

Three Score and Ten

A Ballad in Memory of the Fishermen from Hull and Grimsby
who lost their lives in the Gale of 8 and 9 February 1889

#36

And it's three score and ten,
Boys and men, were lost from Grimsby town,
From Yarmouth down to Scarborough,
Many hundreds more were drowned;
Our herring craft, our trawlers,
Our fishing smacks as well,
They `long defied the bitter night,
And battled with the swell.

Methinks I see some little crafts spreading their sails a-lee
As down the Humber they did glide bound in the Northern sea;
Methinks I see on each small craft a crew with hearts so brave,
Going to earn their daily bread upon the restless wave.

Methinks I see them as they left the land all far behind,
Casting the lead into the deep their fishing grounds to find;
Methinks I see them on the deck working with a will,
To shoot their net into the deep either for good or ill.

Methinks I see them shoot their trawl upon the Thursday night,
And saw the watch upon the deck, and everything was right;
Methinks I see them yet again when daylight did appear,
All hands working with a will getting off their gear.

Methinks I see the net on board and fish so fresh and gay,
And all were busily engaged clearing them away;
Methinks I see them put away into the ice below,
And then the sea began to rise, and the wind did stronger blow.

Methinks I heard the skipper say, 'My lads, we'll shorten sail,
As the sky to all appearance looks like an approaching gale.'
Methinks I see them yet again, and all on board was right,
With sails close reef'd, the deck cleared up, and sidelights burning bright.

Methinks I see them yet again, the midnight hour was passed [sic];
Their little craft was battling there with the fiery blast;
Methinks I heard the skipper say, 'Cheer up, my lads, be brave.
We'll trust in Him who rules the deep, in Him who alone can save.'

Methinks I read the thoughts of them who now are called away;
They were thinking of their loved ones dear many miles away;
Thinking of wife and children dear, and aged parents too,
Who no more will see them here again in this world below.

Great God, Thou sees each sorrowing heart, the widow in distress,
Thou knows the little children dear, who now are fatherless;
Comfort and cheer them here below, and lead them by Thy hand,
And at last may they meet with their loved ones dear in the promised land.

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