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**EDITED BY**

**FREDERICK H. SYKES, PH.D. TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY**

**COLERIDGE'S ANCIENT MARINER AND SELECT POEMS**

1908

## **PREFATORY NOTE**

The text of the poems in this volume is that of J. Dykes Campbell in the Globe edition of Coleridge's poems. For the introduction I have depended also largely upon his Memoir of Coleridge, and upon the two volumes of the "Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge," edited by the poet's grandson, Mr. E.H. Coleridge. In the Notes, as will be seen, I am indebted particularly to the general editor of this series, Dr. F.H. Sykes, to Dr. Lane Cooper of Cornell University, and again to Mr. Coleridge, through whose kindness I have been able to get a reproduction of the Marshmills crayon, undoubtedly the most satisfactory portrait of the poet in existence, for the frontispiece.

**H.M.B.**

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## INTRODUCTION

### I. SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

#### I. THE BEGINNINGS

Coleridge lived in what may safely be called the most momentous period of modern history. In the year following his birth Warren Hastings was appointed first governor-general of India, where he maintained English empire during years of war with rival nations, and where he committed those acts of cruelty and tyranny which called forth the greatest eloquence of the greatest of English orators, in the famous impeachment trial at Westminster, when Coleridge was a sixteen-year-old schoolboy in London. A few years before his birth the liberal philosophy of France had found a popular voice in the writings of Rousseau, which became the gospel of revolution throughout Europe in Coleridge's youth and early manhood. "The New Héloïse" in the field of sentiment and of the relation of the sexes, "The Social Contract" in political theory, and "Émile" in matters of education, were books whose influence upon Coleridge's generation it would be hard to estimate. When Coleridge was four years old the English colonies in America declared their independence and founded a new nation upon the natural rights of man,—a nation that has grown to be the mightiest and most beneficent on the globe. Coleridge was seventeen when the French Revolution broke out; he was forty-three when Napoleon was sent to St. Helena. He saw the whole career of the greatest political upheaval and of the greatest military genius of the modern world. Fox, Pitt, and Burke,—the greatest Liberal orator, the greatest Parliamentary leader, and the greatest philosophic statesman that England has produced—were at the height of their glory when Coleridge went up to Cambridge in 1791.

In literature—naturally, since literature is but an interpretation of life—the age was not less remarkable. Dr. Johnson was still alive when Coleridge came up to school at Christ's Hospital, Goldsmith had died eight years before. But a new spirit was abroad in the younger generation. Macpherson's "Fingal," alleged to be a translation from the ancient Gaelic poet Ossian, had appeared in 1760; Thomas Percy's "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry," a collection of folk-ballads and rude verse-romances such as the common people cherished but critics had long refused to consider as poetry, was published in 1765. These two books were of prime importance in fostering a new taste in literature,—a love of natural beauty, of simplicity, and of rude strength. The new taste hailed with delight the appearance of a native lyric genius in Burns, whose first volume of poems was printed in 1786. It welcomed also the homely, simple sweetness, what Coleridge and Lamb called the "divine chit-chat," of Cowper, whose "Task" appeared in the preceding year. But it was in Coleridge himself and his close contemporaries and followers that the splendor of the new poetry showed itself. He was two years younger than Wordsworth, a year younger than Scott; he was sixteen at the birth of Byron, twenty at that of Shelley, twenty-four at that of Keats; and he outlived all of them except Wordsworth. His genius blossomed early. "The Ancient Mariner," his greatest poem, was published some years before Wordsworth's "Ode on the Intimations of Immortality" was written, or Scott's "Lay of the Last Minstrel." He was in the prime of life, or what should have been the prime of life—forty years old—when Byron burst into sudden fame with the first two cantos of "Childe Harold" in 1812; he was forty-six when Keats published "Endymion"; he was fifty-one when Shelley was drowned. And of all this gifted company Coleridge, though not the strongest character or the most prolific poet, was the profoundest intellect and the *most originative poetic spirit*.

There was little hint, however, of future greatness or of fellowship with great names in his birth and early circumstances. His father was a country clergyman and schoolmaster in the village of Ottery St. Mary, in Devonshire, a simple-hearted unworldly man, full of curious learning and not very attentive to practical affairs. His mother managed the household and brought up the children. Both his parents were of simple West-country stock; but his father, having a natural turn for study and having done well in his early manhood as a schoolmaster, went at the age of thirty-one as a sizar, or poor student, to Sidney-Sussex College, Cambridge, took orders, and was afterwards given the living of Ottery St. Mary. Here he continued his beloved work of teaching, in addition to his pastoral duties, and by means of this combination won the humble livelihood which, through his wife's careful economy, sufficed for rearing his large family. Coleridge tells us that his father "had so little of parental ambition in him that he had destined his children to be blacksmiths, etc." (though he had "resolved that I should be a parson"), "and had accomplished his intention but for my mother's pride and spirit of aggrandizing her family." Several of the children rewarded their mother's care by distinguishing themselves in a modest way in the army or in the church, but the only one about whom the world is curious now was the youngest of the ten, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who was born at Ottery St. Mary, October 21, 1772.

The essential traits of his later character appeared in his early childhood. Almost from infancy he lived in his imagination rather than in the world of reality. "The schoolboys drove me from play, and were always tormenting me, and hence I took no pleasure in boyish sports, but read incessantly.... I became a *dreamer*, and acquired an indisposition to all bodily activity; and I was fretful, and inordinately passionate." "Sensibility, imagination, vanity, sloth," were "prominent and manifest" in his character before he was eight years old. Such is his own account of his childhood, written to his friend Poole in 1797; and it is an accurate description, as far as it goes, of the grown man. But of the religious temper, too, the love of freedom and of virtue, the hatred of injustice, cruelty, and falsehood that guided his uneven steps through all the pitiful struggle of his middle life, of the conscience that made

his weakness hell to him—of these, too, we may be sure that the beginnings were to be seen in the boy at Ottery St. Mary, as indeed they were before his eyes in the person of his father, who, if not a first-rate genius, was, says his son, "a first-rate Christian."

The good vicar died in 1781; and the next year, a "presentation" to Christ's Hospital having been secured for him, little Samuel, not yet eleven years old, went up to London to enter the famous old city school. Here,

"In the great city, pent 'mid cloisters dim,"

where he

"Saw nought lovely but the sky and stars,"

one of some seven hundred Blue-Coat boys, Coleridge lived for nine years.

Most of the boys at Christ's Hospital, then as now, were given a "commercial" education (which none the less included a very thorough training in Latin); but a few of the most promising students were each year selected by the masters for a classical training in preparation for the universities, whence they were known as Grecians. Coleridge was elected a Grecian in 1788. The famous Boyer—famous for his enthusiasm alike in teaching the classics and in wielding the birch—laid the foundation of Coleridge's later scholarship. Here, too, Coleridge did a great amount of reading not laid down in the curriculum,—Latin and Greek poetry and philosophy, mediaeval science and metaphysics—and won the approval of his teachers by the excellence of his verses in Greek and Latin, such as boys at school and students at the universities were expected to write in those days. In the great city school, as in the Devonshire vicarage, he lived in the imagination, inert of body and rapacious of intellect; but he was solitary no longer, having found his tongue and among his more intellectual schoolfellows an interested audience. While yet a boy, he would hold an audience spellbound by his eloquent declamation or the fervor of his argument till, as Lamb, who was one of his hearers, tells us, "the walls of the old Grey Friars re-echoed to the accents of the *inspired charity boy!*" That is the way his conversation,—or monologue, as it often was,—affected not boys only, but men, and especially young men, to his dying day. He cast a spell upon men by his speech; upon his schoolfellows, upon young men at the universities in the Pantisocracy days, upon Lloyd and Poole at Nether Stowey, upon earnest young thinkers in his last days at Highgate; so that even if he had never written "The Ancient Mariner" and the *Biographia Literaria* he would still be remembered for the inspiration of his talk.

Further details of the life at Christ's Hospital must be sought in Lamb's two essays, especially that on "Christ's Hospital Five-and-Thirty Years Ago." In 1791, having secured a Christ's Hospital "exhibition," he entered Jesus College, Cambridge.

His university life extended over three years, from October, 1791, to December, 1794. It was an unhappy time for him and an uneasy time for his respectable relatives, for reasons that were partly in his own nature and partly in the temper of the times.

Even Boyer's severe training, while it had made him a hard student and an unusual scholar for his years, had failed to give him what he most needed as a balance to his intellect and imagination, stability of character. There is evidence that after the first few months, during which the habits of his hard school life had not yet broken, the new liberty of university life led him into extravagance, if not dissipation. Work he doubtless did (he won the Browne medal for a Greek ode on the slave-trade in 1792), but fitfully, giving less and less attention to his regular studies and more to conviviality and, above all, to dreams of literary fame. He wrote verses after various models, sentimental, fanciful, or gallant; he was enthusiastic in praise of a contemporary sonneteer, the Rev. William Bowles, whose "divine sensibility" seemed to him the height of poetic feeling; and in connection with Wordsworth's younger brother Christopher, who entered Cambridge in 1793, he formed a literary society that discussed, among other things, Wordsworth's volume of early poetry, "Descriptive Sketches," published in that year. Wordsworth himself was a Cambridge man, but had taken his degree in 1791 and gone abroad, so that the two men whose personal friendship was to mean so much in English poetry did not meet until 1796. Already in 1793, however, Coleridge had developed political theories, or rather sympathies, which were preparing him for fellowship with Wordsworth.

The French Revolution, which, after years of preparation, took concrete shape in 1789, did not look to young Englishmen in 1791-4 as it looks to us now, nor even as it was to look to those same Englishmen in 1800. In those first years warm-hearted young enthusiasts at the universities saw in the violence of their fellow-men across the Channel only the struggles of the beautiful Spirit of Liberty bursting the chains of age-long tyranny and corruption and calling men up to the heights to breathe diviner air.

"Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,  
But to be young was very Heaven!"

wrote Wordsworth afterwards; and in the glow of his young idealism he had gone over to France in the autumn of 1791 and was on the point of throwing in his lot with the revolutionists, when his parents compelled his return by cutting off his supplies. And many who, like Coleridge, merely watched from afar shared his faith that a new order of things was to be established, wherein Love should be Law and man's inhumanity to man become but a memory of things outworn.

Less generous men, with a selfish interest in established privileges; timid men, who looked with terror upon any prospect of change; older and wiser men, who better understood the foundations of social order and the nature of man—all these looked with distrust upon the revolutionary idealism that was spreading from France through the younger generation of Englishmen. The new notions of liberty, it was felt, threatened not only the vested rights of property and the prescriptions of rank, but the Church, too, and religion. Some of the would-be reformers were avowed atheists; some (Coleridge and his friends, for instance, in the Pantisocracy period) were communists. In general, they ascribed all the evils of society to "institutions," and wanted them abolished.

Just how far Coleridge had gone in this direction by the autumn of 1793 we do not know; far enough at least to disturb his view of the future, to worry his elder brother George, a clergyman and school-teacher, who had in some measure filled a father's place to the young genius, and, most important of all, to alarm and distress a gentle girl in London. For before he left Christ's Hospital for Cambridge he had become intimate at the house of a Mrs. Evans, and most of the letters preserved from his first two years at the University were addressed to her or to one of her two daughters, Anne and Mary. With the latter Coleridge was in love; and that she had some regard for him is apparent from a letter she sent him in 1794. Before that, however, Coleridge had taken a step that seemed likely to close at once his college career and his prospects of literary fame. The reasons have not been recorded: probably pecuniary embarrassment, the yeasty state of his religious and political ideas, and impatience or despondency over his love-affair with Mary Evans, combined to precipitate his flight; what we know is that he ran away from Cambridge and in December, 1793, enlisted as a dragoon in the army.

Coleridge had hardly taken the step before he repented of it. His letters to his brother George, who with other friends bestirred himself for Coleridge's release as soon as his whereabouts was discovered, are rather distressing in their self-abasement. The efforts of his friends were successful and in April he returned to the University, where a public admonition was the extent of his punishment, and he continued in receipt of his Christ's Hospital exhibition.

But Coleridge's college days were practically over. He was now nearly twenty-two years old, and the revolutionary unrest which had doubtless contributed to his first escapade soon resulted in the formation of schemes that took him away from Cambridge for good and all. In June, 1794, he made a visit to an old schoolfellow at Oxford. Here he met Robert Southey of Balliol College. A friendship sprang up between them out of which, before the end of the summer, grew the Utopian scheme of Pantisocracy. A company of gentlemen and ladies were to emigrate to America, take up lands in the Susquehanna valley, and there establish an ideal community in which all should bear rule equally and find happiness in a life of justice, labor, and love. The education of the young in the principles of ideal humanity was an important part of the scheme. We are reminded of the Brook Farm experiment in New England a generation later, which bears a daughter's likeness to Pantisocracy, the chief difference being that the New England enthusiasts were mature men and women and really put the idea into practice, whereas the Pantisocrats were for the most part collegians and never got beyond the stage of talking and writing about their plans. The scheme was further elaborated at Bristol, where Coleridge, returning from a vacation tour in Wales, again met Southey, and at Bath, the home of Southey and of Southey's betrothed and her sister, Edith and Sarah Fricker—"two sisters, milliners of Bath," as Byron contemptuously called them.

To the other sister, Sarah, Coleridge rather precipitately engaged himself. His love for Mary Evans was not dead, but he seems to have despaired of winning her and to have determined, by uniting himself domestically with Southey and his friends, to make retreat from their communistic scheme impossible. A few weeks later he is back at Cambridge, tortured apparently between his old love and his new engagement. Mary Evans has written to him deploring his wild notions and the mad plan of Pantisocracy, yet confident that he has "too much sensibility to be an infidel." Southey has reproved him rather sharply for failing to write to his betrothed at Bath. Our next glimpse of him is at London, discussing poetry and philosophy with Lamb at the "Salutation and Cat" tavern and perhaps trying to get a sight of Mary Evans. In December he is again at Bristol, in lively correspondence with Southey about democracy, Pantisocracy, and poetry, but at the same time he addresses a last appeal to Miss Evans. Her answer is kind, but final; that chapter is closed, and Coleridge writes to Southey that he will "do his duty," by which he means apparently that he will be faithful to Pantisocracy and marry Sarah

Fricker.

The Pantisocracy scheme could not in the nature of things be long-lived. As a matter of fact it lasted little more than a year, ending in a rupture between the two leading spirits just when they became brothers-in-law. Coleridge spent the summer of 1795 in Bristol in company with Southey, writing and lecturing. In October he was married to Sarah Fricker in "St. Mary's Redcliff, poor Chatterton's church." In November Southey married Edith Fricker and set sail for Lisbon, where his uncle was the English chaplain; and Pantisocracy was dead.

The break with Southey was the natural result of attempting to force through a scheme impracticable in itself and doubly impracticable for the men who conceived it. Its collapse did not altogether sever their literary relations. The collaboration begun in "The Fall of Robespierre" (Cambridge, 1794) was continued in Southey's "Joan of Arc" (1796), to which Coleridge contributed the part afterwards printed (with some additions) as "The Destiny of Nations," and in Coleridge's first volume of "Poems" (Bristol, 1796). A more important contributor to this volume, however, was Charles Lamb, whose initials were appended to four of the pieces. A second edition appeared in June, 1797, with eleven additions from Coleridge besides verses by Lamb and Charles Lloyd, all under the title: "Poems by S.T. Coleridge. Second Edition. To which are added Poems by Charles Lamb, and Charles Lloyd." The publisher of both editions was Joseph Cottle, a bookseller of Bristol, who played the part of provincial Murray to the young poets in these years.

Meanwhile Coleridge, after a period of lecturing and projecting, had as we have seen married Sarah Fricker, with whom he was now very much in love, and had begun housekeeping in a cottage at Clevedon near the Bristol Channel. The beauty of the place and his happiness there are celebrated in "The Aeolian Harp" and "Reflections on Leaving a Place of Retirement" (better known by its opening words, "Low was our pretty cot"). His next residence was in Bristol—rather a base of operations than a home, for Coleridge was on the road much of the time, lecturing, preaching, soliciting subscriptions for his political and philosophical paper "The Watchman" (which ran from March to May, 1796), and trying in various other ways to provide for his family, which was increased by the birth of a son in September, 1796. At last in December he secured the little cottage at Nether Stowey in the Quantock Hills (south of the Bristol Channel, in Somerset), close to the house of his beloved friend, Thomas Poole, where he lived until his departure for Germany in September, 1798.

## II. AT NETHER STOWEY

The Stowey period was the blossoming time of Coleridge's genius. All the poems in this volume except the last four, and besides these "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison," "Frost at Midnight," and "Fears in Solitude"—the bulk of his achievement in poetry—were either written or begun in 1797 and 1798. It will be proper, then, to dwell a little on his circumstances, his friends, and his ideas during these two years.

The means of livelihood for himself and his family when he went to Stowey were a subscription of about £40 that Poole and some friends got together for him, £20 that Cottle paid for the second edition of the "Poems," the promise of £80 from the father of Charles Lloyd, who was to live with him and study under his direction, and such money as he could earn by reviews and magazine articles, which he estimated at £40 a year; not a munificent provision for a household of three adults and a child. But the theories of the simple life that had made Pantisocracy seem a feasible project still inspired him with confidence. "Sixteen shillings," he wrote to Poole, "would cover all the weekly expenses of my wife, infant, and myself. This I say from my wife's own calculations." Further, he will support himself by the labor of his hands. "If you can instruct me to manage an acre and a half of land, and to raise in it, with my own hands, all kinds of vegetables and grain, enough for myself and my wife and sufficient to feed a pig or two with the refuse, I hope that you will have served me *most* effectually by placing me out of the necessity of being served." This was in December, just before he moved to Stowey. In February he wrote from his new home to another friend: "From seven till half past eight I work in my garden; from breakfast till twelve I read and compose, then read again, feed the pigs, poultry, etc., till two o'clock; after dinner work again till tea; from tea till supper, *review*. So jogs the day, and I am happy.... I raise potatoes and all manner of vegetables, have an orchard, and shall raise corn with the spade, enough for my family. We have two pigs, and ducks and geese. A cow would not answer the keep: we have whatever milk we want from T. Poole."

There is a suspicious regularity about this schedule. Lamb wrote from London in January: "Is it a farm that you have got? And what does your worship know about farming?" His agricultural activity, in the month of February, must have been chiefly prospective; and we may safely assume that Poole supplied other things besides milk, and that the poet spent more time reading, dreaming, and talking than he did raising potatoes. A good deal of time must have been spent in the actual composition of his poetry,

including his play "Osorio," which was written in 1797, and in studying the landscape beauties of the Quantocks. After the coming of the Wordsworths to Alfoxden he spent much of the time walking between Alfoxden and Stowey, or further afield with Wordsworth and his sister. "My walks," he wrote afterwards, "were almost daily on the top of Quantock, and among its sloping coombs. With my pencil and memorandum-book in my hand, I was making studies, as the artists call them, and often moulding them into verse with the objects and imagery immediately before my eyes." This does not sound much like "raising corn with the spade."

On Sundays he would sometimes preach before such Unitarian congregations, within walking distance, as cared to hear him. But as he would take no pay for his services his preaching contributed nothing toward the support of his family. Lloyd, who was epileptic and subject to moody variation in his attachments, was but an irregular housemate after the first few months, and his contribution to the household expenses was correspondingly uncertain. The future looked so dark in October, 1797, that in spite of misgivings and former scruples he had concluded that he "must become a Unitarian minister, as a less evil than starvation." Accordingly he was in Shrewsbury in January, 1798, preaching in the Unitarian church and on the point of accepting the pastorate at a salary of £150 a year, when the sky brightened in another quarter. Thomas and Josiah Wedgwood, sons of the famous potter and friends of Thomas Poole, offered him an equal sum annually as a free gift. They were wealthy men, well able to afford it; they attached no condition to the gift except that he should devote himself entirely to the study of poetry and philosophy, which was precisely what he wanted to do; and he was not long in determining to accept the offer. "I accepted it," he wrote to Wordsworth while still at Shrewsbury, "on the presumption that I had talents, honesty, and propensities to perseverant effort." The propensities, alas, remained propensities, never acquiring the force of habit. The pension, however, continued to be paid in full until 1812, when Josiah Wedgwood withdrew his half of it. The other half, upon the death of Thomas Wedgwood in 1805, had been secured to Coleridge for life; and this annuity must have constituted the chief reliance of Mrs. Coleridge for many years.

If Coleridge did not prosper financially, he was at least fortunate in his friends; and a man's friends are after all the best testimony to the character of his mind and heart. When he went to Stowey in December, 1796, he was again on good terms with Southey, though the enthusiasm of their first fellowship was gone. The friendship with Lamb, begun in their school-days and renewed at the "Salutation and Cat" in 1794, was maintained by an eager correspondence and by Lamb's visit to Stowey in July, 1797; and although Lloyd's vagaries led to a coolness between the old friends in the following year, the breach was soon healed, and the friendship continued till death. Another with whom Coleridge maintained a voluminous correspondence in 1796-7 was John Thelwall, theoretical democrat, atheist, and admirer of Godwin, whose visit to Coleridge and Wordsworth in the summer of 1797 so shocked the good conservatives of the neighborhood that Wordsworth had to leave Alfoxden in consequence of it. But without doubt the dearest and most influential friend Coleridge had before the Wordsworths came into his life was Thomas Poole. It was in order to be in daily intercourse with Poole that he moved to Stowey; and Poole's hesitation about securing the cottage for him, arising, Coleridge seemed to fear, from imperfect confidence and friendship, was a source of agonized apprehension to the sensitive poet. When we consider that Poole was a self-educated man, a Somersetshire tanner with no claim to literary genius or philosophical acquirements, Coleridge's devotion to him and dependence on him bring out in a strong light the substantial, elemental character of the man. "O Poole!" Coleridge wrote to him from Germany afterwards, "you are a noble heart as ever God made!" Poole had indeed in a marked degree the genius for friendship. Strength of character, sympathy, and self-effacing devotion, combined with prudence and sincerity, made this man a tower of refuge for the unstable spirit of the poet.

No other single relation, however, can compare in importance, for Coleridge's poetic development, with that which sprang up in the summer of 1797 between him and William Wordsworth. Just when they first met is not recorded. We have seen that Coleridge was acquainted with Wordsworth's younger brother in his college days, and discussed with him Wordsworth's first published poems. In January, 1797, he told Cottle that he wished to submit his "Visions of the Maid of Arc" to Wordsworth for criticism. The earliest definite record of their personal acquaintance is a letter Coleridge wrote to Cottle while on a visit to Wordsworth at Racedown (just over the Somerset border in Dorsetshire) early in June. About the beginning of July he is again at Racedown; and when he returns he brings Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy with him for a visit. On the 7th Lamb arrived for his long-planned reunion with Coleridge. The second week of July, 1797, was thus a rich and long-remembered time for all of them, despite the fact that Mrs. Coleridge "accidentally emptied a skillet of boiling milk" on her husband's foot, which confined him "during the whole time of Charles Lamb's stay." The others took long walks in the neighborhood, amid such scenery as is described in "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison," a poem that admirably voices the happiness, of those days of spiritual fellowship. The Wordsworths did not return to Racedown. "By a combination of curious circumstances a gentleman's seat, with a park and woods, elegantly and completely furnished,... in the most beautiful and romantic

situation by the seaside, four miles from Stowey—this we have got for Wordsworth at the *rent of twenty-three pounds a year, taxes included!*" Coleridge triumphantly announced to Southey; and in this house, the Manor of Alfoxden, the Wordsworths remained for a year, in daily companionship with Coleridge and surrounded by scenes of natural beauty that have left a lasting mark on the work of both poets.

What the friendship with Coleridge meant to Wordsworth may best be seen in "The Prelude: or, Growth of a Poet's Mind," Wordsworth's greatest long poem, written some years afterwards and addressed throughout to Coleridge.

"There is no grief, no sorrow, no despair,  
No languor, no dejection, no dismay,  
No absence scarcely can there be, for those  
Who love as we do."

What Wordsworth was to Coleridge is more important for us here. The admiration which the brilliant child of genius felt for the great preacher-poet is chiefly, one feels, an admiration for his character. As a matter of fact, Wordsworth had written nothing, up to his coming to Alfoxden, that would have preserved his name as a poet, nothing so noteworthy or promising as what Coleridge had already written. But Coleridge felt in this lean and thoughtful young man a strength of mind, a depth and sureness of heart that compelled his allegiance and even imparted, for the time, some of that resolution in which he was by nature so sadly deficient. The character of their friendship is to be seen not only in the published work of the two poets from this time on (notably in "Dejection"), but perhaps even more clearly in Dorothy Wordsworth's Journal and in Coleridge's letters. "I speak with heart-felt sincerity," he wrote to Cottle in June, 1797, "and (I think) unblinded judgment, when I tell you that I feel myself *a little man by his side*, and yet do not think myself the less man than I formerly thought myself.... T. Poole's opinion of Wordsworth is that he is the greatest man he ever knew; I coincide." Wordsworth's influence is evident in a letter from Coleridge to his brother George in April, 1798: "I love fields and woods and mountains with almost a visionary fondness. And because I have found benevolence and quietness growing within me as that fondness has increased, therefore I should wish to be the means of implanting it in others, and to destroy the bad passions not by combating them but by keeping them in inaction." Under the calming and clarifying influence of the stronger Northern spirit the fever of his revolutionary dreams abated, he found happiness in the conscious exercise of his poetic powers, and for one year in his troubled existence his genius showed itself in all its splendor.

The immediate poetic result of their friendship was the "Lyrical Ballads," published by Cottle in September, 1798. The origin of the work has been described both by Wordsworth (in a prefatory note to "We Are Seven") and by Coleridge (in the *Biographia Literaria*, chap. xiv.). At first, they were to collaborate in writing a poem the proceeds of which should pay the expenses of a little tour they were making when the plan was thought of, in November, 1797; and thus "The Ancient Mariner" was begun. As this poem grew under Coleridge's "shaping-spirit of imagination" Wordsworth saw that he "could only be a clog" upon its progress, and it was resigned to Coleridge. The plan was then enlarged to include a volume illustrating "two cardinal points of poetry, the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colours of imagination." Wordsworth was to illustrate the former principle, Coleridge the latter, and the proceeds of the book were to go toward the expenses of a trip to Germany, decided on in the spring of 1798. The bulk of the volume was Wordsworth's, and was typically Wordsworthian, ranging from such simple ballads of humble incident as "Goody Blake" and "The Idiot Boy" to the magnificent blank verse of "Tintern Abbey"; Coleridge's share consisted of a brief poem called "The Nightingale," two short extracts from "Osorio," and "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner."

Apart from the "Lyrical Ballads" Coleridge conceived and finished between June, 1797, and the departure for Germany in 1798, and published in the latter year, "Fire, Famine, and Slaughter," "Frost at Midnight," "Fears in Solitude," and "France." He conceived and partly executed, but did not then publish, "Christabel," "Kubla Khan," "Love," "The Ballad of the Dark Ladie," and "The Three Graves." Thus, all Coleridge's best poetry, with the exception of those three saddest of voices out of a broken life, "Dejection" (1802), the lines to Wordsworth on hearing him read "The Prelude" (1807), and "Youth and Age" (1823-32), belongs either wholly or in its inception to the year of his fellowship with the Wordsworths in the Quantock Hills.

Of his political, religious, and literary opinions at this time he has left a fairly adequate account in his published writings and his correspondence, especially in the *Biographia Literaria* and in the letter to the Rev. George Coleridge referred to above. The first year of his married life saw him still, in spite of the failure of Pantisocracy, an eager visionary reformer upborne by generous enthusiasm and ardent religious feeling. "O! never can I remember those days," he wrote in the *Biographia*, "with either shame or regret. For I was most sincere, most disinterested! My opinions were indeed in many and most



important points erroneous; but my heart was single. Wealth, rank, life itself, then seemed cheap to me, compared with the interest of (what I believed to be) the truth, and the will of my Maker." However much he may have consorted with unbelievers like Thelwall and distressed his good brother George by his heterodoxy, he was by nature deeply religious. He tried in his letters to recover Thelwall from his "atheism," though he heartily approved a sentiment expressed by the latter: "He who thinks and *feels* will be virtuous; and he who is absorbed in self will be vicious, whatever may be his speculative opinions." Godwin's system of "Justice," with its soulless logic, he abhorred. He preached often in Unitarian churches. To young Hazlitt, who heard him preach in January, 1798, from the text "And He went up into the mountain to pray, *Himself, alone*," it seemed "as if the sounds had echoed from the bottom of the human heart, and as if that prayer might have floated in solemn silence through the universe." In politics he was, when he went to Stowey, "almost equidistant from all the three prominent parties, the Pittites, the Foxites, and the Democrats"; he was "a vehement anti-ministerialist, but after the invasion of Switzerland, a more vehement anti-Gallican [see the last two stanzas of "France"], and still more intensely an anti-Jacobin." Under Wordsworth's influence his thoughts turned in great measure from contemporary politics to more fundamental matters. Always his poetry had been the utterance of his essential being. "I feel strongly and I think strongly," he wrote to Thelwall in 1796, "but I seldom feel without thinking or think without feeling. Hence, though my poetry has in general a hue of tenderness or passion over it, yet it seldom exhibits unmixed and simple tenderness and passion. My philosophical opinions are blended with or deduced from my feelings." Wordsworth gave his feelings a new object and his philosophy a higher aim. In April of the second year at Stowey, in the letter to his brother already quoted, Coleridge wrote: "I have for some time past withdrawn myself totally from the consideration of *immediate causes*, which are infinitely complex and uncertain, to muse on fundamental and general causes, the 'causae causarum.' I devote myself to such works as encroach not on the anti-social passions—in poetry, to elevate the imagination and set the affections in right tune by the beauty of the inanimate impregnated as with a living soul by the presence of life—in prose to the seeking with patience and a slow, very slow mind, 'Quid sumus, et quidnam victuri gignimus,'—what our faculties are and what they are capable of becoming." This last sentence is a sort of half-prophetic summary of his life's work; but the poetry soon gave way to the prose, and he never again so nearly realized his poetical ideal as he had already done in "The Ancient Mariner."

Of his person and the impression he made upon people at this time there are various contemporary accounts. To Thelwall, in November, 1796, he sent the following description of himself: "... my face, unless when animated by immediate eloquence, expresses great sloth, and great, indeed almost idiotic good-nature. 'Tis a mere carcass of a face; fat, flabby, and expressive chiefly of inexpression. Yet I am told that my eyes, eyebrows, and forehead are physiognomically good; but of this the deponent knoweth not. As to my shape, 'tis a good shape enough if measured, but my gait is awkward, and the walk of the whole man indicates *indolence capable of energies*.... I cannot breathe through my nose, so my mouth, with sensual thick lips, is almost always open. In conversation I am impassioned, and oppose what I deem error with an eagerness which is often mistaken for personal asperity; but I am ever so swallowed up in the *thing* said that I forget my *opponent*. Such am I." The Rev. Leapidge Smith, in his "Reminiscences of an Octogenarian," remembered him as "a tall, dark, handsome young man, with long, black, flowing hair; eyes not merely dark, but black, and keenly penetrating; a fine forehead, a deep-toned, harmonious voice; a manner never to be forgotten, full of life, vivacity, and kindness; dignified in person and, added to all these, exhibiting the elements of his future greatness." [1] Hazlitt, in "My First Acquaintance with Poets" (a paper that every student of Coleridge's life and poetry should read), describing him as he appeared on his visit to Hazlitt's father at Wem in 1798, says: "His complexion was at that time clear, and even bright. His forehead was broad and high, light as if built of ivory, with large projecting eyebrows, and his eyes rolling beneath them like a sea with darkened lustre.... His mouth was gross, voluptuous, open, eloquent; his chin good-humored and round, but his nose, the rudder of the face, the index of the will, was small, feeble, nothing—like what he has done." And Dorothy Wordsworth (to close with a contemporary and sympathetic impression) set him down in her journal after their first meeting at Racedown thus: "He is a wonderful man. His conversation teems with soul, mind, and spirit.... At first I thought him very plain, that is for about three minutes: he is pale, thin, has a wide mouth, thick lips, and not very good teeth, longish, loose-growing, half-curling, rough black hair. But if you hear him speak for five minutes you think no more of them. His eye is large and full, and not very dark, but grey [2]—such an eye as would receive from a heavy soul the dullest expression; but it speaks every emotion of his animated mind; it has more of 'the poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling' than I ever witnessed. He has fine dark eyebrows, and an overhanging forehead." The friendly and keen-sighted woman gives a more sympathetic picture than the others; but there must have been truth, too, in the view of the equally keen-sighted and less friendly Hazlitt, whose description accords well with Coleridge's self-portraiture, and in the last sarcastic item, too well, with the remainder of the poet's career.

## FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 1: "Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge," ed. by E.H. Coleridge, Vol. I., p. 180, note.]

[Footnote 2: The uncertainty as to the color of his eyes is a tribute to their expressiveness. Carlyle described him in 1824 as having "a pair of strange brown, timid, yet earnest-looking eyes." Emerson visited him in 1833 and found him "with bright blue eyes and fine clear complexion."]

### III. THE REST OF THE STORY

Coleridge lived for thirty-six years after he left Stowey for Germany in 1798. His fame as a poet grew as the world became acquainted with and learned to feel the peculiar charm of his poetry, and he was even more famous, for a while, as a literary critic and a moral philosopher. But they were years of weak-willed wandering, of vast hazy plans and feeble performance, lighted only here and there by glimpses of fragmentary accomplishment, and that seldom in poetry. Keats died at twenty-six, leaving behind him a body of poetry hardly less wonderful than Coleridge had fashioned at the same age; and another poet sang of him:

"The bloom, whose petals, nipt before they blew,  
Died on the promise of the fruit, is waste."

In Coleridge the poet died at nearly the same age, almost as completely as if the man himself had passed "within the twilight chamber ... of white Death"; and "Dejection" is that poet's dirge. The remaining years need therefore but few words.

Coleridge had taken opium, perhaps as early as his school-days, for relief from neuralgia. He had recourse to it in March, 1796, for sleeplessness; in the following November, for relief from violent nervous pains; and near the close of the Stowey period, in May, 1798, when the vagaries of Lloyd, the estrangement from Lamb, domestic anxiety, and physical suffering had reduced him to a state of extreme nervous wretchedness, he again took refuge in opiates, of which "Kubla Khan" is partly the result. He returned from Germany in 1799, worked for a while on a newspaper in London and on a translation of Schiller's "Wallenstein," and in the summer of 1800 removed to Keswick in Cumberland, in the Lake Country, where the Wordsworths had already established themselves. Here, in the autumn of 1800, he strove to finish "Christabel," and did finish the second part. In the winter and spring he suffered from a complicated illness, in which he again had recourse to laudanum; and from the spring of 1801 he was confirmed in the opium habit, sinking often to pitiful depths of moral and physical misery. He was in the Mediterranean, chiefly at Malta, from 1804 to 1806. His wife and children remained at Keswick, where Southey and his family had become co-tenants with them of Greta Hall. Southey, it might almost be said, took care of Coleridge's family henceforth; for Coleridge had begun to find his own fireside an intolerable place as early as 1802, lived little at home, and made a formal separation from his wife in 1808,—though they saw each other occasionally after that and the Wedgwood annuity continued to be paid to Mrs. Coleridge. In 1809 he was living with the Wordsworths at Grasmere, where he wrote several numbers of a politico-philosophical paper called "The Friend." About the close of 1810 he was taken in hand by a Mr. and Mrs. Morgan of Hammersmith, near London, under whose care he kept the opium in check sufficiently to give his famous lectures on the "Principles of Poetry" in the winter of 1811-12, and another series in the early summer on Shakespeare. In the winter following, his play of "Remorse," a recast of the "Osorio" of 1797, was acted in London with some success. In the winter of 1813-14 he lectured, in a "conversational" fashion, at Bristol. He also wrote irregularly for the London papers during these years. But his studies, since his return from Germany, had been directed to metaphysics, and especially to the philosophical bases of poetry and theology; and the last twenty years of his life, at least, were occupied with plans for a great philosophical work covering these two fields of thought. One of the fragments of the great work that actually came to light, the *Biographia Literaria*, seems to have been sent to the printers in 1815. A collected edition of his poetry was also begun while he was under the Morgans' care.

From 1816 till his death in 1834 he lived in comparative peace, if not in happiness, with a Mr. Gilman of Highgate near London, an apothecary. Gilman and his wife were able so far to wean him from the drug, or to regulate his use of it, that he brought to the birth something of his vast plans in criticism and philosophy, notably the *Biographia Literaria* (1817) and the "Aids to Reflection" (1825). The beginning of his stay with Gilman was also marked by the publication of "Christabel" and "Kubla Khan" (1816), and of a collected edition of his other poems (including "The Ancient Mariner," considerably revised) under the title "Sibylline Leaves" (1817). But the poems that were not finished in the first

great period at Stowey remained unfinished. He talked divinely ("an archangel a little damaged," Lamb said), and both by his talk and his metaphysical writings profoundly influenced the literature and philosophy of the century, both in England and America; but the poet in him was dead.

"Sense of past youth, and manhood come in vain,  
And genius given, and knowledge won in vain;  
And all which I had culled in woodwalks wild,  
And all which patient toil had reared, and all  
Commune with *thee* had opened out—but flowers  
Strewed on my corse, and borne upon my bier,  
In the same coffin, for the self-same grave!"[1]

It would be a mistake to ascribe the paralysis of Coleridge's powers of constructive imagination exclusively to laudanum. Rather the resort to narcotics and the inability to control his creative faculty are alike symptoms of a temperamental malady which had its roots in his nature close to the seat of that special faculty. Under a favorable conjunction of outward circumstance and inward state, imagination came; it possessed him, and he labored in it, happily. Afterwards he could revise what he had shaped, analyze it philosophically, perfect some details of it, but he could not proceed in the creative act after the inspiration had left him. His own description of his nature—"indolence capable of energies"—is accurate as far as it goes. The opium, resorted to often, no doubt, to quicken the dreams in his brain as well as to relieve his bodily suffering, helped to enfeeble his will; but the "indolence" was in him before he became addicted to opium, and he was never "capable of energies" at the call of duty, but only at the call of his "shaping spirit," over whose coming and going he had no control.

Poetically it is perhaps as well. Had he been like his friend Wordsworth in strength and steadiness of purpose—which is to suppose him another nature than he was—his life would have been happier and more edifying, but he would hardly have given us anything better than "Christabel" and "The Ancient Mariner." Romantic poetry of the higher type is essentially the creature of mood. Even Wordsworth's long and conscientious labors produced but a small bulk of poetry of this character, amid dreary reaches of uninspired preaching. Coleridge waited—in despondency often, in self-upbraidings, in the temporary deception of opium dreams with their consequent misery—for the return of the spirit; and it did not come.

#### FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 1: From the lines addressed to Wordsworth after hearing him read "The Prelude," in 1807.]

## II. COLERIDGE'S POEMS.

### "THE ANCIENT MARINER"

"The Ancient Mariner" was first printed in the first edition of "Lyrical Ballads," 1798, again with considerable changes in the second edition, 1800, and without further significant change in the editions of 1802 and 1805. Its fifth appearance was in "Sibylline Leaves," 1817, again with some important changes, and the addition of the Latin motto and the marginal gloss. In the "Poetical Works," 1828, and again in the "Poetical Works," 1829, the poem appeared in its final form as we now have it,—differing very little from the form it had in "Sibylline Leaves." One or two significant minor changes will be mentioned in the notes.

Coleridge's own account of the genesis of the poem, given in the *Biographia Literaria* nearly twenty years later, is interesting. "During the first year that Mr. Wordsworth and I were neighbours, our conversations turned frequently on the two cardinal points of poetry, the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colours of imagination. The sudden charm, which accidents of light and shade, which moonlight or sunset, diffused over a known and familiar landscape, appeared to represent the practicability of combining both. These are the poetry of nature. The thought suggested itself (to which of us I do not recollect) that a series of poems might be composed of two sorts. In the one, the incidents and agents were to be, in part at least, supernatural; and the excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions, as would naturally accompany such situations, supposing them real. And real in this sense they have been to

every human being who, from whatever source of delusion, has at any time believed himself under supernatural agency. For the second class, subjects were to be chosen from ordinary life; the characters and incidents were to be such as will be found in every village and its vicinity where there is a meditative and feeling mind to seek after them, or to notice them when they present themselves.

"In this idea originated the 'Lyrical Ballads'; in which it was agreed that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic; yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith. Mr. Wordsworth, on the other hand, was to propose to himself as his object, to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the wonders and loveliness of the world before us; an inexhaustible treasure, but for which, in consequence of the film of familiarity and selfish solicitude, we have eyes, yet see not, ears that hear not, and hearts that neither feel nor understand.

"With this view I wrote 'The Ancient Mariner,' and was preparing, among other poems, 'The Dark Ladie,' and the 'Christabel,' in which I should have more nearly realized my ideal than I had done in my first attempt. But Mr. Wordsworth's industry had proved so much more successful, and the number of his poems so much greater, that my compositions, instead of forming a balance, appeared rather an interpolation of heterogeneous matter. Mr. Wordsworth added two or three poems written in his own character, in the impassioned, lofty, and sustained diction which is characteristic of his genius [among them the "Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey"]. In this form the 'Lyrical Ballads' were published."

Lyrical they hardly were, in any current meaning of that word; they were narrative. But they were ballads as the word was then understood. The two cardinal points of poetry that Coleridge says they had in view in this partnership production were both believed to be special marks of the ballad; the charm of homeliness and simplicity, and the spell of the supernatural and romantic. Bishop Percy's "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry," 1765, had created a taste for the traditional poetry of humble folk. Spreading to Germany and uniting there with the sentimental sensationalism of the eighteenth century, this taste found expression in Burger's "Lenore," which in turn had a powerful influence in England, five distinct translations of it appearing in 1796. Of the distinction so much insisted on by later analysts of the true popular ballad—its communal origin, its impersonality, its freedom from adornment, its lack of conscious art—the Englishman of Coleridge's time took no account. "The Ancient Mariner" is not a ballad in the sense in which "Sir Patrick Spens" or "Young Waters" is a ballad. It is in the highest degree a work of conscious and individual art. It is rather to be classed, like "Christabel," as a romance. But it was conceived and written under the influence of the "ballad revival," and bears many marks of that influence both in its general structure and in its details of workmanship.

Much of the archaic diction and antique spelling, as well as the ruder grotesquerie, that in the first edition proclaimed its relation to the pseudo-balladry of the time disappeared in the later editions. But the archaisms, the "unpoetical" diction, and especially the disregard of tense coherence in the poem as we now have it, contribute greatly to the atmosphere of romance—as of a story removed alike from the commonplace experience of every day and from familiar literary conventions—which it was Coleridge's intention to produce. By a few devotional ejaculations—"Heaven's Mother send us grace!" "To Mary Queen the praise be given!"—we are made to feel that the Ancient Mariner lived before the Reformation, in the ages of wonder and faith. Repetition, as in many stanzas of Part IV., is a device caught from the folk-ballad and modified to produce the effect of a spell, which is so strong a mark of the poem. The abrupt opening, the unannounced transitions in dialogue, the omission of all but the vital incidents of the story, all belong to the ballad style. The verse form is what is known as the ballad stanza (stanza of four lines—a line of four accents followed by one of three, the second and fourth lines riming) variously extended and modified to suit the mood of the passage. The prose summary in the form of a marginal gloss, first added in the edition of 1817, is a practice taken from early printed books, but not from balladry, which is normally oral.

Of the literary qualities of the poem much might be said, but I call attention here to but two: the organic structure of the story and the character of the imagery, two important aspects of creative imagination. The seven parts are seven stages of the narrative, each, except the last, closing with a reference to the Mariner's sin. The story proceeds like the successive acts of a play. In Part I. the deed is committed; in Part II. the punishment begins; in Part III. the punishment reaches its climax. Part IV. brings the "turn"; in the crisis of his sufferings comes the consciousness of fellowship with other creatures and repentance for his cruelty. Parts V. and VI. relate his penance begun, and his return by supernatural agencies to the world of human fellowship; and Part VII. brings us back to the opening scene, closing the whole with a moral. The moral is so plainly set forth that one wonders how Mrs. Barbauld could ever have complained, as Coleridge tells us she did, that the poem "had no moral." His reply is worth recording: "I told her that in my opinion the poem had too much; and that the only, or

chief fault, if I might say so, was the obtrusion of the moral sentiment so openly on the reader as a principle or cause of action in a work of such pure imagination. It ought to have had no more moral than the Arabian Nights' tale of the merchant's sitting down to eat dates by the side of a well, and throwing the shells aside, and lo! a genie starts up, and says he *must* kill the aforesaid merchant, because one of the date shells had, it seems, put out the eye of the genie's son." But the poet of 1798 knew better than the metaphysician of 1830. The moral is as essential a part of the whole poem as moral consciousness is of man; without it the poem would be without the coherence of human interest which alone can secure for "these shadows of imagination" "poetic faith." The moral, really, is suffused throughout the work, is the blood of its being; that it should be formulated at the close is quite in accord with the simplicity which marked the whole conception of the "Lyrical Ballads," and is moreover perfectly harmonious with the spirit of the poem itself. There have been poets who seemed to be without the moral sense, and who have written poetry quite free from any moral, like Poe and his landscape visions, but wonderful as they are, they are abnormal, and are less great as they are less completely human. It may be that Wordsworth, as one infers from recollections of the composition of the poem, suggested the moral plot; but if so it entered at once and completely into Coleridge's imagination and governed the shaping of the poem from the start. In all the very considerable changes and omissions that the poem underwent after it was first printed, there was none that either retrenched from or added to the moral interpretation of the tale.

Of its imagery the most evident characteristic is what may be called the anthropomorphic treatment of nature. This, although in accord with modern conceptions of primitive culture, is not at all a mark of the popular ballad. Sun, and moon, and storm-wind, and ocean are in folk-song sun and moon and wind and water and nothing more; but in "The Ancient Mariner" they are living beings.

"And now the Storm-blast came, and he  
Was tyrannous and strong:  
He struck with his o'ertaking wings,  
And chased us south along."

"And straight the Sun was flecked with bars,  
(Heaven's Mother send us grace!)  
As if through a dungeon-grate he peered  
With broad and burning face."

"Still as a slave before his lord,  
The ocean hath no blast;  
His great bright eye most silently  
Up to the Moon is cast—

"If he may know which way to go;  
For she guides him smooth or grim.  
See, brother, see! how graciously  
She looketh down on him."

This is the most noticeable of the "modifying colours of imagination" in "The Ancient Mariner." The practice might be classed as a sort of personification; but how utterly different in its effect from the conventional "literary" personifications of the eighteenth century—of Gray in the "Elegy," for instance! Grandeur, and Envy, and Honour, in that admirable poem, are not real persons to the imagination; the abstraction remains an abstraction. But in Coleridge's poem all nature is alive with the life of men. Other elements of "that synthetic and magical power to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of imagination," and which blends "the idea with the image" and "the sense of novelty and freshness with old and familiar objects" will be felt as the poem is studied.

Wordsworth related in after years that the suggestion for the poem came from a dream of a phantom ship told to Coleridge by a friend, and that he (Wordsworth) proposed the shooting of the albatross, the revenge of the "tutelary spirits," and the "navigation of the ship by the dead men," and contributed the fourth stanza of the poem and the last two lines of the first stanza of Part IV. He had been reading Shelvocke's "Voyages," a book in which he had found a description of albatrosses as they are seen in far southern waters. Other reading that may have suggested some of the scenery is described in the "Notes" to the Globe edition of Coleridge's poems. There are also passages and situations in the last two acts of Wordsworth's play, "The Borderers," which Coleridge read with great admiration in the summer of 1797, that have evident kinship with "The Ancient Mariner," and Wordsworth's "Peter Bell" (composed at Alfoxden, but printed many years later) suggests what the story might have become if Coleridge instead of Wordsworth had withdrawn from collaboration.

## "CHRISTABEL" AND "KUBLA KHAN"

"Christabel" and "Kubla Khan" were first printed in 1816, in a pamphlet along with "The Pains of Sleep," a sort of contrast to "Kubla Khan" composed in 1803. In the Preface to this pamphlet Coleridge informs us that the first part of "Christabel" was written at Stowey in 1797 and the second part at Keswick, Cumberland, in 1800. The poem was intended originally for the "Lyrical Ballads," and it was with the hope of finishing it for the second edition that Coleridge took it up again in the fall of 1800. There is a good deal of uncertainty as to just how much of the work was done at that time. In two letters of that period he speaks of it as "running up to 1300 lines," and "swelled into a poem of 1400 lines," so that it is no longer suitable for the "Lyrical Ballads"; but hardly half of this amount was printed in the 1816 pamphlet or has ever been found since. One suspects that already in 1800 dreams and projects had begun to be confounded with performance. In the latter of the two letters mentioned above he relates how his "verse-making faculties returned" to him, after long and unsuccessful struggles with "barrenness" and deep "dejection," as the result of drinking, "at the house of a neighbouring clergyman, ... so much wine, that I found some effort and dexterity requisite to balance myself on the hither edge of sobriety." On the whole, it seems probable that "Christabel" owes little to the forced efforts of his first year in the Lake country. Like most of the other poems in this volume, it is a product of the great year at Stowey. He himself told a friend in later years: "I had the whole of the two cantos in my mind before I began it," adding very truly, "certainly the first canto is more perfect, has more of the true wild weird spirit than the last."

Down to the close of his life he dreamed of finishing this work. He amused his listeners at Highgate with a continuation of the plot; and in 1833 he declared that if he "were perfectly free from vexation and were in the *ad libitum* hearing of fine music" he could yet finish "Christabel," "for I have, as I always had, the whole plan entire from beginning to end in my mind; but I fear I could not carry on with equal success the execution of the idea." Wordsworth had a different recollection. He told Coleridge's nephew in 1836 that he did not think Coleridge "had ever conceived, in his own mind, any definite plan for it; that the poem had been composed while they were in habits of daily intercourse, and almost in his presence, and when there was the most unreserved intercourse between them as to all their literary projects and productions, and he had never heard from him any plan for finishing it"; and added, what is fully borne out by a study of Coleridge's life: "schemes of this sort passed rapidly and vividly through his mind, and so impressed him, that he often fancied he had arranged things, which really, and upon trial, proved to be mere embryos."

"The unfinished window in Aladdin's tower  
Unfinished must remain,"

wrote Longfellow, alluding to "The Dolliver Romance" that Hawthorne left incomplete at his death. There is strong kinship, moral and artistic, between Coleridge and Hawthorne; both believed that the heart is more than the head, and neither could force his imagination to work under unfavorable conditions. But Hawthorne's failure of imagination came at the end of a fruitful and consistent career, and his life failed with it; in Coleridge the poet died half a lifetime before the man, and left the man—the preacher and philosopher—to lament his loss.

Whether or not Coleridge had the story complete in his mind, what we have is a fragment, and does not enable us to divine, as some broken statues do, the plan of the whole. What it gives us is the romantic mood, the sense of "witchery by daylight," and this it does more hauntingly than anything else in the English language. It is a series of magical and unforgettable pictures. It owes a good deal to the old verse romances and ballads that so impressed the imagination in those days of the mediaeval revival, but it was itself a far stronger influence. It operated as an original force, both by its form and by its spirit, upon the poetic imagination of the first half of the nineteenth century more widely and deeply than the work of any other man, Burns and Keats not excepted. Scott heard it read from manuscript, and the "Lay of the Last Minstrel," with the series of verse romances that followed, may almost be called a result of that reading; the verse form of Scott's romances certainly is. Poe's poetry is as far as the poles removed from Scott's; yet a close study of Poe's work shows the influence of "Christabel" to be even deeper here than in the "Lay of the Last Minstrel."

Coleridge was fully aware of a special power, both of imagination and of verse-music, in the poem. His attempts to complete it in 1800 brought persistently to his mind the project of a philosophy of poetry, and especially of this poem, as we may infer from a letter to Poole in March, 1801: "I shall ... immediately publish my 'Christabel,' with two essays annexed to it, on the 'Preternatural' and on 'Metre.'" When the two cantos were at last printed in 1816, Coleridge wrote in the Preface: "The metre of the 'Christabel' is not, properly speaking, irregular, though it may seem so from its being founded on a new principle: namely, that of counting in each line the accents, not the syllables. Though the latter

may vary from seven to twelve, yet in each line the accents will be found to be only four. Nevertheless this occasional variation in number of syllables is not introduced wantonly, or for the mere ends of convenience, but in correspondence with some transition, in the nature of the imagery or passion." This is not to be taken quite literally. The accentual principle was assuredly nothing new in English verse, and syllable-counting, though introduced by Chaucer, had to be reintroduced by the Renaissance poets and did not become an unquestioned convention till the latter part of the seventeenth century. But the return to free accentual verse in the "Christabel" was an innovation at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It is to be noted, too, that there are lines of three and even of two accents in Part I.

In chap. XV. of the *Biographia Literaria*, in a list of the "specific symptoms of poetic power" in Shakespeare's early work, Coleridge places first "the perfect sweetness of the versification; its adaptation to the subject; and the power displayed in varying the march of the words.... The sense of musical delight, with the power of producing it, is a gift of imagination; and this, together with the power of reducing multitude into unity of effect, and modifying a series of thoughts by some one predominant thought or feeling, may be cultivated and improved, but can never be learnt. It is in these that *Poeta nascitur non fit*."

"Kubla Khan" is the remembered fragment of a dream. All that we know about it is contained in the note Coleridge prefixed to it in the pamphlet of 1816. In the summer of 1798 (Coleridge says 1797, but this seems to have been a slip of his memory[1]) "the author, then in ill health, had retired to a lonely farm-house between Porlock and Linton, on the Exmoor confines of Somerset and Devonshire. In consequence of a slight indisposition, an anodyne had been prescribed, from the effects of which he fell asleep in his chair at the moment that he was reading the following sentence, or words of the same substance, in 'Purchas's Pilgrimage': 'Here the Khan Kubla commanded a palace to be built, and a stately garden thereunto. And thus ten miles of fertile ground were inclosed with a wall.' The author continued for about three hours in a profound sleep, at least of the external senses, during which time he has the most vivid confidence, that he could not have composed less than from two to three hundred lines; if that indeed can be called composition in which all the images rose up before him as *things*, with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions, without any sensation or consciousness of effort. On awaking he appeared to himself to have a distinct recollection of the whole, and taking his pen, ink, and paper, instantly and eagerly wrote down the lines that are here preserved. At this moment he was unfortunately called out by a person on business from Porlock, and detained by him above an hour, and on his return to his room, found, to his no small surprise and mortification, that though he still retained some vague and dim recollection of the general purport of the vision, yet, with the exception of some eight or ten scattered lines and images, all the rest had passed away like the images on the surface of a stream into which a stone has been cast, but, alas! without the after restoration of the latter!"

Opinion will ever vary as to its poetic worth. Coleridge himself professed to consider it "rather as a psychological curiosity" than as a thing "of any supposed *poetic* merits"; to Lamb he repeated it "so enchantingly that it irradiates and brings heaven and elysian bowers into any parlour when he sings or says it," and it has been a sort of touchstone of romantic taste ever since. It supremely illustrates that "sense of musical delight, with the power of producing it," which the poet declared to be a gift of the imagination that can never be learnt.

#### **FOOTNOTES:**

[Footnote 1: See notes to this poem in the Globe edition, and E.H. Coleridge's "Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge," Vol. I, p. 245, note.]

## **"FRANCE: AN ODE"**

This ode was written in February, 1798, and first printed in the "Morning Post" for April 16 of that year, under the significant title of "Recantation." In the autumn it was printed with its present title in a pamphlet together with "Fears in Solitude," another political poem, and "Frost at Midnight," a poem on his infant child. In October, 1802, it was reprinted in the "Post" with a prose "Argument" (see notes), less necessary for the readers of that time than it may be now. Coleridge, like Wordsworth, had welcomed the French Revolution as ushering in an era of light and love in human society; both, though Wordsworth more profoundly, had been depressed by the excesses of 1793-4, and by the lust of conquest which became more and more evident under the Directory; and when at last in February,

1798, the French armies invaded Switzerland, the ancient sacred home of liberty in Europe, Coleridge "recanted" in this ode.

Political poetry is likely to lose its power with the passing of the events and passions that give it birth; it retains its power just in proportion as it is built on lasting and universal interests of the heart of man. That "France" has retained its position as one of the great odes of the English language is due not only to the loftiness of its thought and the splendor of its imagery, but even more to the fact that it turns from the political excitement of the hour to the grandeur and beauty of nature and to those aspirations and ideals whose home is "in the heart of man."

## "LOVE"

From the second edition of "Lyrical Ballads," 1800. It was planned by Coleridge as an introduction to the ballad of "The Dark Ladie," which was never completed, but of which some fifteen stanzas were printed in the 1834 edition of his "Poetical Works." Its composition cannot be accurately dated. It is conceived in the general spirit of the ballads but is simpler, more purely a poem of sentiment, than either "Christabel" or "The Ancient Mariner," and makes no use of the supernatural. Its simplicity and absolute purity of tone are, however, something more than a negative virtue. Coleridge himself declared of it and "The Ancient Mariner" that they might be excelled, but could not be imitated.

## "DEJECTION: AN ODE"

This ode was written in April, 1802, at a time when, after sickness, opium, domestic unhappiness and the consequent paralysis of his poetic faculty had driven him to seek distraction in the study of metaphysics, he made a visit to Wordsworth at Dove Cottage and in that vitalizing presence experienced a brief return of his powers—enough to give wonderful expression to perhaps the saddest thoughts that ever visited ungoverned genius. The earliest known form of the poem, preserved in a letter to W. Sotheby of July 19, 1802, shows (what is apparent enough to one familiar with the relations existing between the two poets) that it was conceived as a letter to Wordsworth, who is addressed in this earliest version as "Dearest Poet," "Wordsworth," and "William." It was first printed in the "Morning Post" for October 4, 1802, with "Edmund" for Wordsworth's name and with some omissions, but with the strong personal feeling undiminished; and in its present form (that is, with the parts omitted in the 1802 print restored, but with the substitution of "Lady" for "Edmund" and with numerous other omissions and changes, notably in the last stanza, all tending to depersonalize the poem) in "Sibylline Leaves," 1816. In 1810 a hint given by Wordsworth, with the best intentions, to a third person concerning the real nature of Coleridge's troubles, was reported, or rather misreported, to Coleridge, and an estrangement fraught with deep grief to both ensued. The breach was healed, as much as such wounds may be, by the mediation of a common friend in 1812; but the old glad and fruitful fellowship could never be restored. Coleridge wrote to Poole, February 13, 1813: "A reconciliation has taken place, but the *feeling*, which I had previous to that moment, ... that, I fear, never can return. All outward actions, all inward wishes, all thoughts and admirations will be the same—*are* the same, but—*aye*, there remains an immedicable *But*."

"Dejection" is distinguished from the other poems in this volume by containing, along with its wonderful interpretation of outward nature into harmony with his own else unutterable sadness, Coleridge's—and perhaps all poets'—essential philosophy of poetry. It was natural that the metaphysics in which he had been immersed should color his thought; but literature affords few if any instances of metaphysics so transformed into poetry in the crucible of feeling as is afforded by stanza V. of this ode.

## "YOUTH AND AGE" AND "WORK WITHOUT HOPE"



In these two poems Coleridge has left a record of the sadness of a life lived

"In darkness, with the light of youth gone out,"

or returning only in glimpses that showed what he had lost. In these latter years he was busy enough in an incoherent, visionary fashion, and did even write and publish (though in characteristically fragmentary form) a work that made a great impression on young men in the second quarter of the century, his "Aids to Reflection"; but his activity was philosophical and theological, not poetic, and even in that field the product fell far short of his plans and promises. The inner and real life of the man is revealed, now as always, in his poetry; and amidst what profound dejection it glimmers on, these two brief poems show.

"Youth and Age" was written in 1823—"an *air* that whizzed ... right across the diameter of my brain ... over the summit of Quantock at earliest dawn just between the nightingale that I stopt to hear in the copse at the foot of Quantock, and the first sky-lark that was a song-fountain, dashing up and sparkling to the ear's eye, ... out of sight, over the cornfields on the descent of the mountain on the other side—out of sight, tho' twice I beheld its mute shoot downward in the sunshine like a falling star of silver"—so he described the conception of the poem in the original MS., printed by Mr. Campbell in the Notes to the Globe edition. It was a flash of poignant memory of the old days at Stowey. The first thirty-eight lines were printed in 1828, and the whole poem (including the last six lines, which were not in the original draft) in 1834.

"Work Without Hope" was written, Coleridge says, "on the 21st February, 1827," and was first printed in 1828.

## THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

## THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

### IN SEVEN PARTS

Facile credo, plures esse Naturas invisibiles quam visibiles in rerum universitate. Sed horum omnium familiam quis nobis enarrabit? et gradus et cognationes et discrimina et singulorum munera? Quid agunt? quae loca habitant? Harum rerum notitiam semper ambivit ingenium humanum, nunquam attigit. Juvat, interea, non diffiteor, quandoque in animo, tanquam in tabulâ, majoris et melioris mundi imaginem contemplari: ne mens assuefacta hodiernae vitae minutiis se contrahat nimis, et tota subsidat in pusillas cogitationes. Sed veritati interea invigilandum est, modusque servandus, ut certa ab incertis, diem a nocte, distinguamus—T. BURNET, *Archaeol. Phil*, p. 68.

### PART I

[Sidenote: An ancient Mariner meeteth three Gallants bidden to a wedding-feast, and detaineth one.]

It is an ancient Mariner,  
And he stoppeth one of three.  
"By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,  
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?"

The bridegroom's doors are opened wide, 5  
And I am next of kin;  
The guests are met, the feast is set:  
May'st hear the merry din."

He holds him with his skinny hand,  
"There was a ship," quoth he. 10  
"Hold off! unhand me, grey-beard loon!"

Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

[Sidenote: The Wedding-Guest is spellbound by the eye of the old seafaring man, and constrained to hear his tale.]

He holds him with his glittering eye—  
The Wedding-Guest stood still,  
And listens like a three years' child: 15  
The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone:  
He cannot choose but hear;  
And thus spake on that ancient man,  
The bright-eyed Mariner. 20

"The ship was cheered, the harbor cleared,  
Merrily did we drop  
Below the kirk, below the hill,  
Below the lighthouse top.

[Sidenote: The Mariner tells how the ship sailed southward with a good wind and fair weather, till it reached the Line.]

The sun came up upon the left, 25  
Out of the sea came he!  
And he shone bright, and on the right  
Went down into the sea.

Higher and higher every day,  
Till over the mast at noon—" 30  
The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,  
For he heard the loud bassoon.

[Sidenote: The Wedding-Guest heareth the bridal music; but the Mariner continueth his tale.]

The bride hath paced into the hall,  
Red as a rose is she;  
Nodding their heads before her goes 35  
The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,  
Yet he cannot choose but hear;  
And thus spake on that ancient man,  
The bright-eyed Mariner. 40

[Sidenote: The ship driven by a storm toward the south pole.]

"And now the Storm-blast came, and he  
Was tyrannous and strong:  
He struck with his o'ertaking wings,  
And chased us south along.

With sloping masts and dipping prow, 45  
As who pursued with yell and blow  
Still treads the shadow of his foe,  
And forward bends his head,  
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,  
And southward aye we fled. 50

And now there came both mist and snow,  
And it grew wondrous cold:  
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,  
As green as emerald.

[Sidenote: The land of ice, and of fearful sounds where no living thing was to be seen.]

And through the drifts the snowy clifts 55  
Did send a dismal sheen:  
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken—

The ice was all between.

The ice was here, the ice was there,  
The ice was all around: 60  
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,  
Like noises in a swound!

[Sidenote: Till a great sea-bird, called the Albatross, came through the snow-fog, and was received with great joy and hospitality.]

At length did cross an Albatross,  
Thorough the fog it came;  
As if it had been a Christian soul, 65  
We hailed it in God's name.

It ate the food it ne'er had eat,  
And round and round it flew.  
The ice did split with a thunder-fit;  
The helmsman steered us through! 70

[Sidenote: And lo! the Albatross proveth a bird of good omen, and followeth the ship as it returned northward through fog and floating ice.]

And a good south wind sprung up behind;  
The Albatross did follow,  
And every day, for food or play,  
Came to the mariners' hollo!

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud, 75  
It perched for vespers nine;  
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,  
Glimmered the white moon-shine."

[Sidenote: The ancient Mariner inhospitably killeth the pious bird of good omen.]

"God save thee, ancient Mariner!  
From the fiends, that plague thee thus!— 80  
Why look'st thou so?"—"With my cross-bow  
I shot the Albatross.

## PART II

The Sun now rose upon the right:  
Out of the sea came he,  
Still hid in mist, and on the left 85  
Went down into the sea.

And the good south wind still blew behind,  
But no sweet bird did follow,  
Nor any day for food or play  
Came to the mariners' hollo! 90

[Sidenote: His shipmates cry out against the ancient Mariner, for killing the bird of good luck.]

And I had done a hellish thing,  
And it would work 'em woe:  
For all averred, I had killed the bird  
That made the breeze to blow.  
Ah wretch! said they, the bird to slay, 95  
That made the breeze to blow!

[Sidenote: But when the fog cleared off, they justify the same, and thus make themselves accomplices in the crime.]

Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,  
The glorious Sun uprist:  
Then all averred, I had killed the bird

That brought the fog and mist. 100  
'T was right, said they, such birds to slay,  
That bring the fog and mist.

[Sidenote: The fair breeze continues; the ship enters the Pacific Ocean, and sails northward, even till it reaches the Line.]

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,  
The furrow followed free;  
We were the first that ever burst 105  
Into that silent sea.

[Sidenote: The ship hath been suddenly becalmed.]

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,  
'T was sad as sad could be;  
And we did speak only to break  
The silence of the sea! 110

All in a hot and copper sky,  
The bloody Sun, at noon,  
Right up above the mast did stand,  
No bigger than the Moon.

Day after day, day after day, 115  
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;  
As idle as a painted ship  
Upon a painted ocean.

[Sidenote: And the Albatross begins to be avenged.]

Water, water, every where,  
And all the boards did shrink; 120  
Water, water, every where  
Nor any drop to drink.

The very deep did rot: O Christ!  
That ever this should be!  
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs 125  
Upon the slimy sea.

About, about, in reel and rout  
The death-fires danced at night;  
The water, like a witch's oils,  
Burnt green, and blue and white. 130

[Sidenote: A Spirit had followed them: one of the invisible inhabitants of this planet, neither departed souls nor angels, concerning whom the learned Jew, Josephus, and the Platonic Constantinopolitan, Michael Psellus, may be consulted. They are very numerous, and there is no climate or element without one or more.]

And some in dreams assured were  
Of the Spirit that plagued us so;  
Nine fathom deep he had followed us  
From the land of mist and snow.

And every tongue, through utter drought, 135  
Was withered at the root;  
We could not speak, no more than if  
We had been choked with soot.

[Sidenote: The shipmates, in their sore distress, would fain throw the whole guilt on the ancient Mariner: in sign whereof they hang the dead sea-bird round his neck.]

Ah! well-a-day! what evil looks  
Had I from old and young! 140  
Instead of the cross, the Albatross  
About my neck was hung.

### PART III

[Sidenote: The ancient Mariner beholdeth a sign in the element afar off.]

There passed a weary time. Each throat  
Was parched, and glazed each eye.  
A weary time! a weary time! 145  
How glazed each weary eye,  
When looking westward, I beheld  
A something in the sky.

At first it seemed a little speck,  
And then it seemed a mist; 150  
It moved and moved, and took at last  
A certain shape, I wist.

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!  
And still it neared and neared:  
As if it dodged a water-sprite, 155  
It plunged and tacked and veered.

[Sidenote: At its nearer approach, it seemeth him to be a ship; and at a dear ransom he freeth his speech from the bonds of thirst.]

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,  
We could nor laugh nor wail;  
Through utter drought all dumb we stood!  
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood, 160  
And cried, A sail! a sail!

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,  
Agape they heard me call:

[Sidenote: A flash of joy;]

[Sidenote: And horror follows. For can it be a ship that comes onward without wind or tide?]

Gramercy! they for joy did grin,  
And all at once their breath drew in, 165  
As they were drinking all.

See! see! (I cried) she tacks no more!  
Hither to work us weal;  
Without a breeze, without a tide,  
She steadies with upright keel! 170

The western wave was all a-flame.  
The day was well nigh done!  
Almost upon the western wave  
Rested the broad bright Sun;  
When that strange shape drove suddenly 175  
Betwixt us and the Sun;

[Sidenote: It seemeth him but the skeleton of a ship.]

And straight the Sun was flecked with bars,  
(Heaven's Mother send us grace!)  
As if through a dungeon-grate he peered  
With broad and burning face. 180

Alas (thought I, and my heart beat loud)  
How fast she nears and nears!  
Are those her sails that glance in the Sun,  
Like restless gossameres?

[Sidenote: And its ribs are seen as bars on the face of the setting Sun. The Spectre-Woman and her Deathmate, and no other on board the skeleton-ship.]

Are those her ribs through which the Sun 185  
Did peer, as through a grate?  
And is that Woman all her crew?  
Is that a Death? and are there two?  
Is Death that woman's mate?

[Sidenote: Like vessel, like crew!]

Her lips were red, her looks were free, 190  
Her locks were yellow as gold:  
Her skin was as white as leprosy,  
The Night-mare Life-in-Death was she,  
Who thicks man's blood with cold.

[Sidenote: Death and Life-in-Death have dived for the ship's crew, and she (the latter) winneth the ancient Mariner.]

The naked hulk alongside came, 195  
And the twain were casting dice;  
'The game is done! I've won! I've won!'  
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

[Sidenote: No twilight within the courts of the Sun.]

The Sun's rim dips; the stars rush out;  
At one stride comes the dark; 200  
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,  
Off shot the spectre-bark.

[Sidenote: At the rising of the moon.]

We listened and looked sideways up!  
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,  
My life-blood seemed to sip! 205  
The stars were dim, and thick the night,  
The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed white;  
From the sails the dew did drip—  
Till clomb above the eastern bar  
The horned Moon, with one bright star 210  
Within the nether tip.

[Sidenote: One after another,]

One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,  
Too quick for groan or sigh,  
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,  
And cursed me with his eye. 215

[Sidenote: His shipmates drop down dead.]

Four times fifty living men,  
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan)  
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,  
They dropped down one by one.

[Sidenote: But Life-in-Death begins her work on the ancient Mariner.]

The souls did from their bodies fly,— 220  
They fled to bliss or woe!  
And every soul, it passed me by,  
Like the whizz of my cross-bow!"

## PART IV

[Sidenote: The Wedding-Guest feareth that a Spirit is talking to him;]

"I Fear thee, ancient Mariner!

I fear thy skinny hand! 225  
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,  
As is the ribbed sea-sand.

I fear thee and thy glittering eye,  
And thy skinny hand, so brown."—  
"Fear me not, fear not, thou wedding-guest! 230  
This body dropt not down.

[Sidenote: But the ancient Mariner assureth him of his bodily life, and proceedeth to relate his horrible penance.]

Alone, alone, all, all alone,  
Alone on the wide, wide sea!  
And never a saint took pity on  
My soul in agony. 235

[Sidenote: He despiseth the creatures of the calm.]

The many men, so beautiful!  
And they all dead did lie:  
And a thousand thousand slimy things  
Lived on; and so did I.

[Sidenote: And envieth that they should live, and so many lie dead.]

I looked upon the rotting sea, 240  
And drew my eyes away;  
I looked upon the rotting deck,  
And there the dead men lay.

I looked to heaven, and tried to pray;  
But or ever a prayer had gusht, 245  
A wicked whisper came, and made  
My heart as dry as dust.

I closed my lids, and kept them close,  
And the balls like pulses beat;  
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky 250  
Lay like a load on my weary eye,  
And the dead were at my feet.

[Sidenote: But the curse liveth for him in the eye of the dead men.]

The cold sweat melted from their limbs,  
Nor rot nor reek did they:  
The look with which they looked on me  
Had never passed away.

An orphan's curse would drag to hell  
A spirit from on high;  
But oh! more horrible than that  
Is a curse in a dead man's eye!  
Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,  
And yet I could not die.

[Sidenote: In his loneliness and fixedness he yearneth towards the journeying Moon, and the stars that still sojourn, yet still move onward; and every where the blue sky belongs to them, and is their appointed rest, and their native country and their own natural homes, which they enter unannounced, as lords that are certainly expected and yet there is a silent joy at their arrival.]

The moving Moon went up the sky,  
And nowhere did abide:  
Softly she was going up,  
And a star or two beside—

Her beams bemoaned the sultry main,  
Like April hoar-frost spread;

But where the ship's huge shadow lay,  
The charmed water burnt away  
A still and awful red.

[Sidenote: By the light of the Moon he beholdeth God's creatures of the great calm.]

Beyond the shadow of the ship,  
I watched the water-snakes:  
They moved in tracks of shining white,  
And when they reared, the elfish light  
Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship  
I watched their rich attire:  
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,  
They coiled and swam; and every track 280  
Was a flash of golden fire.

[Sidenote: Their beauty and their happiness.]

[Sidenote: He blesseth them in his heart.]

O happy living things! no tongue  
Their beauty might declare:  
A spring of love gushed from my heart,  
And I blessed them unaware: 285  
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,  
And I blessed them unaware.

[Sidenote: The spell begins to break.]

The selfsame moment I could pray;  
And from my neck so free  
The Albatross fell off, and sank 290  
Like lead into the sea.

## PART V

Oh sleep! it is a gentle thing,  
Beloved from pole to pole!  
To Mary Queen the praise be given!  
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven, 295  
That slid into my soul.

[Sidenote: By grace of the holy Mother, the ancient Mariner is refreshed with rain.]

The silly buckets on the deck,  
That had so long remained,  
I dreamt that they were filled with dew;  
And when I awoke, it rained. 300

My lips were wet, my throat was cold,  
My garments all were dank;  
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,  
And still my body drank.

I moved, and could not feel my limbs: 305  
I was so light—almost  
I thought that I had died in sleep,  
And was a blessed ghost.

[Sidenote: He heareth sounds and seeth strange sights and commotions in the sky and the element.]

And soon I heard a roaring wind:  
It did not come anear; 310  
But with its sound it shook the sails,  
That were so thin and sere.



The upper air burst into life!  
And a hundred fire-flags sheen,  
To and fro they were hurried about! 315  
And to and fro, and in and out,  
The wan stars danced between.

And the coming wind did roar more loud,  
And the sails did sigh like sedge;  
And the rain poured down from one black cloud; 320  
The Moon was at its edge.

The thick black cloud was cleft, and still  
The Moon was at its side.  
Like waters shot from some high crag,  
The lightning fell with never a jag, 325  
A river steep and wide.

[Sidenote: The bodies of the ship's crew are inspired, and the ship moves on;]

The loud wind never reached the ship,  
Yet now the ship moved on!  
Beneath the lightning and the Moon  
The dead men gave a groan. 330

They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,  
Nor spake, nor moved their eyes;  
It had been strange, even in a dream,  
To have seen those dead men rise.

The helmsman steered, the ship moved on; 335  
Yet never a breeze up blew;  
The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,  
Where they were wont to do;  
They raised their limbs like lifeless tools—  
We were a ghastly crew. 340

The body of my brother's son  
Stood by me, knee to knee:  
The body and I pulled at one rope,  
But he said nought to me."

[Sidenote: But not by the souls of the men, nor by daemons of earth or middle air, but by a blessed troop of angelic spirits, sent down by the invocation of the guardian saint.]

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!" 345  
"Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest!  
'T was not those souls that fled in pain,  
Which to their corpses came again,  
But a troop of spirits blest:

For when it dawned—they dropped their arms,  
And clustered round the mast; 350  
Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths,  
And from their bodies passed.

Around, around, flew each sweet sound,  
Then darted to the Sun; 355  
Slowly the sounds came back again,  
Now mixed, now one by one.

Sometimes a-dropping from the sky  
I heard the sky-lark sing;  
Sometimes all little birds that are, 350  
How they seemed to fill the sea and air  
With their sweet jargoning!

And now 't was like all instruments,  
Now like a lonely flute;

And now it is an angel's song, 365  
That makes the heavens be mute.

It ceased; yet still the sails made on  
A pleasant noise till noon,  
A noise like of a hidden brook  
In the leafy month of June, 370  
That to the sleeping woods all night  
Singeth a quiet tune.

Till noon we quietly sailed on,  
Yet never a breeze did breathe:  
Slowly and smoothly went the ship, 375  
Moved onward from beneath.

[Sidenote: The lonesome Spirit from the south-pole carries on the ship as far as the Line, in obedience to the angelic troop, but still requireth vengeance.]

Under' the keel nine fathom deep,  
From the land of mist and snow,  
The spirit slid: and it was he  
That made the ship to go. 380  
The sails at noon left off their tune,  
And the ship stood still also.

The Sun, right up above the mast,  
Had fixed her to the ocean:  
But in a minute she 'gan stir, 385  
With a short uneasy motion—  
Backwards and forwards half her length  
With a short uneasy motion.

Then like a pawing horse let go,  
She made a sudden bound: 390  
It flung the blood into my head,  
And I fell down in a swoond.

[Sidenote: The Polar Spirit's fellow-daemons, the invisible inhabitants of the element, take part in his wrong; and two of them relate, one to the other, that penance long and heavy for the ancient Mariner hath been accorded to the Polar Spirit, who returneth southward.]

How long in that same fit I lay,  
I have not to declare;  
But ere my living life returned, 395  
I heard and in my soul discerned  
Two voices in the air.

'Is it he?' quoth one, 'Is this the man?  
By him who died on cross,  
With his cruel bow he laid full low 400  
The harmless Albatross.

The spirit who bideth by himself  
In the land of mist and snow,  
He loved the bird that loved the man  
Who shot him with his bow?' 405

The other was a softer voice,  
As soft as honey-dew:  
Quoth he, 'The man hath penance done,  
And penance more will do.'

## PART VI

### FIRST VOICE

'But tell me, tell me! speak again, 410  
Thy soft response renewing—  
What makes that ship drive on so fast?  
What is the ocean doing?'

**SECOND VOICE**

'Still as a slave before his lord,  
The ocean hath no blast; 415  
His great bright eye most silently  
Up to the Moon is cast—

If he may know which way to go;  
For she guides him smooth or grim.  
See, brother, see! how graciously 420  
She looketh down on him.'

**FIRST VOICE**

[Sidenote: The Mariner hath been cast into a trance; for the angelic power causeth the vessel to drive northward faster than human life could endure.]

'But why drives on that ship so fast?  
Without or wave or wind?'

**SECOND VOICE**

'The air is cut away before,  
And closes from behind. 425

Fly, brother, fly! more high, more high!  
Or we shall be belated:  
For slow and slow that ship will go,  
When the Mariner's trance is abated.

[Sidenote: The supernatural motion is retarded; the Mariner awakes, and his penance begins anew.]

I woke, and we were sailing on 430  
As in a gentle weather:  
'T was night, calm night, the moon was high,  
The dead men stood together.

All stood together on the deck,  
For a charnel-dungeon fitter: 435  
All fixed on me their stony eyes,  
That in the Moon did glitter.

The pang, the curse, with which they died,  
Had never passed away:  
I could not draw my eyes from theirs, 440  
Nor turn them up to pray.

[Sidenote: The curse is finally expiated.]

And now this spell was snapt: once more  
I viewed the ocean green,  
And looked far forth, yet little saw  
Of what had else been seen— 445

Like one, that on a lonesome road  
Doth walk in fear and dread,  
And having once turned round walks on,  
And turns no more his head;  
Because he knows, a frightful fiend 450  
Doth close behind him tread.

But soon there breathed a wind on me,  
Nor sound nor motion made:

Its path was not upon the sea,  
In ripple or in shade. 455

It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek  
Like a meadow-gale of spring—  
It mingled strangely with my fears,  
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship, 460  
Yet she sailed softly too:  
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze—  
On me alone it blew.

[Sidenote: And the ancient Mariner beholdeth his native country.]

Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed  
The light-house top I see? 465  
Is this the hill? is this the kirk?  
Is this mine own countree?

We drifted o'er the harbor-bar,  
And I with sobs did pray—  
O let me be awake, my God! 470  
Or let me sleep alway.

The harbor-bay was clear as glass,  
So smoothly it was strewn!  
And on the bay the moonlight lay,  
And the shadow of the Moon. 475

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,  
That stands above the rock:  
The moonlight steeped in silentness  
The steady weathercock.

And the bay was white with silent light 480  
Till rising from the same,

[Sidenote: The angelic spirits leave the dead bodies,]

Full many shapes, that shadows were,  
In crimson colors came.

[Sidenote: And appear in their own forms of light.]

A little distance from the prow  
Those crimson shadows were: 485  
I turned my eyes upon the deck—  
Oh, Christ! what saw I there!

Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,  
And, by the holy rood!  
A man all light, a seraph-man, 490  
On every corse there stood.

This seraph-band, each waved his hand:  
It was a heavenly sight!  
They stood as signals to the land,  
Each one a lovely light; 495

This seraph-band, each waved his hand,  
No voice did they impart—  
No voice; but oh! the silence sank  
Like music on my heart.

But soon I heard the dash of oars, 500  
I heard the Pilot's cheer;  
My head was turned perforce away,  
And I saw a boat appear.

The Pilot and the Pilot's boy,  
I heard them coming fast: 505  
Dear Lord in Heaven! it was a joy  
The dead men could not blast.

I saw a third—I heard his voice:  
It is the Hermit good!  
He singeth loud his godly hymns 510  
That he makes in the wood.  
He'll shrieve my soul, he'll wash away  
The Albatross's blood.

## PART VII

[Sidenote: The Hermit of the Wood,]

This Hermit good lives in that wood  
Which slopes down to the sea. 515  
How loudly his sweet voice he rears!  
He loves to talk with marineres  
That come from a far countree.

He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve—  
He hath a cushion plump: 520  
It is the moss that wholly hides  
The rotted old oak-stump.

The skiff-boat neared: I heard them talk,  
'Why, this is strange, I trow!  
Where are those lights, so many and fair, 525  
That signal made but now?'

[Sidenote: Approacheth the ship with wonder.]

'Strange, by my faith!' the Hermit said—  
'And they answered not our cheer!  
The planks looked warped! and see those sails,  
How thin they are and sere! 530  
I never saw aught like to them,  
Unless perchance it were

Brown skeletons of leaves that lag  
My forest-brook along;  
When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow, 535  
And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,  
That eats the she-wolf's young.'

'Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look—  
(The Pilot made reply)  
I am a-feared!—'Push on, push on!' 540  
Said the Hermit cheerily.

The boat came closer to the ship,  
But I nor spake nor stirred;  
The boat came close beneath the ship,  
And straight a sound was heard. 545

[Sidenote: The ship suddenly sinketh.]

Under the water it rumbled on,  
Still louder and more dread:  
It reached the ship, it split the bay;  
The ship went down like lead.

[Sidenote: The ancient Mariner is saved in the Pilot's boat.]

Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound, 550  
Which sky and ocean smote,  
Like one that hath been seven days drowned  
My body lay afloat;  
But swift as dreams, myself I found  
Within the Pilot's boat. 555

Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,  
The boat spun round and round;  
And all was still, save that the hill  
Was telling of the sound.

I moved my lips—the Pilot shrieked 560  
And fell down in a fit;  
The holy Hermit raised his eyes,  
And prayed where he did sit.

I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,  
Who now doth crazy go, 565  
Laughed loud and long, and all the while  
His eyes went to and fro.  
'Ha! ha!' quoth he, 'full plain I see,  
The Devil knows how to row.'

And now, all in my own coundree, 570  
I stood on the firm land!  
The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,  
And scarcely he could stand.

[Sidenote: The ancient Mariner earnestly entreateth the Hermit to shrieve him; and the penance of life falls on him.]

'O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!'  
The Hermit crossed his brow. 575  
'Say quick,' quoth he, 'I bid thee say—  
What manner of man art thou?'

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched  
With a woful agony,  
Which forced me to begin my tale; 580  
And then it left me free.

[Sidenote: And ever and anon throughout his future life an agony constraineth him to travel from land to land,]

Since then, at an uncertain hour,  
That agony returns:  
And till my ghastly tale is told,  
This heart within me burns. 585

I pass, like night, from land to land;  
I have strange power of speech;  
That moment that his face I see,  
I know the man that must hear me:  
To him my tale I teach. 590

What loud uproar bursts from that door!  
The wedding-guests are there:  
But in the garden-bower the bride  
And bride-maids singing are:  
And hark the little vesper bell, 595  
Which biddeth me to prayer!

O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been  
Alone on a wide, wide sea:  
So lonely 't was, that God himself  
Scarce seemed there to be. 600

O sweeter than the marriage-feast,  
'T is sweeter far to me,  
To walk together to the kirk  
With a goodly company!—

To walk together to the kirk, 605  
And all together pray,  
While each to his great Father bends,  
Old men, and babes, and loving friends  
And youths and maidens gay!

[Sidenote: And to teach, by his own example, love and reverence to all things that God made and loveth.]

Farewell, farewell! but this I tell 610  
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!  
He prayeth well, who loveth well  
Both man and bird and beast.

He prayeth best, who loveth best  
All things both great and small; 615  
For the dear God who loveth us,  
He made and loveth all."

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,  
Whose beard with age is hoar,  
Is gone: and now the Wedding-Guest 620  
Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned,  
And is of sense forlorn:  
A sadder and a wiser man,  
He rose the morrow morn. 625

## CHRISTABEL

### PART THE FIRST

'Tis the middle of night by the castle clock,  
And the owls have awakened the crowing cock.  
Tu—whit!—Tu—whoo!  
And hark, again! the crowing cock,  
How drowsily it crew. 5

Sir Leoline, the Baron rich,  
Hath a toothless mastiff, which  
From her kennel beneath the rock  
Maketh answer to the clock,  
Four for the quarters, and twelve for the hour; 10  
Ever and aye, by shine and shower,  
Sixteen short howls, not over loud;  
Some say, she sees my lady's shroud.

Is the night chilly and dark?  
The night is chilly, but not dark. 15  
The thin gray cloud is spread on high,  
It covers but not hides the sky.  
The moon is behind, and at the full;  
And yet she looks both small and dull.  
The night is chill, the cloud is gray: 20  
'T is a month before the month of May,  
And the Spring comes slowly up this way.

The lovely lady, Christabel,  
Whom her father loves so well,  
What makes her in the wood so late, 25  
A furlong from the castle gate?  
She had dreams all yesternight  
Of her own betrothed knight;  
And she in the midnight wood will pray  
For the weal of her lover that's far away. 30

She stole along, she nothing spoke,  
The sighs she heaved were soft and low,  
And naught was green upon the oak  
But moss and rarest mistletoe:  
She kneels beneath the huge oak tree, 35  
And in silence prayeth she.

The lady sprang up suddenly,  
The lovely lady, Christabel!  
It moaned as near, as near can be,  
But what it is she cannot tell.— 40  
On the other side it seems to be,  
Of the huge, broad-breasted, old oak tree.

The night is chill; the forest bare;  
Is it the wind that moaneth bleak?  
There is not wind enough in the air 45  
To move away the ringlet curl  
From the lovely lady's cheek—  
There is not wind enough to twirl  
The one red leaf, the last of its clan,  
That dances as often as dance it can, 50  
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,  
On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky.

Hush, beating heart of Christabel!  
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!  
She folded her arms beneath her cloak, 55  
And stole to the other side of the oak.  
What sees she there?

There she sees a damsel bright,  
Drest in a silken robe of white,  
That shadowy in the moonlight shone: 60  
The neck that made that white robe wan,  
Her stately neck, and arms were bare;  
Her blue-veined feet unsandal'd were,  
And wildly glittered here and there  
The gems entangled in her hair. 65  
I guess, 'twas frightful there to see  
A lady so richly clad as she—  
Beautiful exceedingly!

"Mary mother, save me now!"  
Said Christabel, "And who art thou?" 70

The lady strange made answer meet,  
And her voice was faint and sweet:—  
"Have pity on my sore distress,  
I scarce can speak for weariness:  
Stretch forth thy hand, and have no fear!" 75  
Said Christabel, "How camest thou here?"  
And the lady, whose voice was faint and sweet,  
Did thus pursue her answer meet:—

"My sire is of a noble line,  
And my name is Geraldine: 80  
Five warriors seized me yestermorn,



Me, even me, a maid forlorn:  
They choked my cries with force and fright,  
And tied me on a palfrey white.  
The palfrey was as fleet as wind, 85  
And they rode furiously behind.  
They spurred amain, their steeds were white:  
And once we crossed the shade of night.  
As sure as Heaven shall rescue me,  
I have no thought what men they be; 90  
Nor do I know how long it is  
(For I have lain entranced I wis)

Since one, the tallest of the five,  
Took me from the palfrey's back,  
A weary woman, scarce alive. 95  
Some muttered words his comrades spoke:  
He placed me underneath this oak;  
He swore they would return with haste;  
Whither they went I cannot tell—  
I thought I heard, some minutes past, 100  
Sounds as of a castle bell.  
Stretch forth thy hand," thus ended she,  
"And help a wretched maid to flee."

Then Christabel stretched forth her hand,  
And comforted fair Geraldine: 105  
"O well, bright dame! may you command  
The service of Sir Leoline;  
And gladly our stout chivalry  
Will he send forth and friends withal  
To guide and guard you safe and free 110  
Home to your noble father's hall."

She rose: and forth with steps they passed  
That strove to be, and were not, fast.  
Her gracious stars the lady blest,  
And thus spake on sweet Christabel: 115  
"All our household are at rest,  
The hall as silent as the cell;  
Sir Leoline is weak in health,  
And may not well awakened be,  
But we will move as if in stealth, 120  
And I beseech your courtesy,  
This night, to share your couch with me."

They crossed the moat, and Christabel  
Took the key that fitted well;  
A little door she opened straight, 125  
All in the middle of the gate;  
The gate that was ironed within and without,  
Where an army in battle array had marched out.  
The lady sank, belike through pain,  
And Christabel with might and main 130  
Lifted her up, a weary weight,  
Over the threshold of the gate:  
Then the lady rose again,  
And moved, as she were not in pain.

So free from danger, free from fear, 135  
They crossed the court: right glad they were.  
And Christabel devoutly cried  
To the lady by her side,  
"Praise we the Virgin all divine  
Who hath rescued thee from thy distress!" 140  
"Alas, alas!" said Geraldine,  
"I cannot speak for weariness."

So free from danger, free from fear,  
They crossed the court: right glad they were.

Outside her kennel, the mastiff old 145  
Lay fast asleep, in moonshine cold.  
The mastiff old did not awake,  
Yet she an angry moan did make!  
And what can ail the mastiff bitch?  
Never till now she uttered yell 150  
Beneath the eye of Christabel.  
Perhaps it is the owlet's scritch:  
For what can ail the mastiff bitch?

They passed the hall, that echoes still,  
Pass as lightly as you will! 155  
The brands were flat, the brands were dying,  
Amid their own white ashes lying;  
But when the lady passed, there came  
A tongue of light, a fit of flame;  
And Christabel saw the lady's eye, 160  
And nothing else saw she thereby,  
Save the boss of the shield of Sir Leoline tall,  
Which hung in a murky old niche in the wall.  
"O softly tread," said Christabel,  
"My father seldom sleepeth well." 165

Sweet Christabel her feet doth bare,  
And jealous of the listening air  
They steal their way from stair to stair,  
Now in glimmer, and now in gloom,  
And now they pass the Baron's room, 170  
As still as death, with stifled breath  
And now have reached her chamber door;  
And now doth Geraldine press down  
The rushes of the chamber floor.

The moon shines dim in the open air, 175  
And not a moonbeam enters here.  
But they without its light can see  
The chamber carved so curiously,  
Carved with figures strange and sweet,  
All made out of the carver's brain, 180  
For a lady's chamber meet:  
The lamp with twofold silver chain  
Is fastened to an angel's feet.

The silver lamp burns dead and dim;  
But Christabel the lamp will trim. 185  
She trimmed the lamp, and made it bright,  
And left it swinging to and fro,  
While Geraldine, in wretched plight,  
Sank down upon the floor below.

"O weary lady, Geraldine, 190  
I pray you, drink this cordial wine!  
It is a wine of virtuous powers;  
My mother made it of wild flowers."

"And will your mother pity me,  
Who am a maiden most forlorn? 195  
Christabel answered—"Woe is me!  
She died the hour that I was born.  
I have heard the gray-haired friar tell  
How on her death-bed she did say,  
That she should hear the castle-bell 200  
Strike twelve upon my wedding-day.

O mother dear! that thou wert here!"  
"I would," said Geraldine, "she were!"

But soon with altered voice, said she—  
"Off, wandering mother! Peak and pine! 205  
I have power to bid thee flee."  
Alas! what ails poor Geraldine?  
Why stares she with unsettled eye?  
Can she the bodiless dead espy?  
And why with hollow voice cries she, 210  
"Off, woman, off! this hour is mine—  
Though thou her guardian spirit be,  
Off, woman, off! 'tis given to me."

Then Christabel knelt by the lady's side,  
And raised to heaven her eyes so blue— 215  
"Alas!" said she, "this ghastly ride—  
Dear lady! it hath wildered you!"  
The lady wiped her moist cold brow,  
And faintly said, "'Tis over now!"

Again the wild-flower wine she drank: 220  
Her fair large eyes 'gan glitter bright,  
And from the floor whereon she sank,  
The lofty lady stood upright:  
She was most beautiful to see,  
Like a lady of a far countree. 225  
And thus the lofty lady spake—  
"All they who live in the upper sky,  
Do love you, holy Christabel!  
And you love them, and for their sake  
And for the good which me befell, 230  
Even I in my degree will try,  
Fair maiden, to requite you well.  
But now unrobe yourself; for I  
Must pray, ere yet in bed I lie."

Quoth Christabel, "So let it be!" 235  
And as the lady bade, did she.  
Her gentle limbs did she undress,  
And lay down in her loveliness.

But through her brain of weal and woe  
So many thoughts moved to and fro, 240  
That vain it were her lids to close;  
So half-way from the bed she rose,  
And on her elbow did recline  
To look at the Lady Geraldine.

Beneath the lamp the lady bowed, 245  
And slowly rolled her eyes around;  
Then drawing in her breath aloud,  
Like one that shuddered, she unbound  
The cincture from beneath her breast:  
Her silken robe, and inner vest, 250  
Dropt to her feet, and full in view,  
Behold! her bosom and half her side—  
A sight to dream of, not to tell!  
O shield her! shield sweet Christabel!

Yet Geraldine nor speaks nor stirs; 255  
Ah! what a stricken look was hers!  
Deep from within she seems half-way  
To lift some weight with sick assay,  
And eyes the maid and seeks delay;  
Then suddenly, as one defied, 260

Collects herself in scorn and pride,  
And lay down by the Maiden's side!—  
And in her arms the maid she took,  
    Ah wel-a-day!  
And with low voice and doleful look 265  
These words did say:  
"In the touch of this bosom there worketh a spell,  
Which is lord of thy utterance, Christabel!  
Thou knowest to-night, and wilt know to-morrow,  
This mark of my shame, this seal of my sorrow; 270  
    But vainly thou warrest,  
    For this is alone in  
    Thy power to declare,  
    That in the dim forest  
    Thou heard'st a low moaning, 275  
And found'st a bright lady, surpassingly fair;  
And didst bring her home with thee in love and in charity,  
To shield her and shelter her from the damp air."

## THE CONCLUSION TO PART THE FIRST

It was a lovely sight to see  
The lady Christabel, when she 280  
Was praying at the old oak tree.  
    Amid the jagged shadows  
    Of mossy leafless boughs,  
    Kneeling in the moonlight,  
    To make her gentle vows; 285  
Her slender palms together prest,  
Heaving sometimes on her breast;  
Her face resigned to bliss or bale—  
Her face, oh call it fair not pale,  
And both blue eyes more bright than clear, 290  
Each about to have a tear.

    With open eyes (ah woe is me!)  
Asleep, and dreaming fearfully,  
Fearfully dreaming, yet, I wis,  
Dreaming that alone, which is— 295  
O sorrow and shame! Can this be she,  
The lady, who knelt at the old oak tree?  
And lo! the worker of these harms,  
That holds the maiden in her arms,  
Seems to slumber still and mild, 300  
As a mother with her child.

    A star hath set, a star hath risen,  
O Geraldine! since arms of thine  
Have been the lovely lady's prison.  
O Geraldine! one hour was thine— 305  
Thou 'st had thy will! By tairn and rill,  
The night-birds all that hour were still.  
But now they are jubilant anew,  
From cliff and tower, tu—whoo! tu—whoo!  
Tu—whoo! tu—whoo! from wood and fell! 310

    And see! the lady Christabel  
Gathers herself from out her trance;  
Her limbs relax, her countenance  
Grows sad and soft; the smooth thin lids  
Close o'er her eyes; and tears she sheds— 315  
Large tears that leave the lashes bright!  
And oft the while she seems to smile  
As infants at a sudden light!

Yea, she doth smile, and she doth weep,  
Like a youthful hermitess, 320  
Beauteous in a wilderness,  
Who, praying always, prays in sleep.  
And, if she move unquietly,  
Perchance, 'tis but the blood so free  
Comes back and tingles in her feet. 325  
No doubt, she hath a vision sweet.  
What if her guardian spirit 'twere,  
What if she knew her mother near?  
But this she knows, in joys and woes,  
That saints will aid if men will call: 330  
For the blue sky bends over all!

## PART THE SECOND

"Each matin bell," the Baron saith,  
"Knells us back to a world of death."  
These words Sir Leoline first said,  
When he rose and found his lady dead: 335  
These words Sir Leoline will say  
Many a morn to his dying day!

And hence the custom and law began  
That still at dawn the sacristan,  
Who duly pulls the heavy bell, 340  
Five and forty beads must tell  
Between each stroke—a warning knell,  
Which not a soul can choose but hear  
From Bratha Head to Wyndermere.

Saith Bracy the bard, "So let it knell! 345  
And let the drowsy sacristan  
Still count as slowly as he can!  
There is no lack of such, I ween,  
As well fill up the space between.  
In Langdale Pike and Witch's Lair, 350  
And Dungeon-ghyll so foully rent,  
With ropes of rock and bells of air  
Three sinful sextons' ghosts are pent,  
Who all give back, one after t' other,  
The death-note to their living brother; 355  
And oft too, by the knell offended,  
Just as their one! two! three! is ended,  
The devil mocks the doleful tale  
With a merry peal from Borrowdale."

The air is still! through mist and cloud 360  
That merry peal comes ringing loud;  
And Geraldine shakes off her dread,  
And rises lightly from the bed;  
Puts on her silken vestments white,  
And tricks her hair in lovely plight, 365  
And nothing doubting of her spell  
Awakens the lady Christabel.  
"Sleep you, sweet lady Christabel?  
I trust that you have rested well."

And Christabel awoke and spied 370  
The same who lay down by her side—  
O rather say, the same whom she  
Raised up beneath the old oak tree!  
Nay, fairer yet! and yet more fair!  
For she belike hath drunken deep 375

Of all the blessedness of sleep!  
And while she spake, her looks, her air,  
Such gentle thankfulness declare,  
That (so it seemed) her girded vests  
Grew tight beneath her heaving breasts. 380  
"Sure I have sinn'd!" said Christabel,  
"Now heaven be praised if all be well!"  
And in low faltering tones, yet sweet,  
Did she the lofty lady greet  
With such perplexity of mind 385  
As dreams too lively leave behind.

So quickly she rose, and quickly arrayed  
Her maiden limbs, and having prayed  
That He, who on the cross did groan,  
Might wash away her sins unknown, 390  
She forthwith led fair Geraldine  
To meet her sire, Sir Leoline.

The lovely maid and the lady tall  
Are pacing both into the hall,  
And pacing on through page and groom, 395  
Enter the Baron's presence-room.

The Baron rose, and while he prest  
His gentle daughter to his breast,  
With cheerful wonder in his eyes  
The lady Geraldine espies, 400  
And gave such welcome to the same,  
As might beseem so bright a dame!

But when he heard the lady's tale,  
And when she told her father's name,  
Why waxed Sir Leoline so pale, 405  
Murmuring o'er the name again,  
Lord Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine?

Alas! they had been friends in youth;  
But whispering tongues can poison truth;  
And constancy lives in realms above; 410  
And life is thorny; and youth is vain;  
And to be wroth with one we love  
Doth work like madness in the brain.  
And thus it chanced, as I divine,  
With Roland and Sir Leoline. 415  
Each spake words of high disdain  
And insult to his heart's best brother:  
They parted—ne'er to meet again!  
But never either found another  
To free the hollow heart from paining— 420  
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,  
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;  
A dreary sea now flows between.  
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,  
Shall wholly do away, I ween, 425  
The marks of that which once hath been.

Sir Leoline, a moment's space,  
Stood gazing on the damsel's face:  
And the youthful Lord of Tryermaine  
Came back upon his heart again. 430

O then the Baron forgot his age,  
His noble heart swelled high with rage;  
He swore by the wounds in Jesu's side  
He would proclaim it far and wide,

With trump and solemn heraldry, 435  
That they, who thus had wronged the dame  
Were base as spotted infamy!  
"And if they dare deny the same,  
My herald shall appoint a week,  
And let the recreant traitors seek 440  
My tourney court—that there and then  
I may dislodge their reptile souls  
From the bodies and forms of men!"  
He spake: his eye in lightning rolls!  
For the lady was ruthlessly seized; and he kenned 445  
In the beautiful lady the child of his friend!

And now the tears were on his face,  
And fondly in his arms he took  
Fair Geraldine, who met the embrace,  
Prolonging it with joyous look. 450  
Which when she viewed, a vision fell  
Upon the soul of Christabel,  
The vision of fear, the touch and pain!  
She shrunk and shuddered, and saw again—  
(Ah, woe is me! Was it for thee, 455  
Thou gentle maid! such sights to see?)

Again she saw that bosom old,  
Again she felt that bosom cold,  
And drew in her breath with a hissing sound:  
Whereat the Knight turned wildly round, 460  
And nothing saw, but his own sweet maid  
With eyes upraised, as one that prayed.

The touch, the sight, had passed away,  
And in its stead that vision blest,  
Which comforted her after-rest, 465  
While in the lady's arms she lay,  
Had put a rapture in her breast,  
And on her lips and o'er her eyes  
Spread smiles like light!

With new surprise,  
"What ails then my beloved child?" 470  
The Baron said—His daughter mild  
Made answer, "All will yet be well!"  
I ween, she had no power to tell  
Aught else: so mighty was the spell.

Yet he, who saw this Geraldine, 475  
Had deemed her sure a thing divine.  
Such sorrow with such grace she blended,  
As if she feared she had offended  
Sweet Christabel, that gentle maid!  
And with such lowly tones she prayed 480  
She might be sent without delay  
Home to her father's mansion.

"Nay!  
Nay, by my soul!" said Leoline.  
"Ho! Bracy the bard, the charge be thine!  
Go thou, with music sweet and loud, 485  
And take two steeds with trappings proud,  
And take the youth whom thou lov'st best  
To bear thy harp, and learn thy song,  
And clothe you both in solemn vest,  
And over the mountains haste along, 490  
Lest wandering folk, that are abroad,  
Detain you on the valley road.

"And when he has crossed the Irthing flood,

My merry bard! he hastes, he hastes  
Up Knorren Moor, through Halegarth Wood, 495  
And reaches soon that castle good  
Which stands and threatens Scotland's wastes.

"Bard Bracy! bard Bracy! your horses are fleet,  
Ye must ride up the hall, your music so sweet,  
More loud than your horses' echoing feet! 500  
And loud and loud to Lord Roland call,  
'Thy daughter is safe in Langdale hall!  
Thy beautiful daughter is safe and free—  
Sir Leoline greets thee thus through me.  
He bids thee come without delay 505  
With all thy numerous array  
And take thy lovely daughter home:  
And he will meet thee on the way  
With all his numerous array  
White with their panting palfreys' foam': 510  
And, by mine honour! I will say,  
That I repent me of the day  
When I spake words of fierce disdain  
To Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine!—  
—For since that evil hour hath flown, 515  
Many a summer's sun hath shone;  
Yet ne'er found I a friend again  
Like Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine."

The lady fell, and clasped his knees,  
Her face upraised, her eyes o'erflowing; 520  
And Bracy replied, with faltering voice,  
His gracious hail on all bestowing;  
"Thy words, thou sire of Christabel,  
Are sweeter than my harp can tell;  
Yet might I gain a boon of thee, 525  
This day my journey should not be,  
So strange a dream hath come to me;  
That I had vowed with music loud  
To clear yon wood from thing unblest,  
Warned by a vision in my rest! 530  
For in my sleep I saw that dove,  
That gentle bird, whom thou dost love,  
And call'st by thy own daughter's name—  
Sir Leoline! I saw the same,  
Fluttering, and uttering fearful moan, 535  
Among the green herbs in the forest alone.  
Which when I saw and when I heard,  
I wondered what might ail the bird;  
For nothing near it could I see,  
Save the grass and green herbs underneath the old tree. 540

"And in my dream, methought, I went  
To search out what might there be found;  
And what the sweet bird's trouble meant,  
That thus lay fluttering on the ground.  
I went and peered, and could descry 545  
No cause for her distressful cry;  
But yet for her dear lady's sake  
I stooped, methought, the dove to take,  
When lo! I saw a bright green snake  
Coiled around its wings and neck. 550  
Green as the herbs on which it couched,  
Close by the dove's its head it crouched;  
And with the dove it heaves and stirs,  
Swelling its neck as she swelled hers!  
I woke; it was the midnight hour, 555



The clock was echoing in the tower;  
But though my slumber was gone by,  
This dream it would not pass away—  
It seems to live upon my eye!  
And thence I vowed this self-same day 560  
With music strong and saintly song  
To wander through the forest bare,  
Lest aught unholy loiter there."

Thus Bracy said: the Baron, the while,  
Half-listening heard him with a smile; 565  
Then turned to Lady Geraldine,  
His eyes made up of wonder and love;  
And said in courtly accents fine,  
"Sweet maid, Lord Roland's beauteous dove,  
With arms more strong than harp or song, 570  
Thy sire and I will crush the snake!"  
He kissed her forehead as he spake,  
And Geraldine in maiden wise  
Casting down her large bright eyes,  
With blushing cheek and courtesy fine 575  
She turned her from Sir Leoline;  
Softly gathering up her train,  
That o'er her right arm fell again;  
And folded her arms across her chest,  
And couched her head upon her breast, 580  
And looked askance at Christabel—  
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!

A snake's small eye blinks dull and shy,  
And the lady's eyes they shrunk in her head,  
Each shrunk up to a serpent's eye, 585  
And with somewhat of malice, and more of dread,  
At Christabel she looked askance!—  
One moment—and the sight was fled!  
But Christabel in dizzy trance  
Stumbling on the unsteady ground 590  
Shuddered aloud, with a hissing sound;  
And Geraldine again turned round,  
And like a thing, that sought relief,  
Full of wonder and full of grief,  
She rolled her large bright eyes divine 595  
Wildly on Sir Leoline.

The maid, alas! her thoughts are gone,  
She nothing sees—no sight but one!  
The maid, devoid of guile and sin,  
I know not how, in fearful wise, 600  
So deeply had she drunken in  
That look, those shrunken serpent eyes,  
That all her features were resigned  
To this sole image in her mind:  
And passively did imitate 605  
That look of dull and treacherous hate!  
And thus she stood, in dizzy trance,  
Still picturing that look askance  
With forced unconscious sympathy  
Full before her father's view— 610  
As far as such a look could be  
In eyes so innocent and blue!

And when the trance was o'er, the maid  
Paused awhile, and inly prayed:  
Then falling at the Baron's feet, 615  
"By my mother's soul, do I entreat

That thou this woman send away!"  
She said: and more she could not say:  
For what she knew she could not tell,  
O'er-mastered by the mighty spell. 620

Why is thy cheek so wan and wild,  
Sir Leoline? Thy only child  
Lies at thy feet, thy joy, thy pride,  
So fair, so innocent, so mild;  
The same, for whom thy lady died! 625  
O, by the pangs of her dear mother  
Think thou no evil of thy child!  
For her, and thee, and for no other,  
She prayed the moment ere she died:  
Prayed that the babe for whom she died, 630  
Might prove her dear lord's joy and pride!  
That prayer her deadly pangs beguiled,  
Sir Leoline!  
And wouldst thou wrong thy only child,  
Her child and thine? 635

Within the Baron's heart and brain  
If thoughts, like these, had any share,  
They only swelled his rage and pain,  
And did but work confusion there.

His heart was cleft with pain and rage, 640  
His cheeks they quivered, his eyes were wild,  
Dishonoured thus in his old age;  
Dishonour'd by his only child,  
And all his hospitality  
To the insulted daughter of his friend 645  
By more than woman's jealousy  
Brought thus to a disgraceful end—  
He rolled his eye with stern regard  
Upon the gentle minstrel bard,  
And said in tones abrupt, austere— 650  
"Why, Bracy! dost thou loiter here?  
I bade thee hence!" The bard obeyed;  
And turning from his own sweet maid,  
The aged knight, Sir Leoline,  
Led forth the lady Geraldine! 655

## THE CONCLUSION TO PART THE SECOND

A little child, a limber elf,  
Singing, dancing to itself,  
A fairy thing with red round cheeks,  
That always finds, and never seeks,  
Makes such a vision to the sight 660  
As fills a father's eyes with light;  
And pleasures flow in so thick and fast  
Upon his heart, that he at last  
Must needs express his love's excess  
With words of unmeant bitterness. 665  
Perhaps 'tis pretty to force together  
Thoughts so all unlike each other;  
To mutter and mock a broken charm,  
To dally with wrong that does no harm.  
Perhaps 'tis tender too and pretty 670  
At each wild word to feel within  
A sweet recoil of love and pity.  
And what, if in a world of sin  
(O sorrow and shame should this be true!)

Such giddiness of heart and brain 675  
Comes seldom save from rage and pain,  
So talks as it's most used to do.

## KUBLA KHAN

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan  
A stately pleasure-dome decree:  
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran  
Through caverns measureless to man  
Down to a sunless sea. 5  
So twice five miles of fertile ground  
With walls and towers were girdled round:  
And here were gardens bright with sinuous rills,  
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;  
And here were forests ancient as the hills, 10  
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted  
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!  
A savage place! as holy and enchanted  
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted 15  
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!  
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,  
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,  
A mighty fountain momentarily was forced:  
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst 20  
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,  
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:  
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever  
It flung up momentarily the sacred river.  
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion 25  
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,  
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,  
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:  
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far  
Ancestral voices prophesying war! 30

The shadow of the dome of pleasure  
Floated midway on the waves;  
Where was heard the mingled measure  
From the fountain and the caves.  
It was a miracle of rare device, 35  
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

A damsel with a dulcimer  
In a vision once I saw:  
It was an Abyssinian maid,  
And on her dulcimer she played, 40  
Singing of Mount Abora.  
Could I revive within me.  
Her symphony and song,  
To such a deep delight 'twould win me,  
That with music loud and long, 45  
I would build that dome in air,  
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!  
And all who heard should see them there,  
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!  
His flashing eyes, his floating hair! 50  
Weave a circle round him thrice,

And close your eyes with holy dread,  
For he on honey-dew hath fed,  
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

## LOVE

All thoughts, all passions, all delights,  
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,  
All are but ministers of Love,  
And feed his sacred flame.

Oft in my waking dreams do I  
Live o'er again that happy hour,  
When midway on the mount I lay,  
Beside the ruined tower.

The moonshine, stealing o'er the scene,  
Had blended with the lights of eve; 10  
And she was there, my hope, my joy,  
My own dear Genevieve!

She leant against the armed man,  
The statue of the armed knight;  
She stood and listened to my lay, 15  
Amid the lingering light.

Few sorrows hath she of her own.  
My hope! my joy! my Genevieve!  
She loves me best, whene'er I sing  
The songs that make her grieve. 20

I played a soft and doleful air,  
I sang an old and moving story—  
An old rude song, that suited well  
That ruin wild and hoary.

She listened with a flitting blush, 25  
With downcast eyes and modest grace;  
For well she knew, I could not choose  
But gaze upon her face.

I told her of the Knight that wore  
Upon his shield a burning brand; 30  
And that for ten long years he wooed  
The Lady of the Land.

I told her how he pined: and ah!  
The deep, the low, the pleading tone  
With which I sang another's love, 35  
Interpreted my own.

She listened with a flitting blush,  
With downcast eyes, and modest grace  
And she forgave me, that I gazed  
Too fondly on her face! 40

But when I told the cruel scorn  
That crazed that bold and lovely Knight,  
And that he crossed the mountain-woods,  
Nor rested day nor night;

That sometimes from the savage den, 45

And sometimes from the darksome shade,  
And sometimes starting up at once  
In green and sunny glade,—

There came and looked him in the face  
An angel beautiful and bright; 50  
And that he knew it was a Fiend,  
This miserable Knight!

And that unknowing what he did,  
He leaped amid a murderous band,  
And saved from outrage worse than death 55  
The Lady of the Land!

And how she wept, and clasped his knees;  
And how she tended him in vain—  
And ever strove to expiate  
The scorn that crazed his brain;— 60

And that she nursed him in a cave;  
And how his madness went away,  
When on the yellow forest-leaves  
A dying man he lay;—

His dying words—but when I reached 65  
That tenderest strain of all the ditty,  
My faltering voice and pausing harp  
Disturbed her soul with pity!

All impulses of soul and sense  
Had thrilled my guileless Genevieve; 70  
The music and the doleful tale,  
The rich and balmy eve;

And hopes, and fears that kindle hope,  
An undistinguishable throng,  
And gentle wishes long subdued, 75  
Subdued and cherished long!

She wept with pity and delight,  
She blushed with love, and virgin-shame;  
And like the murmur of a dream,  
I heard her breathe my name. 80

Her bosom heaved—she stepped aside,  
As conscious of my look she stepped—  
Then suddenly, with timorous eye  
She fled to me and wept.

She half enclosed me with her arms, 85  
She pressed me with a meek embrace;  
And bending back her head, looked up,  
And gazed upon my face.

'Twas partly love, and partly fear,  
And partly 'twas a bashful art, 90  
That I might rather feel, than see,  
The swelling of her heart.

I calmed her fears, and she was calm,  
And told her love with virgin pride;  
And so I won my Genevieve, 95  
My bright and beauteous Bride.

# FRANCE: AN ODE

## I

Ye Clouds! that far above me float and pause,  
Whose pathless march no mortal may control!  
Ye Ocean-Waves! that, wheresoe'er ye roll,  
Yield homage only to eternal laws!  
Ye Woods! that listen to the night-birds' singing, 5  
Midway the smooth and perilous slope reclined,  
Save when your own imperious branches swinging,  
Have made a solemn music of the wind!  
Where, like a man beloved of God,  
Through glooms, which never woodman trod, 10  
How oft, pursuing fancies holy,  
My moonlight way o'er flowering weeds I wound,  
Inspired, beyond the guess of folly,  
By each rude shape and wild unconquerable sound!  
O ye loud Waves! and O ye Forests high! 15  
And O ye Clouds that far above me soared!  
Thou rising Sun! thou blue rejoicing Sky!  
Yea, every thing that is and will be free!  
Bear witness for me, wheresoe'er ye be,  
With what deep worship I have still adored 20  
The spirit of divinest Liberty.

## II

When France in wrath her giant-limbs upreared,  
And with that oath, which smote air, earth, and sea,  
Stamped her strong foot and said she would be free,  
Bear witness for me, how I hoped and feared! 25

With what a joy my lofty gratulation  
Unawed I sang, amid a slavish band:  
And when to whelm the disenchanted nation,  
Like fiends embattled by a wizard's wand,  
The Monarchs marched in evil day, 30  
And Britain joined the dire array;  
Though dear her shores and circling ocean,  
Though many friendships, many youthful loves  
Had swoln the patriot emotion  
And flung a magic light o'er all her hills and groves; 35  
Yet still my voice, unaltered, sang defeat  
To all that braved the tyrant-quelling lance,  
And shame too long delayed and vain retreat!  
For ne'er, O Liberty! with partial aim  
I dimmed thy light or damped thy holy flame; 40  
But blessed the paeans of delivered France,  
And hung my head and wept at Britain's name.

## III

"And what," I said, "though Blasphemy's loud scream  
With that sweet music of deliverance strove!  
Though all the fierce and drunken passions wove 45  
A dance more wild than e'er was maniac's dream!  
Ye storms, that round the dawning east assembled,  
The Sun was rising, though ye hid his light!"  
And when, to soothe my soul, that hoped and trembled,

The dissonance ceased, and all seemed calm and bright; 50  
When France her front deep-scarred and gory  
Concealed with clustering wreaths of glory;  
When, insupportably advancing,  
Her arm made mockery of the warrior's ramp;  
While timid looks of fury glancing, 55  
Domestic treason, crushed beneath her fatal stamp,  
Writhed like a wounded dragon in his gore;  
Then I reproached my fears that would not flee;  
"And soon," I said, "shall Wisdom teach her lore  
In the low huts of them that toil and groan! 60  
And, conquering by her happiness alone,  
Shall France compel the nations to be free,  
Till Love and Joy look round, and call the Earth their own."

#### IV

Forgive me, Freedom! O forgive those dreams!  
I hear thy voice, I hear thy loud lament, 65  
From bleak Helvetia's icy caverns sent—  
I hear thy groans upon her blood-stained streams!  
Heroes, that for your peaceful country perished,  
And ye that, fleeing, spot your mountain-snows  
With bleeding wounds; forgive me, that I cherished 70  
One thought that ever blessed your cruel foes!  
To scatter rage and traitorous guilt  
Where Peace her jealous home had built;  
A patriot-race to disinherit  
Of all that made their stormy wilds so dear; 75  
And with inexpiable spirit  
To taint the bloodless freedom of the mountaineer—  
O France, that mockest Heaven, adulterous, blind,  
And patriot only in pernicious toils!  
Are these thy boasts, Champion of human kind? 80  
To mix with Kings in the low lust of sway,  
Tell in the hunt, and share the murderous prey;  
To insult the shrine of Liberty with spoils  
From freemen torn; to tempt and to betray?

#### V

The Sensual and the Dark rebel in vain, 85  
Slaves by their own compulsion! In mad game  
They burst their manacles and wear the name  
Of Freedom, graven on a heavier chain!  
O Liberty! with profitless endeavour  
Have I pursued thee, many a weary hour; 90  
But thou nor swell'st the victor's strain, nor ever  
Didst breathe thy soul in forms of human power.  
  
Alike from all, howe'er they praise thee,  
(Nor prayer, nor boastful name delays thee)  
Alike from Priestcraft's harpy minions, 95  
And factious Blasphemy's obscener slaves,  
Thou speedest on thy subtle pinions,  
The guide of homeless winds, and playmate of the waves!  
And there I felt thee!—on that sea-cliff's verge,  
Whose pines, scarce travelled by the breeze above, 100  
Had made one murmur with the distant surge!  
Yes, while I stood and gazed, my temples bare,  
And shot my being through earth, sea and air,  
Possessing all things with intensest love,

## DEJECTION: AN ODE

WRITTEN APRIL 4, 1802

Late, late yestreen I saw the new Moon,  
With the old Moon in her arms;  
And I fear, I fear, my Master dear!  
We shall have a deadly storm.

*Ballad of Sir Patrick Spence.*

### I

Well! If the Bard was weather-wise, who made  
The grand old ballad of Sir Patrick Spence,  
This night, so tranquil now, will not go hence  
Unroused by winds, that ply a busier trade  
Than those which mould yon cloud in lazy flakes, 5  
Or the dull sobbing draft, that moans and rakes  
Upon the strings of this Aeolian lute,  
Which better far were mute.  
For lo! the New-moon winter-bright!  
And overspread with phantom light, 10  
(With swimming phantom light o'erspread  
But rimmed and circled by a silver thread)  
I see the old Moon in her lap, foretelling  
The coming-on of rain and squally blast.  
And oh! that even now the gust were swelling, 15  
And the slant night-shower driving loud and fast!  
Those sounds which oft have raised me, whilst they awed,  
And sent my soul abroad,  
Might now perhaps their wonted impulse give,  
Might startle this dull pain, and make it move so and live! 20

### II

A grief without a pang, void, dark, and drear,  
A stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief,  
Which finds no natural outlet, no relief,  
In word, or sigh, or tear—  
O Lady! in this wan and heartless mood, 25  
To other thoughts by yonder throstle wooed,  
All this long eve, so balmy and serene,  
Have I been gazing on the western sky,  
And its peculiar tint of yellow green:  
And still I gaze—and with how blank an eye! 30  
And those thin clouds above, in flakes and bars,  
That give away their motion to the stars;  
Those stars, that glide behind them or between,  
Now sparkling, now bedimmed, but always seen:  
Yon crescent Moon, as fixed as if it grew 35  
In its own cloudless, starless lake of blue;  
I see them all so excellently fair,  
I see, not feel, how beautiful they are!



### III

My genial spirits fail;  
And what can these avail 40  
To lift the smothering weight from off my breast?  
It were a vain endeavour,  
Though I should gaze for ever  
On that green light that lingers in the west:  
I may not hope from outward forms to win 45  
The passion and the life, whose fountains are within.

### IV

O Lady! we receive but what we give,  
And in our life alone does Nature live:  
Ours is her wedding garment, ours her shroud!  
And would we aught behold, of higher worth. 50

Than that inanimate cold world allowed  
To the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd,  
Ah, from the soul itself must issue forth  
A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud  
Enveloping the Earth— 55  
And from the soul itself must there be sent  
A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,  
Of all sweet sounds the life and element!

### V

O pure of heart! thou need'st not ask of me  
What this strong music in the soul may be! 60  
What, and wherein it doth exist,  
This light, this glory, this fair luminous mist,  
This beautiful and beauty-making power.  
Joy, virtuous Lady! Joy that ne'er was given,  
Save to the pure, and in their purest hour, 65  
Life, and Life's effluence, cloud at once and shower,  
Joy, Lady! is the spirit and the power,  
Which wedding Nature to us gives in dower,  
A new Earth and new Heaven,  
Undreamt of by the sensual and the proud— 70  
Joy is the sweet voice, Joy the luminous cloud—  
We in ourselves rejoice!  
And thence flows all that charms our ear or sight,  
All melodies the echoes of that voice,  
All colours a suffusion from that light. 75

### VI

There was a time when, though my path was rough,  
This joy within me dallied with distress,  
And all misfortunes were but as the stuff  
Whence Fancy made me dreams of happiness:  
For hope grew round me, like the twining vine, 80  
And fruits, and foliage, not my own, seemed mine.

But now afflictions bow me down to earth:  
Nor care I that they rob me of my mirth;  
But oh! each visitation  
Suspends what nature gave me at my birth, 85  
My shaping spirit of Imagination.

For not to think of what I needs must feel,  
But to be still and patient, all I can;  
And haply by abstruse research to steal  
From my own nature all the natural man— 90  
This was my sole resource, my only plan:  
Till that which suits a part infects the whole,  
And now is almost grown the habit of my soul.

## VII

Hence, viper thoughts, that coil around my mind,  
Reality's dark dream! 95  
I turn from you, and listen to the wind,  
Which long has raved unnoticed. What a scream  
Of agony by torture lengthened out  
That lute sent forth! Thou Wind, that rav'st without,  
Bare crag, or mountain-tairn, or blasted tree, 100  
Or pine-grove whither woodman never clomb,  
Or lonely house, long held the witches' home,  
Methinks were fitter instruments for thee,  
Mad Lutanist! who in this month of showers,  
Of dark-brown gardens, and of peeping flowers, 105  
Mak'st Devils' yule, with worse than wintry song,  
The blossoms, buds, and timorous leaves among.  
Thou Actor, perfect in all tragic sounds!  
Thou mighty Poet, even to frenzy bold!  
What tell'st thou now about? 110  
'Tis of the rushing of an host in rout,  
With groans of trampled men, with smarting wounds—  
At once they groan with pain, and shudder with the cold!

But hush! there is a pause of deepest silence!  
And all that noise, as of a rushing crowd, 115  
With groans, and tremulous shudderings—all is over—  
It tells another tale, with sounds less deep and loud!  
A tale of less affright,  
And tempered with delight,  
As Otway's self had framed the tender lay, 120  
'Tis of a little child  
Upon a lonesome wild,  
Not far from home, but she hath lost her way:  
And now moans low in bitter grief and fear,  
And now screams loud, and hopes to make her mother hear. 125

## VIII

'Tis midnight, but small thoughts have I of sleep:  
Full seldom may my friend such vigils keep!  
Visit her, gentle Sleep! with wings of healing,  
And may this storm be but a mountain-birth,  
May all the stars hang bright above her dwelling, 130  
Silent as though they watched the sleeping Earth!  
With light heart may she rise,  
Gay fancy, cheerful eyes,  
Joy lift her spirit, joy attune her voice;  
To her may all things live, from pole to pole, 135  
Their life the eddying of her living soul!  
O simple spirit, guided from above,  
Dear Lady! friend devoutest of my choice,  
Thus mayest thou ever, evermore rejoice.

## YOUTH AND AGE

Verse, a breeze mid blossoms straying,  
Where Hope clung feeding, like a bee—  
Both were mine! Life went a-maying  
With Nature, Hope, and Poesy,  
When I was young! 5

*When* I was young?—Ah, woful *When*!  
Ah! for the change 'twixt Now and Then!  
This breathing house not built with hands,  
This body that does me grievous wrong,  
O'er aery cliffs and glittering sands, 10  
How lightly *then* it flashed along:—  
Like those trim skiffs, unknown of yore,  
On winding lakes and rivers wide,  
That ask no aid of sail or oar,  
That fear no spite of wind or tide! 15  
Nought cared this body for wind or weather  
When Youth and I lived in 't together.

Flowers are lovely; Love is flower-like;  
Friendship is a sheltering tree;  
O! the joys, that came down shower-like, 20  
Of Friendship, Love, and Liberty,  
Ere I was old!

*Ere* I was old? Ah woful *Ere*,  
Which tells me Youth 's no longer here!  
O Youth! for years so many and sweet, 25  
'Tis known, that thou and I were one,  
I'll think it but a fond conceit—  
It cannot be that thou art gone!  
Thy vesper-bell hath not yet tolled:—  
And thou wert aye a masker bold! 30  
What strange disguise hast now put on,  
To *make believe*, that thou art gone?  
I see these locks in silvery slips,  
This drooping gait, this altered size:  
But Spring-tide blossoms on thy lips, 35  
And tears take sunshine from thine eyes!  
Life is but thought: so think I will  
That Youth and I are house-mates still.

Dew-drops are the gems of morning,  
But the tears of mournful eve! 40  
Where no hope is, life 's a warning  
That only serves to make us grieve,  
When we are old:  
That only serves to make us grieve  
With oft and tedious taking-leave, 45  
Like some poor nigh-related guest,  
That may not rudely be dismiss;  
Yet hath outstayed his welcome while,  
And tells the jest without the smile.

## WORK WITHOUT HOPE

All Nature seems at work. Slugs leave their lair—  
The bees are stirring—birds are on the wing—  
And Winter slumbering in the open air,  
Wears on his smiling face a dream of Spring!  
And I the while, the sole unbusy thing, 5  
Nor honey make, nor pair, nor build, nor sing.

Yet well I ken the banks where amaranths blow,  
Have traced the fount whence streams of nectar flow.  
Bloom, O ye amaranths! bloom for whom ye may,  
For me ye bloom not! Glide, rich streams, away! 10  
With lips unbrightened, wreathless brow, I stroll:  
And would you learn the spells that drowse my soul?  
Work without Hope draws nectar in a sieve,  
And Hope without an object cannot live.

## EPITAPH

Stop, Christian passer-by!—Stop, child of God,  
And read with gentle breast. Beneath this sod  
A poet lies, or that which once seemed he.—  
O, lift one thought in prayer for S.T.C.;  
That he who many a year with toil of breath 5  
Found death in life, may here find life in death!  
Mercy for praise—to be forgiven for fame  
He ask'd, and hoped, through Christ.  
Do thou the same!

## NOTES

### THE ANCIENT MARINER

The Latin motto is condensed, by omission, from about a page of Thomas Burnet's *Archaeologiae Philosophicae: sive Doctrina Antiqua de Rerum Originibus*, published in London in 1692. Burnet was Master of Charterhouse from 1685 till his death in 1715, and enjoyed considerable reputation as a man of curious learning. In the *Archaeologiae* he professed to reconcile a former work of his on the origins of the world with the account given in Genesis. The quotation is from chapter VII. of book I., "De Hebraeis, eorumque Cabalâ," and may be translated thus: "I easily believe that the invisible natures in the universe are more in number than the visible. But who shall tell us all the kinds of them? the ranks and relationships, the peculiar qualities and gifts of each? what they do? where they dwell? Man's wit has ever been circling about the knowledge of these things, but has never attained to it. Yet in the meanwhile I will not deny that it is profitable to contemplate from time to time in the mind, as in a picture, the idea of a larger and better world; lest the mind, becoming wonted to the little things of everyday life, grow narrow and settle down altogether to mean businesses. At the same time, however, we must watch for the truth, and observe method, so as to distinguish the certain from the uncertain, day from night."

Instead of this motto the first edition had an Argument prefixed, as follows:

"How a Ship having passed the Line was driven by storms to the cold Country towards the South Pole; and how from thence she made her course to the tropical Latitude of the Great Pacific Ocean; and of the strange things that befell; and in what manner the Ancyent Marinere came back to his own Country."

This was somewhat enlarged in the second edition (1800), and dropped thereafter.

\*Page 3\*, LINE 12—\*eftsoons\*. Anglo-Saxon *eftsona* (*eft* afterwards, again, + *sona* soon), reënforced by the adverbial genitive ending *-s*. Coleridge found the word in Spenser and the old ballads.

4, 23—\*kirk\*. The Scotch and Northern English form of "church." The old ballads had been preserved chiefly in the North; hence this Northern form came to be looked on as the proper word for church in the ballad style.

41, marginal gloss—\*driven\*. All editions down to Campbell's had "drawn;" but this he believes to have been a misprint, since the narrative seems to require "driven."

5, 55—\*clifts\*. This word arose from a confusion of "cliff," a precipice, and "cleft," a fissure. It was "exceedingly common in the 16th-18th cent.," according to the New English Dict., which gives examples from Captain John Smith, Marlowe, and Defoe.

62—\*swound\*. An archaic form of "swoon," found in Elizabethan English.

64—\*thorough\*. "Through" and "thorough" are originally the same word, and in Shakespeare's time both forms were used for the preposition. Cf. Puck's song in "Midsummer Night's Dream," "Thorough bush, thorough briar."

67—\*eat\*. This form (pronounced *et*) is still in use in England and New England for the past tense of the verb, though in America the form "ate" is now preferred. "Eat" as past participle, however, was archaic or rude even in Coleridge's time.

76—\*vespers\*. Properly a liturgical term, meaning the daily evening service in church; then in a more general way "evening." The Century Dict. gives no examples of its use as a nautical term. Probably Coleridge used it to give a suggestion of ante-Reformation times. The more familiar word for the evening service in the English Church is "even-song," but Coleridge in line 595 prefers "the little vesper bell" for its suggestion of medievalism.

6, 97—\*like God's own head\*. The comparison is the converse of that in the Bible, Matthew xvii., 2, Revelations I., 16, where the countenance of Christ glorified is said to shine "as the sun" (Sykes).

98—\*uprist\*. This word was used in Middle English as a noun, and regularly as the 3d pers. sing. pres. ind. of the verb "uprise." In "The Reves Tale" line 329, however, Chaucer uses, it in a context of past tenses, as Coleridge does here, as if it were a weak preterit; and Chaucer uses "rist up" in the same way several times (Sykes).

104—\*The furrow followed free\*. This was changed in "Sibylline Leaves" to "The furrow streamed off free," because, Coleridge tells us, "from the ship itself the *Wake* appears like a brook flowing off from the stern." In the case of modern steamboats at least it would be more correct to say that the wake, as seen from the stern of the boat, looks like a brook *following* the boat. The original reading was restored in the editions of 1828 and 1829.

7, 123—\*The very deep did rot\*, etc. The ship becalmed in tropic seas, and the slimy things engendered there, were a vision in Coleridge's mind before "The Ancient Mariner" was thought of. In the lines contributed to Southey's "Joan of Arc" in 1796 (published, with additions, as "The Destiny of Nations" in "Sibylline Leaves"), in an allegoric passage on Chaos and Love, he wrote:

"As what time, after long and pestful calms,  
With slimy shapes and miscreated life  
Poisoning the vast Pacific, the fresh breeze  
Wakens the merchant sail uprising."

The same subject had occupied Wordsworth's imagination before he and Coleridge came together at Stowey; see Wordsworth's "The Borderers," Act iv.

125—\*slimy things\*. Strange creatures, the spawn of the rotting sea, for which the Mariner has no name.

131, marginal gloss—\*Josephus, Michael Psellus\*. The only "learned Jew, Josephus," that we know of is the historian of that name who lived in the first century of our era; but little has been found in his works to justify this reference. The "Platonic Constantinopolitan, Michael Psellus," was a Byzantine teacher of the eleventh century who wrote a dialogue in which demons are classified according to the element in which they live (Cooper; Sykes).

8, 152—\*I wist\*. "Wist" is properly the past tense of an old verb "wit," to know. But Coleridge seems to use "I wist" here as equivalent to "I wis" (see "Christabel," l. 92), which is a form of "iwis," an adverb meaning "certainly."

157—\*with throats unslaked\*, etc. A remarkable instance of onomatopoeia.

9, 164—\*gramercy\*. An exclamation, meaning originally "much thanks" (Old French *grand merci*), and so used by Shakespeare ("Merchant of Venice" II., 2, 128, "Richard III" III., 2, 108). But in the ballads it is often a mere exclamation of wonder and surprise, and so Coleridge uses it here,—\*grin\*. Coleridge says ("Table Talk" May 31, 1830): "I took the thought of 'grinning for joy' from my companion's remark to me, when we had climbed to the top of Plinlimmon [in Wales, in the summer of 1794], and were nearly dead with thirst. We could not speak from the constriction, till we found a little puddle under a stone. He said to me: 'You grinned like an idiot.' He had done the same." To "grin" was originally to snarl and show the teeth as animals do when angry. "They go to and fro in the evening: they grin like a dog, and run about through the city," Ps. LIX., 6, Prayer-Book Version, where the King James Version has "make a noise like a dog." Hence idiots, stupid people, foolish people, all who are or who demean themselves below the dignity of man, *grin* rather than smile; and so the Mariner's companions, their muscles stiffened by drought, could show their gladness only by the contortions of a grin, not by a natural smile of joy.

169—\*Without a breeze, without a tide\*. The Phantom Ship is a wide-spread sailor's superstition that has been often used in the romantic literature of the nineteenth century. See Scott's "Rokeby," Canto II. xi; Marryat's "Phantom Ship;" Poe's "MS. Found in a Bottle;" and Longfellow's "Ballad of Carmilhan" (in "Tales of a Wayside Inn," Second Day). It is seen in storms, driving by with all sails set, and is generally held to be an omen of disaster. Coleridge has shaped the legend to his own purposes. The ship appears in a calm, not in a storm, and sailing without, rather than against, wind and tide; and instead of a crew of dead men it carries only Death and Life-in-Death. Possibly he was acquainted with a form of the legend found in Bechstein's *Deutsches Sagenbuch* (pointed out by Dr. Sykes), in which "Falkenberg, for murder of his brother, is condemned to sail a spectral bark, attended only by his good and his evil spirit, who play dice for his soul."

185—\*Are those her ribs\*, etc. Instead of this stanza the first edition had these two:

"Are those *her* naked ribs, which fleck'd  
The sun that did behind them peer?  
And are those two all, all the crew,  
That woman and her fleshless Pheere?"

"His bones are black with many a crack,  
All black and bare, I ween;  
Jet-black and bare, save where with rust  
Of mouldy damps and charnel crust  
They're patch'd with purple and green"

And again after line 198 the first edition had this stanza:

"A gust of wind sterte up behind  
And whistled thro' his bones;  
Thro' the holes of his eyes and the hole of his mouth  
Half-whistles and half-groans."

But this crude grotesquerie of horror—quite in the taste of that day, the day of "Monk" Lewis and Mrs. Radcliffe—Coleridge's finer poetical judgment soon rejected.

190—\*Her lips were red\*, etc. Life-in-Death—who wins the Mariner, while Death wins his shipmates—is conceived as a witch, something after the fashion of Geraldine in "Christabel" or Duessa in "The Faerie Queene," but wilder, stranger than either; a thing of startling and evil beauty. Spenser's pages of description, however, give no such vivid image of loathsome loveliness as do the first three lines of this stanza. "Her skin was as white as leprosy" is a feat in suggestion.

10, 199, marginal gloss—\*within the courts of the Sun\*. Between the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn.

210—\*with one bright star Within the nether tip\*. An interesting case of poetical illusion. No one, of course, ever saw a star *within* the tip of the horned moon. Yet a good many readers, until reminded of their astronomy, think they have seen this phenomenon. Coleridge apparently knew that the human mind would receive it as experience. The phrase is no slip on his part; the earlier editions had instead "almost atween the tips," which is astronomically justifiable, but in "Sibylline Leaves" and later he wrote it as in the text.

222—\*And every soul, it passed me by, Like the whizz of my cross-bow!\* It was an ancient belief, imaginatively revived by romantic poets, that when a person died his soul could be seen, or heard, or

both, as it left the body, Cf. Keats's "Eve of St. Agnes," first stanza; Rossetti's "Sister Helen;" and Kipling's "Danny Deever."

11, 226—\*And thou art long\*, etc. "For the last two lines of this stanza," runs. Coleridge's note to the passage in "Sibylline Leaves," "I am indebted to Mr. Wordsworth. It was on a delightful walk from Nether Stowey to Dulverton, with him and his sister, in the autumn of 1797, that this poem was planned, and in part composed." Wordsworth in later years declared that he contributed also lines 13-16, "and four or five lines more in different parts of the poem, which I could not now point out."

245—\*or ever\*. "Or" here is not the adversative conjunction but an entirely different word, an archaic variant of "ere," meaning "before."

250—\*For the sky and the sea\*, etc. Another instance of the sound fitting the sense. The rocking rhythm of the line is the rhythm of his fevered pulse. The poem is full of this quality.

13, 297—\*silly\*. This word meant in Old English timely (from *soel*, time, occasion) hence fortunate, blessed. From this was developed, under the influence of medieval religious teaching, the meaning innocent, harmless, simple; and from this again our modern meaning, foolish, simple in a derogatory sense. Chaucer has the word in all these meanings, and also in another, a modification of the second—wretched, pitiable. Another shade of the same meaning appears in Spenser's "silly bark," i.e. *frail* ship, and in Burns's "To a Mouse":

"Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin!  
Its silly wa's the win's are strewin'!"

"The epithet may be due either to the gush of love that has filled the Mariner's heart, or to his noticing the buckets, long useless, frail, now filled with water" (Sykes); very likely to both together.

14, 314—\*fire-flags\*. The notion of the "fire-flags" "hurried about" was probably suggested to Coleridge by the description of the Northern Lights (*aurora borealis*) in Hearne's "Journey ... to the Northern Ocean," a book printed in 1795 and known to both Wordsworth and Coleridge before 1798. Hearne says: "I can positively affirm that in still nights I have frequently heard them make a rustling and crackling noise, like the waving of a large flag in a fresh gale of wind." See also Wordsworth's "Complaint of a Forsaken Indian Woman" (Cooper).

15, 358—\*Sometimes a-dropping\*, etc. The Mariner's sin was that in wanton cruelty he took the life of a friendly fellow-creature; his punishment is to live with dead men round him and the dead bird on his breast, in such solitude that "God himself scarce seemed there to be," until he learns to feel the *sacredness of life* even in the water-snakes, the "slimy things" that coil in the rotting sea; and the stages of his penance are marked by suggestions of his return to the privilege of human fellowship. The angels' music is like the song of the skylark, the sails ripple like a leaf-hidden brook—recollections of his happy boyhood in England; and finally comes the actual land breeze, and he is in his "own cuntry." Observe the marginal gloss to line 442.

17, 407—\*honey-dew\*. See note on "Kubla Khan," line 53.

416—\*His great bright eye\*, etc. Dorothy Wordsworth in her Journal, February 27, 1798, describes the look of the sea by moonlight, "big and white, swelled to the very shores, but round and high in the middle."

20, 512—\*shrieve\*. To hear confession and pronounce absolution, one of the duties of the priesthood in the Catholic church. The word is more often spelled *shrive*. *Shrift* is the abstract noun derived from it.

21, 523—\*skiff-boat\*. A pleonastic compound; a skiff is a boat. Coleridge is fond of such formations. See for example II. 41, 77, 472 of this poem and II. 46, 649 of "Christabel" (Cooper).

535—\*ivy-tod\*. A clump or bush of ivy. Cf. Spenser's "Shepherds Calender," March, II. 67 ff.:

"At length within an Yvie todde  
(There shrouded was the little God)  
I heard a busie bustling."

23, 607—\*While each to his great Father bends\*, etc. Cf. the 148th Psalm (Prayer-Book Version) v. 12: "Young men and maidens, old men and children, praise the name of the Lord: for his name only is excellent, and his praise above heaven and earth."

## CHRISTABEL

25,6-7—This couplet ran as follows in the first edition:

"Sir Leoline, the Baron rich,  
Hath a toothless mastiff bitch."

In the editions of 1828 and 1829 Coleridge changed it to the form printed in the text; "but *bitch* has been restored in all subsequent editions except Mr. Campbell's" (Garnett).

16—\*thin gray cloud\*, etc. The "thin gray cloud," as also the dancing leaf of ll. 49-52, was observed at Stowey. They are noted in Dorothy Wordsworth's Journal, January 31 and March 7, 1798.

26, 54—\*Jesu\*. This form of the word is nearer to the Hebrew original than the more familiar *Jesus*. It is often (though not exclusively) used in ejaculation and prayer, as here, and was perhaps supposed to be the vocative form.

27, 92—\*I wis.\* This is a misinterpretation of Middle English *iwis*, from Old English *gewis*, "certainly."

29, 129—\*The lady sank,\* etc. The threshold of a house is, in folk-lore, a sacred place, and evil things cannot cross but have to be carried over it.

142—\*I cannot speak,\* etc. Geraldine blesses "her gracious stars" (l. 114), but cannot join in praise to the Holy Virgin.

30, 167—\*And jealous of the listening air\*. This line was not in the first edition, but was added in the edition of 1828.

32, 252—\*Behold! her bosom and half her side\*, etc. There exist at least three versions of this passage. The text is that of the 1828 edition. The edition of 1816 lacked ll. 255-61, having only these lines between 253 and 262:

"And she is to sleep by Christabel.  
She took two paces, and a stride," etc.

The third form is that of a MS. copy of the poem once the property of Wordsworth's sister-in-law, Sarah Hutchinson, and recently published in facsimile by Mr. E.H. Coleridge, which gives this reading for ll. 253-4:

"Are lean and old and foul of hue,  
And she is to sleep by Christabel."

Coleridge seems to have tried both ways, that of revealing Geraldine's loathsome secret and that of leaving it an unknown and nameless horror, and finally to have chosen the latter, just as he rejected in later editions the charnel-house particulars in the description of Death in "The Ancient Mariner." Unquestionably he was right. The horror that is merely suggested and left shrouded in mystery for the imagination to work on is more powerful than that which is known. The suppressed line, however, helps us in an age less familiar with notions of the supernatural to understand what Geraldine is. The character is conceived upon the general lines of Duessa in the first book of "The Faerie Queene;" a being of great external loveliness, but within "full of all uncleanness." Observe also that the thought, shrouded here, is half revealed later (l. 457).

35, 344—\*Bratha Head, Wyndermere, Langdale Pike\*, etc. For the relation of the Second Part of the poem to the Lake country see Introduction. All of the places named in these lines are near the border-line between Cumberland and Westmoreland and within a dozen miles of the Wordsworths' home at Grasmere. Keswick, which was the home of Coleridge from 1800 to 1804, and of his wife and children for many years thereafter, is on Derwent Water, in Cumberland, some ten miles north of Grasmere. The little river Bratha runs into the upper or northern end of Windermere, a larger lake lying about three miles below Grasmere and connected with it by another stream. Langdale Pike (or Pikes, for there are more than one) is the name of the steep hills at the head of Langdale, on the Cumberland border. Dungeon-Ghyll is a ravine in Langdale (see Wordsworth's "The Idle Shepherd Boys; or, Dungeon-Ghyll Force"). Borrowdale lies over the border in Cumberland and slopes the other way, toward Derwent Water.

37, 407—\*Lord Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine\*. Sir Leoline lives at "Langdale Hall," a supposed castle in the immediate vicinity of the poets' homes; the friend of his youth, whose daughter Geraldine claims to be, is given the name of a real family and an historical estate in eastern Cumberland, Tryermaine in Gilsland, on the River Irthing, which forms part of the boundary between Cumberland and Northumberland. Scott in his notes to "The Bridal of Triermain" quotes as follows from Burns's



"Antiquities of Westmoreland and Cumberland": "After the death of Gilmore, Lord of Tryermaine and Torcrossock, Hubert Vaux gave Tryermaine and Torcrossock to his second son, Ranulph Vaux.... Ranulph, being Lord of all Gilsland, gave Gilmore's land to his younger son, named Roland.... And they were named Rolands successively, that were lords thereof, until the reign of Edward the Fourth."

44—\*The Conclusion to Part the Second\*. Campbell thought it "highly improbable" that these lines were originally composed as a part of "Christabel." In a letter to Southey, May 6, 1801, Coleridge speaks of his eldest boy, Hartley, then in his fifth year: "Dear Hartley! we are at times alarmed by the state of his health, but at present he is well. If I were to lose him, I am afraid it would exceedingly deaden my affection for any other children I may have." Then he writes the lines that we now have as the Conclusion to Part the Second; and adds: "A very metaphysical account of fathers calling their children rogues, rascals, and little varlets, etc."

## KUBLA KHAN

Kubla Khan, grandson of Genghis Khan, was a Mongolian conqueror who stretched his empire from European Russia to the eastern shores of China in the thirteenth century. His exploits, like those of his grandfather and those of the Mohammedan Timur in the next century, made a deep impression on the imagination of Western Europe. Compilers of travellers's tales, like Hakluyt and Purchas, caught up eagerly whatever they could find, history or legend, concerning the extent of his domain, the methods of his government, or the splendors of his court. The passage in "Purchas his Pilgrimage" to which Coleridge refers is as follows:

"In Xamdu did Cublai Can build a stately Palace, encompassing sixteene miles of plaine ground with a wall, wherein are fertile Meddowes, pleasant Springs, delightfull Streames, and all sorts of beasts of chase and game, and in the midst thereof a sumptuous house of pleasure" (quoted in the Notes of the Globe edition).

Coleridge's poem, however, contains suggestions and reminiscences from another part of Purchas's book, and probably from other books as well. "It reads like an arras of reminiscences from several accounts of natural or enchanted parks, and from various descriptions of that elusive and danger-fraught garden which mystic geographers have studied to locate from Florida to Cathay" (Cooper).

The earthly paradise, which was closed to man indeed, but not destroyed, when Adam and Eve were driven from its gates, has exercised the imagination of the Christian world from the early Middle Ages. Lactantius described it in the fourth century; the author of the "Phoenix," probably in the eighth century, translated Lactantius' Latin into Anglo-Saxon verse; Sir John Mandeville, in the fourteenth century, though he did not reach it himself because he "was not worthy," gives an account of it from what he has "heard say of wise Men beyond;" Milton described it enchantingly in "Paradise Lost;" Dr. Johnson used a modification of it in "Rasselas;" and William Morris in our own time made it the framework for a delightful series of world-old tales. The idea, indeed, is not peculiar to Christianity, but is probably to be found in every civilization. Christian Europe has naturally located it in the East; and since the Crusades, which brought Western Europe more in contact with the East, various eastern legends have been attached to or confounded with the original notion. One of these is the Abyssinian legend of the hill Amara (cf. l. 41, where Coleridge's "Mount Abora" seems to stand for Purchas's Amara). Amara in Purchas's account is a hill in a great plain in Ethiopia, used as a prison for the sons of Abyssinian kings. Its level top, twenty leagues in circuit and surrounded by a high wall, is a garden of delight. "Heaven and Earth, Nature and Industrie, have all been corriuals to it, all presenting their best presents, to make it of this so louely presence, some taking this for the place of our Forefathers Paradise." The sides of the hill are of overhanging rock, "bearing out like mushromes, so that it is impossible to ascend it" except by a passageway "cut out within the Rocke, not with staires, but ascending little by little," and closed above and below with gates guarded by soldiers. "Toward the South" of the level top "is a rising hill ... yeelding ... a pleasant spring which passeth through all that Plaine ... and making a Lake, whence issueth a River, which having from these tops espied Nilus, never leaves seeking to find him, whom he cannot leave both to seeke and to finde.... There are no Cities on the top, but palaces, standing by themselves ... spacious, sumptuous, and beautifull, where the Princes of the Royall blood have their abode with their families."

This legend looks backward to Mandeville, with whose account of the Terrestrial Paradise it has much in common, and forward to Milton, who used some of its elements in his description of Paradise in the fourth book of "Paradise Lost." (See Professor Cooper's article in "Modern Philology," III., 327 ff., from which this is condensed.)

Mr. E.H. Coleridge (the poet's grandson) has recently shown that in the winter of 1797-8 Coleridge read and made notes from a book, "Travels through ... the Cherokee Country," by the American botanist William Bartram. Chapter VII. of Bartram's book contains an account of some natural wonders

in the Cherokee country that almost certainly afforded part of the imagery of "Kubla Khan." Bartram, says Mr. Coleridge, "speaks of waters which 'descend by slow degrees through rocky caverns into the bowels of the earth, whence they are carried by subterraneous channels into other receptacles and basons.' He travels for several miles over 'fertile eminences and delightful shady forests.' He is enchanted by a 'view of a dark sublime grove;' of the grand fountain he says that the 'ebullition is astonishing and continual, though its greatest force of fury intermits' (note the word 'intermits') 'regularly for the space of thirty seconds of time: the ebullition is perpendicular upward, from a vast rugged orifice through a bed of rock throwing up small particles of white shells.' He is informed by 'a trader' that when the Great Sink was forming there was heard 'an inexpressible rushing noise like a mighty hurricane or thunderstorm,' that 'the earth was overflowed by torrents of water which came wave after wave rushing down, attended with a terrific noise and tremor of the earth,' that the fountain ceased to flow and 'sank into a huge bason of water;' but, as he saw with his own eyes, 'vast heaps of fragments of rock' (Coleridge writes 'huge fragments'), 'white chalk, stones, and pebbles had been thrown up by the original outbursts and forced aside into the lateral valleys.'"

From these and from other like sources Coleridge's mind was no doubt stored with suggestions of tropical wonder and loveliness, which fell together—if his own account of the making of the poem is to be relied on—into the kaleidoscopic beauty of "Kubla Khan." It is not unlikely, too (cf. ll. 12-13), that the ash-tree dell at Stowey, which he had already used for a scene of supernatural terror in "Osorio," bears some part in his avowed dream of Xanadu.

45, 3—\*Alph, the sacred river.\* This name seems to be of Coleridge's own invention; at least it has not been pointed out where he found it.

16—\*demon-lover.\* The demon-lover (or more often, with sexes reversed, the fairy mistress) is a favorite theme of romance, taken from folk-lore, where it appears in many forms. Cf. the ballads of "Thomas Rymer," "Tam Lin," and "The Demon Lover," in Child's "English and Scottish Popular Ballads," and Scott's "William and Helen" (a translation of Burger's "Lenore").

46, 39, 41—\*Abyssinian maid, Mount Abora.\* See introductory note above.

53—\*honey-dew.\* A sweet sticky substance found on plants, deposited there by the aphid or plant-louse. It was supposed to be the food of fairies. Not improbably Coleridge was thinking of manna, a saccharine exudation found upon certain plants in the East. Mandeville describes it as found in "the Land of Job:" "This Manna is clept Bread of Angels. And it is a white Thing that is full sweet and right delicious, and more sweet than Honey or Sugar. And it Cometh of the Dew of Heaven that falleth upon the Herbs in that Country. And it congealeth and becometh all white and sweet. And Men put it in Medicines."

53-4—\*For he on honey-dew hath fed, And drunk the milk of Paradise.\* Professor Cooper, in the article cited in the introductory note above, points out that this part of the poem contains perhaps reminiscences of the stories told of the Old Man of the Mountain. This was the title popularly given to the head of a fanatical sect of Mohammedans in Syria in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, whose method of getting rid of their enemies has given us the word *assassin*. To quote from Mandeville's "Travels," which has the essentials of the story, though the chief is here called Gatholonabes, and his domain is not in Syria but in the island Mistorak, "in the Lordship of Prester John:"

"He had a full fair Castle and a strong in a Mountain, so strong and so noble, that no Man could devise a fairer or a stronger. And he had made wall all the Mountain about with a strong Wall and a fair. And within those Walls he had the fairest Garden that any Man might behold....

"And he had also in that Place, the fairest Damsels that might be found, under the Age of fifteen Years, and the fairest young Striplings that Men might get, of that same Age. And they were all clothed in Cloths of Gold, full richly. And he said that those were Angels.

"And he had also made 3 Wells, fair and noble, and all environed with Stone of Jasper, and of Crystal, diapered with Gold, and set with precious Stones and great orient Pearls. And he had made a Conduit under the Earth, so that the 3 Wells, at his List, should run, one Milk, another Wine, and another Honey. And that Place he clept Paradise.

"And when that any good Knight, that was hardy and noble, came to see this Royalty, he would lead him into his Paradise, and show him these wonderful Things for his Sport, and the marvellous and delicious Song of divers Birds, and the fair Damsels, and the fair Wells of Milk, Wine and Honey, plenteously running. And he would make divers Instruments of Music to sound in an high Tower, so merrily, that it was Joy to hear; and no Man should see the Craft thereof. And those, he said, were Angels of God, and that Place was Paradise, that God had promised to his Friends, saying, '*Dabo vobis*

*Terram fluentem Lacte et Melle'* ('I shall give thee a Land flowing with Milk and Honey'). And then would he make them to drink of certain Drink [hashish, a narcotic drug, whence their name of Assassins], whereof anon they should be drunk. And then would they think it greater Delight than they had before. And then would he say to them, that if they would die for him and for his Love, that after their Death they should come to his Paradise; and they should be of the Age of the Damsels, and they should play with them, and yet be Maidens. And after that should he put them in a yet fairer Paradise, where that they should see the God of Nature visibly, in His Majesty and in His Bliss. And then would he show them his Intent, and say to them, that if they would go slay such a Lord, or such a Man that was his Enemy or contrarious to his List, that they should not therefore dread to do it and to be slain themselves. For after their Death, he would put them in another Paradise, that was an 100-fold fairer than any of the tother; and there should they dwell with the most fairest Damsels that might be, and play with them ever-more.

"And thus went many divers lusty Pachelors to slay great Lords in divers Countries, that were his Enemies, and made themselves to be slain, in Hope to have that Paradise."

## FRANCE: AN ODE

When Coleridge republished this poem in the *Post* in 1802 he prefixed to it the following

### ARGUMENT

*First Stanza.* An invocation to those objects in Nature the contemplation of which had inspired the Poet with a devotional love of Liberty. *Second Stanza.* The exultation of the Poet at the commencement of the French Revolution, and his unqualified abhorrence of the Alliance against the Republic. *Third Stanza.* The blasphemies and horrors during the domination of the Terrorists regarded by the Poet as a transient storm, and as the natural consequence of the former despotism and of the foul superstition of Popery. Reason, indeed, began to suggest many apprehensions; yet still the Poet struggled to retain the hope that France would make conquests by no other means than by presenting to the observation of Europe a people more happy and better instructed than under other forms of Government. *Fourth Stanza.* Switzerland, and the Poet's recantation. *Fifth Stanza.* An address to Liberty, in which the Poet expresses his conviction that those feelings and that grand *ideal* of Freedom which the mind attains by its contemplation of its individual nature, and of the sublime surrounding objects (see stanza the first) do not belong to men as a society, nor can possibly be either gratified or realized under any form, of human government; but belong to the individual man, so far as he is pure, and inflamed with the love and adoration of God in Nature.

51, 22—\*When France in wrath\*, etc. The storming of the Bastille took place July 14, 1789. On the 4th of August feudal and manorial privileges were swept away by the National Assembly; and on the 18th of August the Assembly formally adopted a declaration of "the rights of man." In September 1792 the National Convention abolished royalty and declared France a republic.

52, 26-7—\*With what a joy my lofty gratulation Unawed I\* sang. Coleridge wrote a poem on the "Destruction of the Bastille," probably in 1789 or soon after (first printed in 1834); and in September, 1792, some lines "To a Young Lady, with a Poem on the French Revolution" (first printed in *The Watchman* in 1796), in which he tells his emotions—

"When slumbering Freedom roused with high disdain  
With giant fury burst her triple chain!"

28—\*the disenchanting nation\*. "Disenchanted" because they found that freedom, peace, and virtue were not to be secured by mere proclamation; and that all Europe was not ready at the call of the revolutionists to abolish prescriptive rights and establish republican forms of society. In January 1793 Louis XVI was beheaded. The act was followed pretty promptly by a coalition of England, Holland, Spain, Naples, and the German states against the Republic.

36—\*Yet still my voice\*. In "Religious Musings," 1794-6, and more ardently in the parts that he contributed to Southey's "Joan of Arc," 1796.

42—\*Britain's name\*. England was from the beginning the centre of resistance to the violence and ambition of revolutionary France; and Pitt, who controlled English policy in these years, was looked upon as a cold-blooded agent of tyranny by the French republicans and their English sympathizers.

44—\*sweet music of deliverance\*. The French were so convinced that their Revolution marked the beginning of a new era in human affairs that they determined to have a new chronology. Accordingly a

commission of scientists was appointed to formulate a system, which was adopted in October 1793. The "Era of the Republic" was to be counted from the autumnal equinox, 1792. The year was divided into twelve months, as before, but they were renamed (*Thermidor* hot month, *Fructidor* fruit month, *Nivose* snow month, &c.), and ran in periods of thirty days each from the 22d of September. This left five days undistributed, which were set apart as feast-days in celebration of five virtues or ideals. Each month consisted of three decades, and each tenth day, or *decadis*, was a holiday. The purpose of this was to eradicate the observance of the Christian Sunday. This chronology was in actual use in France until Napoleon put an end to it in 1806.

The municipality of Paris in 1793 decreed that on the 10th of November the worship of Reason should be inaugurated at Notre Dame. "On that day the venerable cathedral was profaned by a series of sacrilegious outrages unparalleled in the history of Christendom. A temple dedicated to 'Philosophy' was erected on a platform in the middle of the choir ... the Goddess of Reason, impersonated by Mademoiselle Maillard, a well known figurante of the opera, took her seat upon a grassy throne in front of the temple; ... and the multitude bowed the knee before her in profound admiration.... At the close of this grotesque ceremony the whole cortège proceeded to the hall of the Convention, carrying with them their 'goddess,' who was borne aloft in a chair of state on the shoulders of four men. Having deposited her in front of the president," Chaumette, the spokesman of the procession, "harangued the Assembly.... He proceeded to demand that the ci-devant metropolitan church should henceforth be the temple of Reason and Liberty; which proposition was immediately adopted. The 'goddess' was then conducted to the president, and he and other officers of the House saluted her with the 'fraternal kiss,' amid thunders of applause. After this, upon the motion of Thuriot, the Convention in a body joined the mass of the people, and marched in their company to the temple of Reason, to witness a repetition of the impieties above described.... At St. Gervais a ball was given in the chapel of the Virgin. In other churches theatrical spectacles took place.... On Sunday, the 17th of November, all the parish churches of Paris were closed by authority, with three exceptions.... Religion was proscribed, churches closed, Christian ordinances interdicted; the dreary gloom of atheistical despotism overspread the land."—Jervis, "The Gallican Church and the Revolution," quoted in Larned's "History for Ready Reference," p. 1300. The next year, however, Robespierre had a decree passed of which the first article was: "The French people acknowledge the existence of the Supreme Being and the immortality of the soul;" and thereupon the inscriptions *To Reason* that had been placed upon the French churches were replaced by others reading *To the Supreme Being*.

50—\*calm and bright\*. After the downfall of Robespierre in 1794 France gradually worked back to a less hysterical mood. In October 1795 a new form of government known as the Directory was established, under which the people enjoyed comparative safety at home and developed a remarkable military efficiency against their foreign enemies. Bonaparte's military genius brought him rapidly to the front in the wars of the Directory. It was he that created the Cisalpine and Ligurine "republics," and his policy directed the invasions of Rome and of Switzerland.

53, 66—\*Helvetia\*. In March, 1798, after having fostered or compelled the formation of republics under French protection in Holland, northern Italy, and Rome, the Directory, under pretence of defending the republican rights of the Vaudois, made a concerted attack upon Switzerland. Berne, the centre of resistance, was taken, despite the heroic defence of the mountaineers who for five centuries had maintained in "bleak Helvetia's icy caverns" a "shrine of liberty" for all Europe.

## DEJECTION: AN ODE

55, 1 of motto—\*yestreen\*. Abbreviation of "yester-even," yesterday evening.

58, 82—\*But now afflictions\*, etc. In March 1801 Coleridge wrote to Godwin: "In my long illness I had compelled into hours of delight many a sleepless, painful hour of darkness by chasing down metaphysical game, and since then I have continued the hunt, until I found myself unaware at the root of pure mathematics.... The poet is dead in me." And years afterward in a letter to an artist friend, W. Collins (December, 1818): "Poetry is out of the question. The attempt would only hurry me into that sphere of acute feelings from which abstruse research, the mother of self-oblivion, presents an asylum."

95—\*Reality's dark dream\*! In the earlier forms of the poem the lines corresponding to 94-5 stood thus:

"Nay, wherefore did I let it haunt my mind,  
This dark, distressful dream?"

He seems to mean, "This loss of joy, of poetic power, is, must be, only an evil dream, and I will shake it from my mind;" but he knows that it is a reality, and so turns to forget it in the sensuous intoxication of the wind's music. Or perhaps—for Coleridge is already a metaphysician—reality is used here in

opposition to ideality or imagination; the truth of philosophy (cf. ll. 89-90) and the metaphysic habit of mind that the study of it induces—what we call reality—is a dream that has come between him and the world of the ideal in which he had and used his "shaping spirit of imagination." The passage is obscure.

100—\*Bare crag\*, etc. The scenery here is that of the Lake country where Coleridge and Wordsworth were then living—the former at Keswick in Cumberland, the latter at Grasmere, Westmoreland.

59, 120—\*Otway\*. Coleridge wrote originally, "As thou thyself [i.e. Wordsworth—see next note] had'st fram'd the tender lay." This he changed to "Edmund's self" when he first printed the poem in 1802; and finally to "Otway's self." Thomas Otway was a dramatist of the time of Charles II (born 1651, died 1685). He wrote, among other plays, two tragedies of wonderful pathetic power, "The Orphan" and "Venice Preserved." The theme and style of the former of these, especially, no doubt suggested his name to Coleridge here. Otway's own career was pathetic; he died young, neglected, and according to one story, starved. To this story Coleridge alludes in one of his early poems, the "Monody on the Death of Chatterton:"

"While, 'mid the pelting of that merciless storm,  
Sunk to the cold earth Otway's famished form!"

121—\*'T is of a little child\*, etc. Alluding to Wordsworth's "Lucy Gray," which had been published in the second edition of "Lyrical Ballads," 1800.

## YOUTH AND AGE

60, 12—\*trim skiffs\*, etc. Fulton had invented the steamboat in 1807. The first regular steamboat in British waters was built in 1812.

61, 34—\*altered size\*. Coleridge became very stout in his later years.

## WORK WITHOUT HOPE

62, 5—\*the sole unbusy thing\*. Cf. George Herbert's "Employment:"

"All things are busie; onely I  
Neither bring hony with the bees,  
Nor flowers to make that, nor the husbandrie  
To water these."

"I find more substantial comfort now," wrote Coleridge to his friend Collins in 1818, "in pious George Herbert's 'Temple,' which I used to read to amuse myself with his quaintness, in short, only to laugh at, than in all the poetry since Milton."

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK COLERIDGE'S ANCIENT MARINER AND SELECT  
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