

Alfred Perceval Graves (1846-1931)

1 Johnny Cox

As in the good ship Annabel
We coasted off Corfu,
A sudden storm upon us fell
And tore our timbers true
And rent our sails in two. 5

Our topmast tumbled by the board,
Our mizen mast as well;
Through flapping canvas, scourging cord,
Above like our death-bell
We heard the thunder knell. 10

“Now cut away!” Our Captain cries,
“And like a cork she floats;”
But axe in hand, with scowling eyes,
Set teeth and cursing throats,
The Lascars loose the boats. 15

When Johnny Cox, who lay below,
From off his fever bed
Comes stagg’ring up, a ghastly show,
As if from out the dead,
And drives them back in dread. 20

“What quit your posts, ye cowards all,
Here’s ballast then for you!”
With that he heaves a cannon ball
Full crash the cutter through,
And saves the ship and crew. 25

But he, our hero, ere the rocks
We rounded, drooped and died;
And we should lower you, Johnny Cox
Lamenting o’er the side
Into the moaning tide. 30

1893

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