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About the author

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (October 21, 1772–July 25, 1834) was an English poet, critic, and philosopher and, along with his friend William Wordsworth, one of the founders of the Romantic Movement in England. He is probably best known for his poem *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.



Coleridge was born in Ottery St. Mary, the son of a vicar. After the death of his father, he was sent to Christ's Hospital, a boarding school in London. In later life, Coleridge idealised his father as a pious innocent, but his relationship with his mother was a difficult one. His childhood was characterised by attention-seeking, which has been linked with his dependent personality as an adult, and he was rarely allowed to return home during his schooldays. From 1791 until 1794 he attended Jesus College at the University of Cambridge, except for a short period when he enlisted in the royal dragoons. At the university he met with political and theological ideas then considered radical. He left Cambridge without a degree and joined the poet Robert Southey in a plan, soon abandoned, to found a utopian communist-like society, called pantisocracy, in the wilderness of Pennsylvania. In 1795 the two friends married Sarah and Elizabeth Fricker (who were sisters), but Coleridge's marriage proved unhappy. Southey departed for Portugal, but Coleridge remained in England. In 1796 he published *Poems on Various Subjects*.

In 1795 Coleridge met poet William Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy. The two men of letters published a joint volume of poetry, *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), which proved to be a manifesto for Romantic poetry. The first version of Coleridge's great poem *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* appeared in this volume.

Around 1796, Coleridge started using opium as a pain reliever. His and Dorothy Wordsworth's notebooks record that he suffered from a variety of medical complaints, including toothache and facial neuralgia. There appears to have been no stigma associated with merely taking opium then, but also little understanding of the physiological or psychological aspects of addiction.

The years 1797 and 1798, during which the friends lived in Nether Stowey, Somersetshire, were among the most fruitful of Coleridge's life. Besides the *Ancient Mariner*, he composed the symbolic poem *Kubla Khan*, written as a result of an opium dream, in "a kind of a reverie", and began the numinous narrative poem *Christabel*, medieval in atmosphere. During this period he also produced his much-praised "conversation" poems *This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison*, *Frost at Midnight*, and *The Nightingale*.

In the autumn of 1798 Coleridge and Wordsworth left for a sojourn in Germany; Coleridge soon went his own way and spent much of his time in university towns. During this period he became interested in German philosophy, especially the transcendental idealism of Immanuel Kant, and in the literary criticism of the 18th-century dramatist Gotthold Lessing. Coleridge studied German and, after his return to England, translated the dramatic trilogy *Wallenstein* by the romantic poet Friedrich Schiller into English.

In 1800 he returned to England and shortly thereafter settled



with his family and friends at Keswick in the Lake District of Cumberland. Soon, however, he fell into a vicious circle of lack of confidence in his poetic powers, ill-health, and increased opium dependency.

From 1804 to 1806, Coleridge lived in Malta and travelled in Sicily and Italy, in the hope that leaving Britain's damp climate would improve his health and thus enable him to reduce his consumption of opium. For a while he had a civil-service job as the Public Secretary of the British administration of Malta. Thomas de Quincey alleges in his *Recollections of the Lakes and the Lake Poets* that it was during this period that Coleridge became a full-blown opium addict, using the drug as a substitute for the lost vigour and creativity of his youth. It has been suggested, however, that this reflects de Quincey's own experiences more than Coleridge's.

Between 1808 and 1819 this "giant among dwarfs", as he was often considered by his contemporaries, gave a series of lectures in London and Bristol – those on Shakespeare can be, to an extent, regarded as renewing cultural interest in the playwright.

In 1816 Coleridge, his addiction worsening, his spirits depressed, and his family alienated, took residence in the home of the physician James Gillman, in Highgate. In Gillman's home he finished his major prose work, the *Biographia Literaria* (1817), a volume composed of 25 chapters of autobiographical notes and dissertations on various subjects, including some incisive literary theory and criticism. The sections in which Coleridge's definitions of the nature of poetry and the imagination – his famous distinction between primary and secondary imagination on the one hand and fancy on the other – are especially interesting. He published other writings while he was living at the Gillman home, notably *Sibylline Leaves* (1817), *Aids to Reflection* (1825), and *Church and State* (1830). He died in Highgate on July 25, 1834.

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The Poetry of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

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 minutis 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. .

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Part One.

[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,
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.
“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:
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.

“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,
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—”
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
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.

[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,
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.

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
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:
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,
 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!

[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,
 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!—
 Why look'st thou so?"—"With my cross-bow
 I shot the Albatross.

Part Two.

The Sun now rose upon the right:
 Out of the sea came he,
 Still hid in mist, and on the left
 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!

[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,
 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.
 '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
 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!

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,
 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;
 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
 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.

[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,
 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!
 Instead of the cross, the Albatross
 About my neck was hung.

Part Three.

[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!
 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;
 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,
 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,
 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,
 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!

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
 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.

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
 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,
 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,
 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;



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!
 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
 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.

[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,—
They fled to bliss or woe!
And every soul, it passed me by,
Like the whizz of my cross-bow!”

Part 4.

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

“I Fear thee, ancient Mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand!
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!
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.

[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,
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,

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
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 to-
wards 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
 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:
 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
 Like lead into the sea.



Part Five.

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,
 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.

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:
 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;
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!
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;
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,
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.

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;
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.

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!”

“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;

Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths,

And from their bodies passed.

Around, around, flew each sweet sound,

Then darted to the Sun;

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,

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,
 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,
 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,
 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.
 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,
 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:
 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,
 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
 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?'

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

Part Six.

First voice.

'But tell me, tell me! speak again,
 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;
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.'

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.



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
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:
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,
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—

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
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.

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,
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?
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!
Or let me sleep away.

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.

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
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:
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,
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;

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,
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:
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
That he makes in the wood.
He'll shrieve my soul, he'll wash away
The Albatross's blood.

Part Seven.

[Sidenote: The Hermit of the Wood,]

This Hermit good lives in that wood
Which slopes down to the sea.

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:
 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,
 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!
 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,



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!’
 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.

[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,
 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.

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
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,
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 countree,
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.
'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;
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.

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.

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,
 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.

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,
 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
 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;
 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
 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.

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.

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;
 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.
 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:
 '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,
 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.

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,
 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.—
 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
 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,
 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,
 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:
 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.
 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?”

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!”
 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:
 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,
 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;
 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.
 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,
 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:
 "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
 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:
 "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,
 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,
 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
 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,
 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!"
 "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
 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
 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!
 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,
 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."

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,
 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,
 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,
 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.
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,
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?
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
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!
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,
"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—
"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:
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.
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,
 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!”
 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,
 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,
 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,
 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;
 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,
 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
 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;
 But vainly thou warrest,
 For this is alone in
 Thy power to declare,
 That in the dim forest
 Thou heard’st a low moaning,
 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
Was praying at the old oak tree.
Amid the jagged shadows
Of mossy leafless boughs,
Kneeling in the moonlight,
To make her gentle vows;
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,
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—
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,
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—
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!

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—
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,
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.
 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:
 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:
 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,
 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!
 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,
 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;
 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
 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,
 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
 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
 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.
 "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
 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,



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,
 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,
 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,
 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;
 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.
 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—
 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,
 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.

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,
 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
 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
 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.
 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,
 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,

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,
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?"
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,
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
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,
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,
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,
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!
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
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':
 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,
 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;
 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,
 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!
 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,
 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.

"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
 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.
 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,
 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
 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;
 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,
 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
 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,
 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,
 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
 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
 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,
 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

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—
 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,
 "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.

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!
 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,
 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?

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,
 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
 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—
 "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!

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
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.
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
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
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.
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,
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
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 momently was forced:

Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
 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
 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!

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,
 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,
 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,
 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!
 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.

Off 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;
 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,



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.

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,
 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;
 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,
 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!

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,
 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;
 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
 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;—

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
 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;
 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,
 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.

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,
 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,
 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,
 My bright and beautiful Bride.



France: An Ode.

1.

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,
 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,
 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!
 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
 The spirit of divinest Liberty.

2.

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!

With what a joy my lofty gratulation
 Unawed I sang, amid a slavish band:
 And when to overwhelm the disenchanting nation,
 Like fiends embattled by a wizard's wand,
 The Monarchs marched in evil day,
 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;
 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;
 But blessed the paeans of delivered France,
 And hung my head and wept at Britain's name.

3.

"And what," I said, "though Blasphemy's loud scream
 With that sweet music of deliverance strove!
 Though all the fierce and drunken passions wove
 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;
 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,
 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!
 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.”

4.

Forgive me, Freedom! O forgive those dreams!
 I hear thy voice, I hear thy loud lament,
 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
 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;
 And with inexpressible 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?
 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?

5.

The Sensual and the Dark rebel in vain,
 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;
 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,
 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,
 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,
 O Liberty! my spirit felt thee there.



Dejection: An Ode.

Written April.

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.

1.

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,
 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,
 (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,
 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!

2.

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,



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!
 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
 In its own cloudless, starless lake of blue;
 I see them all so excellently fair,
 I see, not feel, how beautiful they are!

3.

My genial spirits fail;
 And what can these avail
 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
 The passion and the life, whose fountains are within.

4.

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.

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—
 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!

5.

O pure of heart! thou need'st not ask of me
 What this strong music in the soul may be!
 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,
 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—
 Joy is the sweet voice, Joy the luminous cloud—
 We in ourselves rejoice!
 And thence flows all that charms or ear or sight,
 All melodies the echoes of that voice,
 All colours a suffusion from that light.

6.

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,
 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,
 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—
 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.

7.

Hence, viper thoughts, that coil around my mind,
 Reality's dark dream!
 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,
 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,
 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?
 '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,
 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,
 '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.

8.

'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,
 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,
 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!

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,
 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!
 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,
 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,
 '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!
 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,
 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!
 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,
 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.

Lines composed 21st February 1825.

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,
 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!
 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
 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!































































































