

GOD HELP OUR MEN AT SEA

(S. Reynolds Hole, Once A Week, 1860)

GOD help our men at sea!
In firelit, pictured rooms, 'mid wine and flowers,
And gleesome company,
The wild winds aw us, in our blithest hours,
To sigh this prayer;
And, lonely, with clenched hands, at night 'tis ours,
"Lord of the waves, O spare!"

God help our men at sea!
They saw him, who outlived that deathful night,
To his extremity,—
Kneeling, and looking, in the stormfire's light,
To Heaven in grace.
And angels' glory was upon him, bright
As upon Stephen's face.

God help our men at sea!
Those pilgrim fathers, who leave all to teach
Their Saviour's charity.
May their prayers, like St. Paul's, in tempest reach
His ears, who said,
With an exceeding tenderness of speech,—
"Tis I. Be not afraid!"

God help our men at sea!
I had a brother once. Our love ne'er fail'd
In its intensity.
Smiling on our sweet mother, as he sail'd,
I saw him last.
Ah me! how that sweet mother droop'd and paled
Ere on brief year had pass'd!

God help our men at sea!
The workers, who at home can find no spheres
For work; whom poverty
Drives from their birthland, strong, despite those
tears,
To toil and win;
And then, please God, return for peaceful years
To their own land and kin.

God help our men at sea!
If lust of power over revenge assail
England's tranquillity,
Using His gracious gifts, we shall prevail,
As oft before.
And Israel see the proud Egyptians pale
And "dead on the sea-shore."