

AN IRISH HERO.

[The subject of the annexed poem is an Irishman, named John Regan, who elicited the admiration of Clement Scott, the editor of *Punch*, by an act of heroism performed at Truro, in Cornwall. Regan is a coastguard, who was born in Queestown, where his father was well known.]

CAUGHT BY THE TIDE.

(A story of a Coastguardman.)

They sing their songs and their life-boat lays, and
the gossip from guest to host
Is of wreckage wild in the winter-time round the
dark grey Cornish coast;
There are plenty of yarns of the sailor, and of fisher-
men out at sea.
There are tales of the lighthouse-keepers, and of
women who bend the knee
When their mates are away in the storm-time, and
the cottage is left to the roar
Of the hurricane lashing the surf to foam, and
screaming about the shore;
But best of all tales I ever heard to make me think
better of men
Who fling in their lives for duty—it happened—you
ask me when?
On a wonderful summer's evening, just as holiday
time began!
It had for its scene old Cornwall—its hero a coast-
guardman!

A party of "trippers" had ventured to visit the rocks
and caves,
Where the sea-birds find their houses, and ignorant
folks their graves;
You may search for wild adventure on the sea-coast
south and north,
But for beauty travel by Truro to the village of Per-
ranporth.
It was there on this summer evening, on the beach, as
the daylight died,
That a wandering, thoughtless fellow was caught at
the turn of the tide:
Up came the sea and trapped him, cutting the ground
from his feet;
He rushed, but he couldn't go onward—then back,
there was no retreat!
Up came the sea still closer—was it death? Not a
second to count—
Then setting his teeth at the danger, to the cliffs he
began to mount.

Tearing the surf and the grasses, and searing the sea-
birds' nest,
Clinging with feet and fingers, and bruising his arms
and breast,
At last with a desperate struggle he lifted his life to
a stone,
Where he held with a cry for a second, suspended in
air above!
Or else more death barred his passage: and his terrified
face turned gray.
For the ledge of the rock he clung to was crumbling
slowly away!
"Where is the man for a rescue?" so the cry of
agony ran.
"I am that man, God willing!" said Regan, the
coastguardman!

Then followed a terrible silence, a horror that might
be felt,
For the village was emptied of women, who muttered
their prayers and knelt;
They could see the eyes of the shivering man, with
the agonized face turned gray.
As stone after stone of his safety-ledge kept crum-
bling slowly away,
"Bring me a rope!" said Regan, "and bind it about
my waist."
Look at that wretched fellow! In a second he'll fall!
Make haste.
Keep the coil tight in your hand, mates—there,
tighter so, and stiff,
Now, wait till I give the signal! Then haul me over
the cliff.
Why do you stand there staring? I'll save him,
mates, if I can:
If I die, I have done my duty!" said Regan, the
coastguardman!

He swooped to his prey like an eagle, as they lowered
with bated breath:
This man with his brave life given to a fellow con-
demned to death,
The silence grew more awful and agony paled on the
lip
Of the women and men who waited—till at last with
a mighty grip
The man of the coastguard seized him, and tightened
his arms around
This prize he had risked his life for—then searching
for safety ground
They swung from the ledge together, for the rope was
taut and stiff,
Till it dragged the burdened hero to the arms of the
crowd on the cliff!

There are times when the heart's too full, sir, for
even our English cheers,
But the women they crowded around him, with kisses
and prayers and tears!
So tell about it from south to north, proclaim it
where you can:
Go spread it forth from Perranporth this tale of a
coastguardman!

CLEMENT SCOTT.

BOTTLES AND RAGS.

I.

"Toby er not toby; them's the words he said.
I'm puttin' in my oar what sez that Bottles is
just goin' to make his mark in the hist'onic
walks. It'll be a cold day when Champagne
Bottles, Esquire gets left. Now for a sample
dose of me galorious gift: Right smart and high
mighty signurs, that I have skipped the gutter
with yer darter, tra-la-loo, su'passes the toby or
not toby.

"Ah ha! there's the rub! If it's better fur a
noble duke like meself to yank bottles, paltry bot-
tles from the ashes, er sling me heels in the glium
of the theayter, then 'tis more fitin' fur genius
to let slip the dogs of war-r-r, and nip her up,
Elizabeth Jane. This is a pignard in me grip; oft
have I carved Bologna sassegers with this
trusty blade in me father's festive banquet halls
on the Rhine. Toby er not toby; that's the
sub before this September mob. Toby an actor
on the min' stage er to yank bottles. Shall I er
shall I not? I await yer response, me luda."

The soliloquizer braced his sturdy little limbs,
climbed his chubby, dirty fists, and gazed about
him as though pausing for a reply. His face was
red with the exertion of his emotional elocution.
His hair, black and coarse, fell over his brows
like the forelock of a Shetland pony.

"Bully fer you, Bottles! yer the daisy actor
of this theayter; and I'm critic, jedge and jury
as sez so." The speaker, a slim mite of a girl,
came from behind a barrel at the other side of
the dock. A look of would-be scorn came upon
the aspiring histrionic's face, as he ejaculated,
in tones of breast-deep tragedy,—

"Avant! Thy coming from the lower re-
gions brings me fell news. What ho! me reten-
urs! spectral form of strange garb, dost bring me
news from me dad's festive halls! Hast with thee
Yarrick's skull! Oft have I seen him caress his
downy moustache, which would cling there like
fur on a sick cat's tail. Ah ha! poor Tom's a-
cold! I say, Rags, what have you got?" Bot-
tles jumped down from the barrel, and with a
stage stride approached the girl. They are a
quaint pair: he a gatherer of empty bottles, she
a rag-picker. If they ever had names they are
now no longer spoken, for they are known
among the quarters they visit as Bottles and
Rags.

Bottles is one mass of tatters and flitters from
crowless hat to torn shoes, through which his
his frost-bitten toes peep. And the girl, if any-
thing, is more ragged than he. A tiny bonnet,
which in its palmy days must have graced a gay
belle, is perched upon a dainty head. The face,
pinched, yet roguish, is wreathed by a mass of
corn-yellow curls hanging in tangled *neglige*.
One fist, blue with cold, is held behind her, the
other is outstretched to greet the boy. As he
grasped hold of the hand, the spirit of the man
within him speaks,—

"Poor little Rags! cold as a hunk of ice.
Where you ben? what you got? and what you
goin' to do with it? If you've ben, and got
nuthin', and can't do anythin', then come with
yer father. He's got ten cents; and ten cents'll
buy a plate of fried cakes, kid."

It was interesting to study the expression of
utter trust which came upon the face while the
boy is speaking. Her father! that was only a
pet term he was wont to use, expressive of his
guardianship over her. He was fourteen, she
eight. Waifs. Straws floating upon the under-
current of Boston's ebb and flow of humanity.

"Bottles," said the girl, after a short pause,
"what's the most money you ever had in all yer
life?"

"To onet, do you mean, Rags?"

"Yup."

"Well, let me see: I had—why! last Christ-
mas I had as much as one seventy-five—"

"You poor thing! yer too poor fur me to
society with," broke in the girl, as she drew her
ragged skirt away with mock pride.

"See here, Rags, you've alters ben square with
yer father. You've got sumthin' on yer mind.
Jist tell me the hull thing er—I'll cut you off
with ten cents, not havin' the reg'lar shillin'."

"Feast yer eyes on that," said the girl, hold-
ing out the hand which she had concealed be-
hind her.

The boy fell back a step or two, as he gazed
upon the article which she held. Then he fast-
ened his bead-like eyes upon her face as he ut-
tered, in tones of reproach,—

"Rags, hain't I brought you up better ner
this! You, you who I picked out the gutter!
Oh! it's sharper than a snake's tail to have a
priggin' darter."

"But I didn't prig the puss," quickly ex-
claimed Rags.

"Ah! spoken like me own dutiful child. I
say, Rags, is the puss well heeled?"

"I hain't looked; it's heavy, though, and it
jingles. I only found it while go over on India
Wharf. I run all the way to find you."
Bottles took the purse in his hands. As he
felt the magic touch of its contents through the
silken meshes it drove all thought of cold or
hunger away.

In the purse was more money than either had
ever before touched. In it was warmth and victu-
als; though Bottles gave no thought to
either, so overjoyed was he in the possession of
the precious money, real gold and silver, for he
could tell that by its clinking.

II.

The two waifs finally, cold and tired, reached
the tumble-down structure in South street,
where they lodged. They climbed up the rick-
ety stairways, passed through the narrow, dark,
and ill-smelling halls, until they reached the
attic door, upon which Bottles tapped softly.

A small circular disk in one of the upper
panels slid back, and a thin, beak-like nose
with a pair of red-rimmed eyes appeared in the
opening, as a sharp, raspy voice inquired,—

"Who's there?"

"Bottles and Rags," responded the boy. The
door was opened, and the pair passed into the
low, musty-smelling room.

"Got 'nythin'?" asked the raspy-voiced fe-
male.

"Nixy," returned the boy. The purse in his
pocket seemed determined to jingle. This
would have been a dire calamity; for the old
woman would have pounced upon it like a
hawk.

"And you?" asked the woman, turning to-
ward Rags.

The girl held her hands out, palms down and
open.

"Humph! purty fair. No bottles, no rags;
got nothin'! Can't stay here to-night."

"Oh, yes, mammy,—I forgot. I've got a
dime. Can't you let us stay fur that?" broke
in Bottles.

"A dime! small 'nuff. I— Well, gi' me
the money," said the woman.

Bottles laid the piece upon her outstretched
palm. The touch of the silver seemed to awaken
a sympathetic thrill, a desire for stimulant.
She threw a bag-hood over her iron-gray locks,
and taking a noseless pitcher from the window-
sill, went out.

"Good. She's gone fur beer. When she
drinks beer she sleeps, and when she sleeps, we
counts the contents of this puss. Rags, I say,
kid, we'll have a daisy time to-morrow. Did
you know to-morrow was the day fur doin' big
eatin'? It's a reg'lar hollerday, and all us rich
eccons don't have to do nothin' but enjoy our-
selves."

"A hollerday! will the band and the p'lice
and fire-works—"

"Rags, yer out of yer lattytude, as the sailors
down at the Hum sez. To-morrow's Christmas,
kid."

"What's that, Bottles?"

"The day set 'part fur doin' big feedin',
sabe?"

"Yup," responded Rags.

"I say, Rags, did 'ny one see you pick it up,
—the puss?"

"No; I jist seen it kinder jammed down in a
big crack. I knowed it was ducats, and when
knowin' a thing of that sort, I made sure no one
was lookin' when I lifted it."

"And a purty good lift it was, Rags. That
one lift means big feedin' fur you and I long
with the swells. If there's nuff ducats left we'll
get sum new togs and board round a spell, 'fore
settin' down to biz 'g'in. Nixy, now, here
comes the old woman."

The latter entered with the pitcher of beer.
The waifs went to the snuff-box window and
gazed out upon the chilly-looking roofs and the
slippery street below. The old woman drank
the beer, after which she rolled herself up in a
tattered blanket, laid down upon a creaking
bed, turned her face to the wall, and was soon
loudly snoring.

"She's gone up, Rags. Now fur it, but hang
a rag over the keyhole first," said the boy. The
girl did as he requested, then came and sat
down by him. He poured the clinking pieces
upon the soap-box under the window sill.

"Rags, I reckon there's nuff ducats here to
buy a hull house from bottom to cabaza."

"Really, Bottles?"

"You hear yer father talk! I hain't much
on the count, but I guess I can strike it within
a few hundred. Jist foller me—hello! here's
sumthin' else in the puss. A ring. Bah! I
don't take no stock in these things. Can get a
hull cartload jist like it down in Salem street
fur ten cents a one. Put her on, kid." The
ring, evidently designed for a child, just fitted
the dirty little finger over which the girl slipped
it.

"Now fur the ducats. Rags, ducats is the
root hogger die; and I'm jist porker nuff to root
into 'em. One, two, three,—grand and galor-
ious signurs, here's more'n ten double buzzards.
Them stands fur twenty dollars, two of 'em is
forty, and so on xometry. Here goes fur a count.
One, two, three, four, five. That's jist an even
hundred. Pshaw! rich is no name fur it. Put
yer finger on that pile. Rags, yer holdin' down
one hundred dollars. Does it burn yer fingers?
I'll even up with that pile and—presto!—there's
two hundred dollars. Two hundred dollars and
other chicken feed too numerous to mention!"
exclaimed the boy, sweeping the money into the
purse. "Better drop the sparkler in. If the
old woman gits on to it, good evenin' ducats,
sparkler, big feedin', and all. I reckon we'd
better get sum ba'my sleep now."

"But, Bottles, I'm hungry. I want some-
thin' to eat first," said Rags, turning her big
blue eyes up at him.

"Chew on that, then, you poor little hungry
kid you. All I got. Eat 'way, Rags; I can
stand it till mornin'; no, till dinner to-mor-
row."

The boy laid down upon a pile of rags; and
after the girl had eaten the soda cracker which
he had given to her, she, too laid down near
him, and was soon wrapped in slumber. They
awakened early, rose, and stole from the attic,
leaving the old woman still asleep.

III.

"I say, Rags, hain't this jist old scum
shus?"

"Yup," mumbled Rags, as she took a great
bite of bread.

"See here, kid, don't be waistin' yer eatitio-
on sich common grub as bread. Sail into the
beans and salad, and ham'n eggs, and cran-
berry, and sass, and—turkey. Turkey is the
galorious bird of freedom to-day," urged Bottles,
helping himself in turn to each of the dainties,
as named.

Perhaps the Crawford was never graced by
such a pair during the whole of its extent of ca-
tering to the public.

Never in all their life had the pair sat down
to such a glorious spread. It would have given
a dyspeptic the horrors could he have gazed
upon them while eating.

Bottles had purchased two regular dinner-
checks, and chosen a table in the corner so as to
be as free as possible from the hungry crowd
which thronged the place. The waifs' faces
were washed clean; they were as tidy as their
dilapidated garments would permit. A new

yellow ribbon held Rags' curls back from her
really pretty face, with its roguish, big, blue
eyes, cute little mouth, and turn-up nose. And
Bottles, he had laid out a portion of the wealth
on a paper collar, green tie, and huge, glaring,
red glass pin. The ring which the purse had
contained was upon Rags' forefinger. She was
possessed of the excusable vanity of her sex, and
managed her hand so as to show off the spark-
ling gem to the best possible advantage.

"Hold up, Rags," whispered the boy, touch-
ing her foot with his; "don't lick yer fingers.
Hain't I learned you better ner that? I'm goin'
to make a lady of you, kid; and I'm bound to
have you git on to them small items."

"All right, Bottles; I guess yer right. I
hain't up in sich eatin' as this, and you must
pardin slips."

"Here's the wine-list. Do we want Mumm?"

"Nixy. Taint fur such as us, Bottles.
'Sides, you'n I has started out on the temp'ra-
ance racket, and it hain't the thing fur us to use
budge."

"Yer speakin' in a right toot now, Rags. I
only mentioned the fack fur fun. Can't you
smuggle one of them tarts, Rags?"

"Hain't it stealin'?" asked the girl, looking
up quickly.

"Not if the court knows hisself. I paid fur
all that comes to this table in the way of grub.
I own all, but them dishes, spoons, forks and
sieh, and— But hold up. I'll go and put a
flea in this feller's ear who sold me the checks." Bottles
rose and went to the cashier's desk. A
peculiar expression came upon his face as the
boy spoke to him. Then he reached down
under the desk and handed out a paper sack. The
boy's face was wreathed with smiles when he
came back.

"It's all right, Rags. I told him as how I
reckoned we'd have to make this feedin' last till
next Christmas; also that we wasn't bloated
bankers and had hard diggin' fur grub. He gave
me this bag, and said I could take all that we
couldn't eat. Hain't it slick?"

"Well, I should smile. Here's two jam
tarts—"

"Hold on, Rags; put the solids in first, er
you'll smash the tarts."

A smile passed over each face as the waifs
loaded their bag with the remains of the meal.

"Ready, Rags?"

"Yes; let me get my opera hat on all square."
She arranged her head-gear to suit her, and
followed Bottles to the door.

Then—all this brigitness turned to clouds,
for a tall, blue-coat form, with double rows of
brass buttons upon the breast, stood there.

"Come with me, kids," said the officer, tak-
ing hold of each other by the shoulder.

"You don't mean us! I say boys, you've
got the wrong party. We hain't done nothin',
nave we, Rags?"

But poor little Rags was crying. The blue-
coats had always been the terror of her life. She
had heard terrible stories about them. Now,
she and Bottles are in the care of one, and she
is ready to drop in fright.

"What's the racket, boss?" asked Bottles.
He, too, was troubled; but he must put on a
brave face for the girl's sake.

"Lifting a purse. Come on."

And this was the end of the poor little waifs'
grand Christmas dinner. On the way to the
station-house with an officer.

A curious crowd of street-boys, newspaper
vendors, bootblack, and the like followed the
policeman and his two little prisoners to the
station-house.

His Honor was taking dinner; would not
hold court to-day, and the two waifs were put
into a comfortable cell upstairs.

Rags cried herself to sleep, while Bottles,
hero-like, sat by her side upon the cot and kept
chattering her by telling her that it would all be
right in the morning.

And down-stairs, under lock and key, the un-
lucky purse and ring were lying in the desk
drawer.

IV.

"Next."

The two waifs, Bottles and Rags, were pushed
forward until they stood in front of the desk
before "his Honor."

"Bless me! what's this? Little ones, what
are you doing here?" asked the kind-faced
judge, beaming down upon the pair, through a
set of gold-bowed glasses.

Bottles knew it was not proper for him to
speak, and Rags could not.

"Officer, what is the charge against this
pair?" asked the judge of the policeman who
had made the arrest.

"Stealing a purse, your Honor."

"Ah! that is a serious charge."

"But, sir, 'tain't—"

"Never mind, my little man; your turn will
come. Let the party who made the complaint
stand forward."

A tall man clad in clerical garments, with
long-drawn visage, stepped forward. The cor-
ners of his trap-like mouth were drawn down in
a most solemn expression. He clasped his
hands in front of him, and turned his eyes upon
the little waifs, as though even their presence
was unholy to his cloth.

"Your name?" uttered the judge.

"Rev. Abraham Clearstarch."

Bottles could hardly hold in the titter, which,
notwithstanding the solemnity of the occasion,
was ready to bubble from his lip.

"You are a minister, are you not?"

"The rev. gentleman bowed. A new