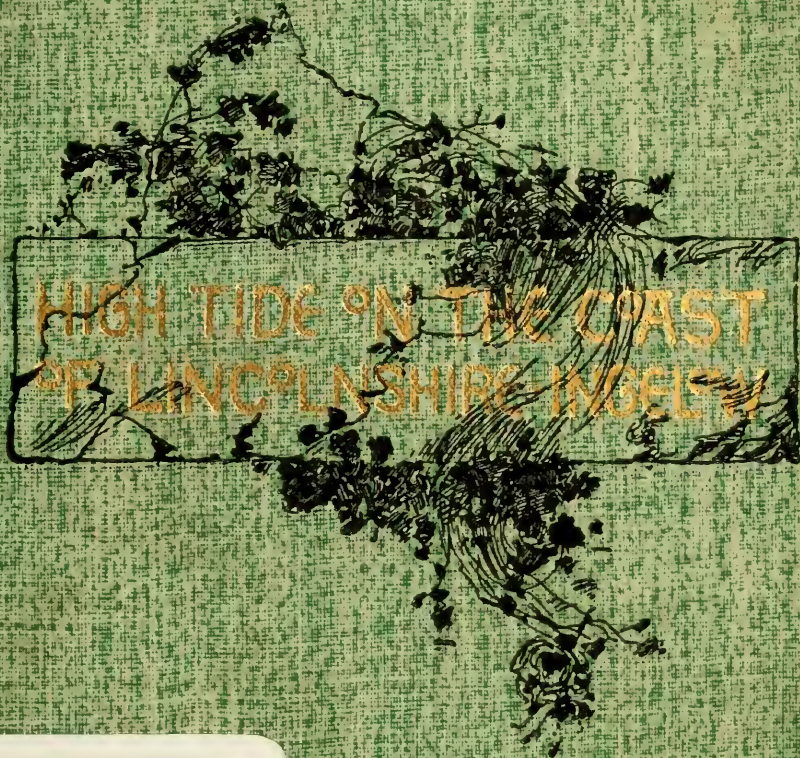


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HIGH TIDE ON THE COAST
OF LINCOLNSHIRE IN 1851

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HIGH TIDE ON THE COAST OF
LINCOLNSHIRE. BY JEAN INGE-
LOW. WITH ETCHED ILLUSTRATIONS
BY LOUIS K. HARLOW.



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THE HIGH TIDE ON THE COAST OF
LINCOLNSHIRE. (1571.)

THE old mayor climbed the belfry tower,
The ringers ran by two, by three;
“Pull, if ye never pulled before;
Good ringers, pull your best,” quoth he.
“Play uppe, play uppe, O Boston bells!
Ply all your changes, all your swells,
Play uppe ‘The Brides of Enderby.’”

Men say it was a stolen tyde—
The Lord that sent it, He knows all;
But in myne ears doth still abide
The message that the bells let fall:
And there was nought of strange, beside
The flights of mews and peewits pied
By millions crouched on the old sea wall.

I sat and spun within the doore,
My thread brake off, I raised myne eyes;
The level sun, like ruddy ore,
Lay sinking in the barren skies;
And dark against day's golden death
She moved where Lindis wandereth,
My sonne's faire wife, Elizabeth.



“Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!” calling,
Ere the early dews were falling,
Farre away I heard her song,
“Cusha! Cusha!” all along;
Where the reedy Lindis floweth,
Floweth, floweth,
From the meads where melick groweth
Faintly came her milking song—

“Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!” calling,
“For the dewes will soone be falling;
Leave your meadow grasses mellow,
Mellow, mellow;
Quit your cowslips, cowslips yellow;
Come uppe, Whitefoot, come uppe, Lightfoot,
Quit the stalks of parsley hollow,
Hollow, hollow;
Come uppe, Jetty, rise and follow,
From the clovers lift your head;
Come uppe, Whitefoot, come uppe, Lightfoot,
Come uppe, Jetty, rise and follow,
Jetty, to the milking shed.”



If it be long, ay, long ago,
When I beginne to think howe long,
Againe I hear the Lindis flow,
Swift as an arrowe, sharpe and strong,
And all the aire, it seemeth mee,
Bin full of floating bells (sayth shee),
That ring the tune of Enderby.

Alle fresh the level pasture lay,
And not a shadowe mote be seene,
Save where full fyve good miles away
The steeple towered from out the greene;
And lo! the great bell farre and wide
Was heard in all the country side
That Saturday at eventide.


The swanherds where their sedges are
Moved on in sunset's golden breath.
The shepherde lads I heard afarre,
And my sonne's wife, Elizabeth;
Till floating o'er the grassy sea
Came downe that kyndly message free,
The "Brides of Mavis Enderby."





Then some looked uppe into the sky,
And all along where Lindis flows
To where the goodly vessels lie,
And where the lordly steeple shows.
They sayde, "And why should this thing be?
What danger lowers by land or sea?
They ring the tune of Enderby!





“For evil news from Mablethorpe,
Of pyrate galleys warping down;
For shippes ashore beyond the scorpe,
They have not spared to wake the towne;
But while the west bin red to see,
And storms be none, and pyrates flee,
Why ring ‘The Brides of Enderby’?”

I looked without, and lo! my sonne
Came riding downe with might and main:
He raised a shout as he drew on,
Till all the welkin rang again,
“Elizabeth! Elizabeth!”
(A sweeter woman ne’er drew breath
Than my sonne’s wife, Elizabeth.)



“The olde sea wall (he cried) is downe,
The rising tide comes on apace,
And boats adrift in yonder towne
Go sailing uppe the market-place.”
He shook as one that looks on death.
“God save you, mother!” straight he saith;
“Where is my wife, Elizabeth?”



“Good sonne, where Lindis winds away,
With her two bairns I marked her long;
And ere young bells beganne to play
Afar I heard her milking song.”
He looked across the grassy lea,
To right, to left, “Ho, Enderby!”
They rang “The Brides of Enderby!”



With that he cried and beat his breast;
For, lo! along the river's bed
A mighty eygre reared his crest,
And uppe the Lindis raging sped.
It swept with thunderous noises loud;
Shaped like a curling snow-white cloud,
Or like a demon in a shroud.

And rearing Lindis backward pressed
Shook all her trembling banks amaine;
Then madly at the eygre's breast
Flung uppe her weltering walls again.
Then banks came downe with ruin and rout—
Then beaten foam flew round about—
Then all the mighty floods were out.



So farre, so fast the eygre drave,
The heart had hardly time to beat,
Before a shallow seething wave
Sobbed in the grasses at oure feet :
The feet had hardly time to flee
Before it brake against the knee,
And all the world was in the sea.

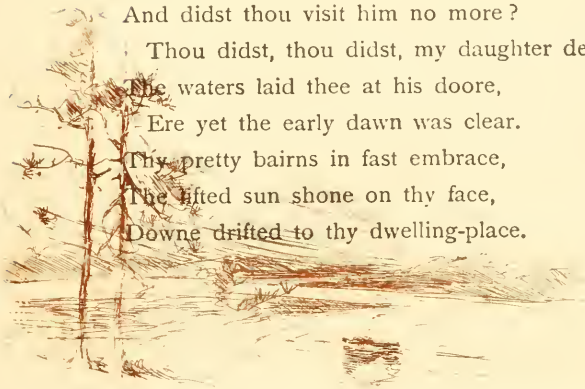
Upon the roofe we sate that night,
The noise of bells went sweeping by ;
I marked the lofty beacon light
Stream from the church tower, red and high —
A lurid mark and dread to see ;
And awesome bells they were to mee,
That in the dark rang " Enderby."





They rang the sailor lads to guide
From roofe to roofe who fearless rowed;
And I—my sonne was at my side,
And yet the ruddy beacon glowed;
And yet he moaned beneath his breath,
“O come in life, or come in death!
O lost! my love, Elizabeth.”

And didst thou visit him no more?
Thou didst, thou didst, my daughter deare;
The waters laid thee at his doore,
Ere yet the early dawn was clear.
Thy pretty bairns in fast embrace,
The lifted sun shone on thy face,
Downe drifted to thy dwelling-place.







That flow strewed wrecks about the grass,
That ebbe swept out the flocks to sea ;
A fatal ebbe and flow, alas !

To manye more than myne and mee :
But each will mourn his own (she saith) ;
And sweeter woman ne'er drew breath
Than my sonne's wife, Elizabeth.

I shall never hear her more
By the reedy Lindis shore,
"Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!" calling,
Ere the early dews be falling ;
I shall never hear her song,
"Cusha! Cusha!" all along
Where the sunny Lindis floweth,

Goeth, floweth ;
From the meads where melick groweth,
When the water winding down,
Onward floweth to the town.

I shall never see her more
Where the reeds and rushes quiver,
 Shiver, quiver;
Stand beside the sobbing river,
Sobbing, throbbing, in its falling
To the sandy lonesome shore;
I shall never hear her calling,
"Leave your meadow grasses mellow,
 Mellow, mellow;
Quit your cowslips, cowslips yellow;
Come uppe, Whitefoot, come uppe, Lightfoot;
Quit your pipes of parsley hollow,
 Hollow, hollow;
Come uppe, Lightfoot, rise and follow;
 Lightfoot, Whitefoot,
From your clovers lift the head:
Come uppe, Jetty, follow, follow,
Jetty, to the milking shed."



