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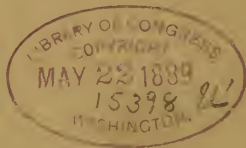
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The Student's Series of English Classics. ✓

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COLERIDGE'S
" "
ANCIENT MARINER.

EDITED BY
KATHARINE LEE BATES.
WELLESLEY COLLEGE. 1

"Nothing can be truer than fairy wisdom. It is as true as sunbeams."
DOUGLAS JERROLD.



LEACH, SHEWELL, & SANBORN.
BOSTON AND NEW YORK.

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P R E F A C E.

ON the list of entrance requirements in English literature, as recently adopted by the Association of New England Colleges, stands Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner." The selection is a happy one, for the reason that the poem, exquisite in melody and imagery, and abounding in nature-pictures equally remarkable for wide range and delicate accuracy, nevertheless produces at first so vivid an impression of spectral horror as to blind the casual reader to its rare poetic grace and charm. But as the poem is dwelt upon in the class-room, the student being brought to realize the marvellous succession of moonlight, ocean scenes, then the agonies of that disordered soul and the frightfulness of the images reflected from its guilty consciousness will but serve to throw into fairer contrast the blessedness of the spirit restored to the life of love, and the peaceful beauty of the universe as beheld by eyes purged from selfishness and sin.

Coleridge at his best is so purely poetical that he is an especially valuable author for class-room use, his mastery of diction, melody and figure tending to culti-

vate in the student a high poetic standard. Yet Coleridge at his best could be comprehended within the limits of a very thin volume. If it should be desired to extend the study of Coleridge beyond the "Ancient Mariner," the finest of his other poems might be brought before the class by recitations or readings. Such poems are "Christabel," "Genevieve," "Kubla Khan," "Ballad of the Dark Ladie," "France," "Fears in Solitude," "The Eolian Harp," "Reflections on Having Left a Place of Retirement," "The Foster Mother's Tale," "Sonnet to Burke," "Answer to a Child's Question," "Hymn before Sunrise," "The Lime Tree Bower My Prison," "The Nightingale: A Conversation Poem," "Frost at Midnight," "Dejection," "Ode to Tranquillity," "Lines to W. L.," "The Pains of Sleep," "The Knight's Tomb," "Youth and Age," "Fancy in Nubibus," the bird song in "Zapolya," the Miserere in "Remorse," and the famous original passage upon "The fair humanities of old religion" in "The Piccolomini."

COLERIDGE.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

(1772-1834.)

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE, born in Devonshire, England, Oct. 21, 1772, was the youngest of thirteen children. His father was a clergyman, schoolmaster, and book-worm, holding the two positions of vicar of Ottery St. Mary and master of Henry VIII.'s Free Grammar School in the same parish. Coleridge has recorded of his mother that she was, as doubtless she had need to be, "an admirable economist." His childish love, however, seems to have gone out less to her, the Martha "careful and troubled about many things," than to the absent-minded, unworldly old vicar, who is remembered for his "Critical Latin Grammar," wherein he proposed a change in the names of the cases, designating the ablative, for example, as "the quare-quale-quidditive case;" and also for the Hebrew quotations, which, copiously besprinkled throughout his sermons, he used to recommend to the awe-stricken hearts of his rustic congregation, as "the immediate language of the Holy Ghost." "The truth is," says Coleridge, "my father was not a first-rate genius; he was, however, a first-rate Christian, which is much better."

In this crowded vicarage the little poet led, as he tells us, a solitary life. "I took no pleasure in boyish sports, but read incessantly. I read through all gilt-cover little books that could be had at that time, and likewise all the uncovered tales of Tom Hickathrift, Jack the Giant-killer, and the like. And I used to lie by the wall and mope, and my spirits used to come upon me suddenly, and in a flood; and then I was accustomed to run up and down the churchyard, and act over again all I had been reading on the docks, the nettles, and the rank grass . . . I never played except by myself, and then only acted over what I had been reading or fancying, or half one, half the other; with a stick cutting down weeds and nettles, as one of the 'Seven champions of Christendom.' Alas! I had all the simplicity, all the docility of the little child, but none of the child's habits. I never thought as a child, never had the language of a child."

Before the boy was nine years old, occurred the sudden death of his father. Money, never abundant in this household, was now scarcer than ever, and the dreamy, precocious child must needs be abruptly pushed out of the home shelter into the rough life of a London Charity School. Through the exertions of one of his father's old pupils, an eminent judge of the neighborhood, Coleridge obtained admission to Christ's Hospital and was made a Blue-Coat Boy. Here among the Blue-Coats he passed the next eight years of his life, still lonely, for all his six hundred schoolfellows, and rapt in strange imaginings. "My talents and superiority," he says, "made me forever at the head in my routine of study,

though utterly without the desire to be so; without a spark of ambition; and as to emulation, it had no meaning for me; but the difference between me and my form-fellows, in our lessons and exercises, bore no proportion to the measureless difference between me and them in the wide, wild wilderness of useless, unarranged book knowledge and book thoughts." It is related that the visionary student, who seems to have been addicted to at least one boyish pastime, delighting on summer holidays in the bathing excursions to a neighboring stream, was once walking down the Strand, throwing out his arms continually, as if in the act of swimming. A stranger, with whose person his hand came in contact, taking the lad for a pickpocket, seized him, with the exclamation: "What, so young and so wicked!" — "I am not a pickpocket," pleaded Coleridge, "I only thought I was Leander swimming the Hellespont." The astonished stranger, finding his thief turn genius, procured for him, by way of apology, free access to a circulating library.

"Here," writes Coleridge, "I read through the catalogue, folios and all, whether I understood them, or did not understand them, running all risks in skulking out to get the two volumes which I was entitled to have daily. Conceive what I must have been at fourteen; I was in a continual low fever. My whole being was, with eyes closed to every object of present sense, to crumple myself up in a sunny corner, and read, read, read — fancying myself on Robinson Crusoe's island, finding a mountain of plum-cake, and making a room for myself, and then eating it into the shapes of tables

and chairs—hunger and fancy!” Poor little Blue-Coat! Those feasts of books were the only feasts he knew in Christ’s Hospital. It required a flight of fancy indeed for the half-starved orphan to imagine a plum-cake. For at that time, in the words which Coleridge himself used years after: “The portion of food to the Blue-Coats was cruelly insufficient for those who had no friends to supply them.” Lamb, his schoolfellow, then and always Coleridge’s “gentle-hearted Charles,” had relatives in town, and so fared better; but the whimsical essayist has given, in the sketch entitled “Christ’s Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago,” a sympathetic picture of his less fortunate friend’s experience.

Yet Coleridge’s recollections of his school days were not all unhappy. To an eager intellect like his, the field of knowledge was itself delectable land. Under the guidance of this same choleric head master, the “rabid pedant” at whom Lamb pokes such irresistible fun, Coleridge ranged widely over Greek, Latin, and English literature. “At school (Christ’s Hospital),” he says, in his *Biographia Literaria*, “I enjoyed the inestimable advantage of a very sensible, though at the same time a very severe master, the Reverend James Bowyer. He early moulded my taste to the preference of Demosthenes to Cicero; of Homer and Theocritus to Virgil; and again of Virgil to Ovid. . . . At the same time that we were studying the Greek tragic poets, he made us read Shakspeare and Milton as lessons; and they were the lessons, too, which required most time and trouble to *bring up*, so as to

escape his censure. I learned from him, that poetry, even that of the loftiest and, seemingly, that of the wildest odes, had a logic of its own, as severe as that of science; and more difficult, because more subtle, more complex, and dependent on more and more fugitive causes. 'In the truly great poets,' he would say, 'there is a reason assignable, not only for every word, but for the position of every word.'" But it was not to the study of poetry that the young student gave himself up with freest abandon. "At a very premature age," Coleridge has recorded, "even before my fifteenth year, I had bewildered myself in metaphysics, and in theological controversy. Nothing else pleased me. History and particular facts lost all interest in my mind. . . . Poetry itself, yea, novel and romance, became insipid to me."

In his nineteenth year, Coleridge wrote a poetic farewell, not without tenderness, to Christ's Hospital; and entered at Jesus College, Cambridge, just a month after Wordsworth, having taken the bachelor's degree, had quitted the university. Of Coleridge's career at Cambridge, one of his college mates writes: "Coleridge was very studious, but his reading was desultory and capricious. He took little exercise merely for the sake of exercise: but he was ready at any time to unbend his mind in conversation; and, for the sake of this, his room was a constant rendezvous of conversation-loving friends, — I will not call them loungers, for they did not call to kill time, but to enjoy it. What evenings have I spent in those rooms! What little suppers, or *sizings*,

as they were called, have I enjoyed; when Æschylus, and Plato, and Thucydides were pushed aside, with a pile of lexicons and the like, to discuss the pamphlets of the day. Ever and anon a pamphlet issued from the pen of Burke. There was no need of having the book before us; Coleridge had read it in the morning, and in the evening he would repeat whole pages *verbatim*."

But brilliant as these occasional feats of memory might be, phenomenal though his natural gifts of understanding and imagination were, the irresolution and lack of practical energy, which so deeply marred the poet's later life, had already begun their injurious work with him. Even at Christ's Hospital, drunken with metaphysics, he had turned impatiently away from the mathematics and the other exact sciences, the colder and stricter discipline which these exert over the mental faculties being distasteful to him; and at Cambridge, although he gained a gold medal for a Greek ode, he seems to have neglected the *minutiæ* of classic scholarship, for we find him more than once an unsuccessful candidate for college honors. Early in the third year of his Cambridge residence, in debt and despondent, he yielded to a reckless impulse, and took coach for London. There he drifted about for a few days, spent his scanty stock of money, waxed hungry and, a recruiting advertisement catching his eye, enlisted off-hand, the most unsoldierly young Englishman that ever wore the scarlet, as a private in the 15th Light Dragoons. "Being at a loss, when suddenly asked my name," he afterwards wrote to a friend, "I answered, *Cumberback*, and verily, my habits were so little eques-

trian, that my horse, I doubt not, was of that opinion." For four months Coleridge served his country under arms as best he might, his comrades helping the awkward recruit about the grooming of his horse, and like non-scholastic duties; while he repaid these services by writing letters for them to their wives and sweethearts. But the words, "*Eheu, quam infortuni miserrimum est fuisse felicem,*" inscribed in pencil on the stable wall under his saddle, attracted the notice of an officer. The upshot was that Coleridge, bought off with some difficulty by his friends, returned in April to Cambridge, where he remained only until the summer vacation. Then, diverted from college interests by his large enthusiasms for political and social reform, and shut off from all chance of college preferment by his profession of the Unitarian faith, he severed his connection with the University without taking a degree.

The year in which the restless poet thus broke free from academic life was 1794. For four years past all Europe had been shaken to its centre by the great event of modern history. The French Revolution, with its impetuous rush, had been sweeping all the frank and generous young hearts of England away from traditional moorings on the wild, glad dream of universal liberty, equality, and brotherhood.

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

Coleridge shared to the full the leaping hope, the delirious joy, the pure ideal of the hour. The horrors of the

Revolution daunted him no more than they did Wordsworth; for the blasphemy and carnage both our poets deemed but the cloud before the daybreak, the transient evils incident to the holy triumph of Freedom. In the blood-stained leaders of the mob they sought to discern patriots, philosophers, philanthropists.

“Elate we looked
Upon their virtues; saw, in rudest men,
Self-sacrifice the firmest; generous love,
And continence of mind, and sense of right,
Uppermost in the midst of fiercest strife.”

And when England arrayed herself with the enemies of France; when

“To whelm the disenchanting nation,
Like fiends embattled by a wizard’s wand,
The monarchs marched in evil day,
And Britain joined the dire array,”

Coleridge, like Wordsworth, in the hot grief and indignation of a youthful spirit, withdrew his sympathies from his native land.

“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 pæans of delivered France,
And hung my head, and wept at Britain’s name.”

Breaking away from the routine of University life in such mood as this, Coleridge almost immediately fell in with the poet Southey, like himself, at this time, Unitarian in religion, and ardently democratic in politics. These two young dreamers speedily gave themselves up to architecture of that unprofessional kind known as air-castle building. They proposed to establish in America, on the banks of the Susquehanna, — a location chosen because of the resonant name of the river, — a social community under the title of Pantisocracy. The Adams in this earthly paradise were to till the soil, the Eves were to perform the household tasks; there was to be an abundance of leisure for social intercourse, for reading of books, and writing of poems; all things were to be held in common, and selfishness was to be unknown. But while Coleridge and Southey were maturing the details of this plan at Bristol, they fell in love with two sisters resident there; and in the fall of 1795, at the age of twenty-three, Coleridge, with no visible means of support, was married to Sarah Fricker. We hear little more of the project

“The tinkling team to drive
O'er peaceful Freedom's undivided vale.”

The young husband and wife cast in their lot with unenlightened England; where not even bread was held in common, but it behooved every man to win for himself and his what portion of the loaf he could. And here began for Coleridge a painful and a losing struggle. To tell what he did is a brief matter, but to tell what he proposed and intended to do would fill many pages.

First he tried his hand at lecturing, then at the publication of a weekly miscellany, *The Watchman*. For his third venture he issued a volume of "Juvenile Poems," receiving in compensation thirty guineas. These poems, some fifty in number, many of them dating from undergraduate days, represent rather the byplay of Coleridge's pen than any sustained exertion of his genius; and yet, though more often eloquent and graceful than highly imaginative, these youthful poems, above and beyond their wealth of diction, ease of rhythm, breadth of thought and dignity of tone, bear upon them that indefinable something which we recognize as the pure poetic impress. Meanwhile the poet had turned preacher and was delivering impassioned discourses, usually upon the political topics of the time, in the Unitarian chapels about Bristol. Hazlitt thus records his impressions on hearing Coleridge preach, —

"As he gave out his text, 'He departed again into a mountain, *himself alone,*' his voice rose 'like a stream of rich, distilled perfumes;' and when he came to the two last words, which he pronounced loud, deep, and distinct, it seemed to me, who was then young, 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. . . . The preacher then launched into his subject, like an eagle dallying with the wind. . . . For myself, I could not have been more delighted if I had heard the music of the spheres."

Seventeen hundred and ninety-six was ushered out by Coleridge with his "Ode to the Departing Year." With

1797 dawned the *annus mirabilis* of his genius. His poetic activity, stimulated by his new friendship with Wordsworth, touched its zenith then. It was the year of the "Rime of the Ancient Mariner," and "Christabel;" of "Love," and the "Ode to France;" of "Remorse," and "Kubla Khan." His poet comrade,

"Friend of the wise and teacher of the good,"

has sketched us one last picture of a blithe-hearted Coleridge.

"That summer, under whose indulgent skies
 Upon smooth Quantock's airy ridge we roved
 Unchecked, or loitered 'mid her sylvan combs,
 Thou, in bewitching words, with happy heart,
 Didst chant the vision of that Ancient Man,
 The bright-eyed Mariner, and rueful woes
 Didst utter of the lady Christabel."

From these joyous rambles sprang a rich poetic harvest. "The thought," says Coleridge, "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 interest 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. 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." Thus originated

the *Lyrical Ballads*, a joint volume of poems, prepared in accordance with this idea, save that the division of labor proved to be unequal, Wordsworth contributing nearly five times as many poems as his fitful companion. This little book appeared in the spring of 1798, its publication, though productive at the time of small fame and less profit to the brother authors, marking an epoch in the history of English poetry. In the autumn of this same year, the two poets, with Wordsworth's sister Dorothy, took a trip to Germany, the poetic outcome being, for Coleridge, his masterly translation of Schiller's "Wallenstein." But over the onward path of the young poet, still in the radiant sunrise of his genius, the menacing clouds had gathered; and the annals of his later life are but "the tragic story of a high endowment with an insufficient will."

The troubles that were fast closing about Coleridge, to stifle his exquisite song, sprang mainly from two sources: the overthrow of his early, passionate faith in a dawning era of liberty and love, and the slavery of the opium habit. For to the young poets of England, who had thrown the purest enthusiasm of their hearts into the French Revolution, came bitter disappointment and paralyzing sorrow. When the France in whom they had trusted, once freed from her own tyrants, exchanged her pledges of love for deeds of hate, her theories of universal brotherhood for acts of selfish injustice, her psalms to the Goddess of Liberty for the battle-cry raised against the free mountains of Switzerland; when England herself was threatened with invasion; when the

oppressed became the oppressor; when the Republic passed into the Empire; when Napoleon's wars of conquest drenched Europe with blood; — then it was that, bewildered, betrayed, despairing of humanity, liberals turned conservatives, lovers of the race were driven back on the narrower virtue of patriotism and, for visions of the Golden Age and inspired songs to Freedom, came disbelief in visions, and loss of the power to sing. Wordsworth's stronger nature, on which the shock of disillusion fell at first with crushing force, rose from the blow chastened and serene, though never the same again. Henceforth he cared little for popular movements, trusted little in political agitations, but dwelt apart from cities, among the rustic poor, regaining his faith in mankind as he lingered in cottage doorways and heard, —

“From mouths of men obscure and lowly, truths
Replete with honor.”

His wounded heart found healing in the dear, familiar touch of nature; and his broken hopes for society were re-united in a deeper reverence for humanity. The ideal that made the glory of his youth was darkened; but, year by year, a calm-thoughted philosopher, he wrought steadily at his art, presenting his life to God as

“An oblation of divine tranquillity;”

and bequeathing to his fellow-men a noble body of poetry, instinct with

“Love and hope and faith's transcendent dower.”

But with the death of his aspiration for man, died the poet-life of Coleridge. "For Coleridge," says a keen-sighted critic, "wanted will; and with will, perseverance and continuance. Nothing gave his will force but high-pitched enthusiasm; and with its death within him, with the perishing of his youthful dream, the enduring energy of life visited him no more. And this is specially true of him as Poet. Almost all his best poetic work is coincident with the Revolution; afterwards, everything is incomplete."

Yet it is possible that the poetic power, even after this benumbing shock, might yet have rallied, had not Coleridge suffered himself to become enslaved by the opium-habit.

"Sickness, 'tis true,
Whole years of weary days, besieged him close,
Even to the gates and inlets of his life :"

but the remedy was worse than the disease. Recognizing to the full the shame and misery entailed upon him by this bondage, which made lethargy of his days and torture of his nights, he nevertheless lacked the manliness to break his chain.

"Sad lot, to have no hope ! Though lowly kneeling
He fain would frame a prayer within his breast,
Would fain entreat for some sweet breath of healing,
That his sick body might have ease and rest ;
He strove in vain ! the dull sighs from his chest
Against his will the stifling load revealing,
Though nature forced ; though like some captive guest,
Some royal prisoner at his conqueror's feast,
An alien's restless mood but half concealing,

The sternness on his gentle brow confessed
 Sickness within and miserable feeling;
 Though obscure pangs made curses of his dreams,
 And dreaded sleep, each night repelled in vain,
 Each night was scattered by its own loud screams;
 Yet never could his heart command, though fain,
 One deep full wish to be no more in pain."

The laudanum fostered his natural indolence and procrastination. Bitterly he reproached himself, but his self-rebukings did not lead to amendment.

"To me hath Heaven with bounteous hand assign'd
 Energetic reason and a shaping mind,
 The daring ken of truth, the patriot's part,
 And pity's sigh, that breathes the gentle heart —
 Sloth-jaundiced all! and from my graspless hand
 Drop friendship's precious pearls, like hour-glass sand."

And beneath one of his unfinished poems he wrote these words of saddest significance, —

"Carmen reliquum in futurum tempus relegatum.
 To-morrow! and To-morrow! and To-morrow!" —

It was not the least of Coleridge's sufferings that he could not suffer alone. To read the record of his Herculean projects and frail accomplishment, is to pity, not only him, but his wife and children. Domestic care, financial responsibility, fretted and harassed the man of contemplation; he struggled against the stream for a little, and then drifted with the current, lamenting, but no longer resisting. In his earlier poems we have frequent and tender allusions to his bride, and passages of purest beauty concerning his infant child. But he has

not been one year married before his spirit is sorely irked by the necessity for regular labor with his pen, to meet the expenses of his little household. To a friend he writes: "I am forced to write for bread — write the flights of poetic enthusiasm, when every minute I am hearing a groan from my wife. Groans, and complaints, and sickness. The present hour I am in a quickset hedge of embarrassments, and, whichever way I turn, a thorn runs into me. The future is cloud and thick darkness. Poverty, perhaps, and the thin faces of them that want bread looking up to me! Nor is this all. My happiest moments for composition are broken in upon by the reflection that I must make haste. 'I am too late!' 'I am already months behind!' 'I have received my pay beforehand.' O wayward and desultory spirit of Genius, ill canst thou brook a taskmaster!"

The odds were too heavily against him, restless, irresolute, unreliable as he was. "The courage necessary for him, above all things, had been denied this man," says Carlyle. "His life, with such ray of the empyrean in it, was great and terrible to him, and he had not valiantly grappled with it; he had fled from it, sought refuge in vague day-dreams, hollow compromises, in opium, in theosophic metaphysics. Harsh pain, danger, necessity, slavish, harnessed toil, were of all things abhorrent to him. And so the empyrean element, lying smothered under the terrene, and yet inextinguishable there, made sad writhings. For pain, danger, difficulty, steady slaving toil, and other highly disagreeable behests of destiny, shall in no wise be shirked by any brightest mortal that

will approve himself loyal to his mission in this world; nay, precisely the higher he is, the deeper will be the disagreeableness and the detestability, to flesh and blood, of the tasks laid on him, and the heavier, too, and more tragic, his penalties if he neglects them."

Never was erring poet blessed with more patient and more generous friends. Southey's home afforded a refuge to Mrs. Coleridge and the children. The Wordsworths opened their doors to him. De Quincey gave him money. Many another friend did the same, sometimes spontaneously, more often in response to Coleridge's begging letters. For the last eighteen years of his life the unthrifty, humiliated poet was kindly cared for in the family of a Dr. Gilman.

"It is no secret," says Leigh Hunt, "that Coleridge lived in the Grove at Highgate with a friendly family, who had sense and kindness enough to know that they did themselves honor by looking after the comfort of such a man. His room looked upon a delicious prospect of wood and meadow, with colored gardens under the window, like an embroidery to the mantle. I thought, when I first saw it, that he had taken up his dwelling-place like an abbot. Here he cultivated his flowers, and had a set of birds for his pensioners, who came to breakfast with him. He might have been seen taking his daily stroll up and down, with his black coat and white locks, and a book in his hand; and was a great acquaintance of the little children."

In this peaceful retreat, enabled at last, by the aid of his friendly physician, to escape in some degree from the

tyranny of opium, Coleridge seemed to begin life anew; but it was life as a philosopher, now, no longer as a poet. Fourteen years before this retirement to Highgate, Coleridge himself had mournfully recorded the suspension of his poetic faculty.

“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.”

The “shaping spirit of imagination” did not return to him, in this quiet evening of his stormy day; but his pen was industrious, especially in lines of literary criticism and of religious philosophy. The list of his prose works comprises “The Friend,” “Two Lay Sermons,” “Biographia Literaria,” “Aids to Reflection,” “Church and State,” “Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit,” and “Literary Remains.” Besides these, he left behind a mass of notes and correspondence, and a volume has been

made of his "Table-talk." These works, though unequal in merit, all reveal the presence of what De Quincey has styled "the largest and most spacious intellect, the subtlest and the most comprehensive, in my judgment, that has yet existed amongst men."

As a Shakspearian critic, Coleridge is unsurpassed in English letters. As a religious philosopher, he exerted a powerful influence over his own and the succeeding generation, being the first to introduce the German speculations into English theology. Abandoning his Unitarianism, he found place again within the Established Church, and notwithstanding his familiarity with the writings of the most able sceptics of France and Germany, taught a distinctively Christian philosophy.

Coleridge's wonderful flow of speech attracted many disciples to Highgate; his later years knew honor and reverence, and the faithful friends of his youth loved him to the end. Charles Lamb, indeed, never recovered from the shock of his old schoolfellow's death, which occurred in 1834, and survived him but a short time. Wordsworth laments the two friends together.

"Nor has the rolling year twice measured
From sign to sign its steadfast course,
Since every mortal power of Coleridge
Was frozen at its marvellous source.

"The rapt one, of the godlike forehead,
The heaven-eyed creature sleeps in earth;
And Lamb, the frolic and the gentle,
Has vanished from his lonely hearth."

For Wordsworth, like Scott and all that shining group of poets who were Coleridge's contemporaries, stood awe-stricken before the miraculous imagination which, in the "Rime of the Ancient Mariner," but gave forth one flash of its splendor. After that twenty-fifth year of high achievement, the over-burdened life went astray in sad, ignoble confusions; but at last it was the poet who lay dying. "I am dying," he said, "but without expectation of a speedy release. Is it not strange that very recently bygone images, and scenes of early life, have stolen into my mind, like breezes blown from the spice-islands of Youth and Hope, — those two realities of this phantom world?"

To Coleridge these might well seem the only realities; for in the days of youth and hope alone had he been true to his own reality, — his one rightful life as poet. In the presence of these words his later years, their errors and their sufferings, even their labors, fade away; and we know Coleridge once again as the "heaven-eyed" youth who roamed with Wordsworth over the Quantock Hills, chanting his magical, dreamland ballads, "exquisitely wild," to the music of his own inspired heart.

PEN PICTURES OF COLERIDGE.

COME back into memory, like as thou wert in the dayspring of thy fancies, with hope like a fiery column before thee — the dark pillar not yet turned — Samuel Taylor Coleridge — Logician, Metaphysician, Bard! — How have I seen the casual passer through the cloisters stand still, entranced with admiration (while he weighed the disproportion between the *speech* and the *garb* of the young *Mirandula*), to hear thee unfold, in thy deep and sweet intonations, the mysteries of *Jamblichus*, or *Plotinus* (for even in those years thou waxedst not pale at such philosophic draughts), or reciting *Homer* in his Greek, or *Pindar* — while the walls of the old Gray Friars re-echoed to the accents of the *inspired charity-boy!* — CHARLES LAMB.

You had a great loss in not seeing Coleridge. He is a wonderful man. His conversation teems with soul, mind, and spirit. Then he is so benevolent, so good-tempered and cheerful, and, like William, interests himself so much about every little trifle. 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 gray; 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. — DOROTHY WORDSWORTH.

The noticeable man with large gray eyes. — WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

In height, he might seem to be about five feet eight (he was, in reality, about an inch and a half taller, but his figure was of an order which drowns the height); his person was broad and full, and tended even to corpulence; his complexion was fair, though not what painters technically style fair, because it was associated with black hair; his eyes were large and soft in their expression; and it was from the peculiar appearance of haze or dreaminess, which mixed with their light, that I recognized my object. This was Coleridge. — THOMAS DE QUINCEY.

Coleridge was as little fitted for action as Lamb, but on a different account. His person was of a good height, but as sluggish and solid as the other's was light and active. He had, perhaps, suffered it to look old before its time, for want of exercise. His hair was white at fifty; and, as he generally dressed in black, and had a very tranquil demeanor, his appearance was gentlemanly, and for several years before his death was reverend. Nevertheless, there was something invincibly young in the look of his face. It was round and fresh colored, with agreeable features, and an open, indolent, good-natured mouth. This boy-like expression was very becoming in one who dreamed and speculated as he did when he was really a boy, and who passed his life apart from the rest of the world with a book and his flowers. His forehead was prodigious, a great piece of placid marble; and his fine eyes, in which all the activity of his mind seemed to concentrate,

moved under it with a sprightly ease, as if it was pastime to him to carry all that thought. — LEIGH HUNT.

Coleridge sat on the brow of Highgate Hill, in those years, looking down on London and its smoke-tumult, like a sage escaped from the inanity of life's battle; attracting toward him the thoughts of innumerable brave souls still engaged there. His express contributions to poetry, philosophy, or any specific province of human literature or enlightenment, had been small and sadly intermittent; but he had, especially among young inquiring men, a higher than literary, a kind of prophetic or magician character. He was thought to hold, he alone in England, the key of German and other transcendentalisms; knew the sublime secret of believing by "the reason" what "the understanding" had been obliged to fling out as incredible; and could still, after Hume and Voltaire had done their best and worst with him, profess himself an orthodox Christian, and say and print to the Church of England, with its singular old rubrics and surplices at Allhallowtide, *Esto perpetua*. A sublime man; who, alone in those dark days, had saved his crown of spiritual manhood; escaping from the black materialisms, and revolutionary deluges, with "God, Freedom, Immortality," still his: a king of men. The practical intellects of the world did not much heed him, or carelessly reckoned him a metaphysical dreamer: but to the rising spirits of the young generation, he had this dusky, sublime character; and sat there as a kind of *Magus*, girt in mystery and enigma; his Dodona oak grove (Mr. Gilman's house at Highgate) whispering strange things, uncertain whether oracles or jargon.

The good man, he was now getting old, towards sixty, perhaps; and gave you the idea of a life that had been full of

sufferings; a life heavy-laden, half-vanquished, still swimming painfully in seas of manifold physical and other bewilderment. Brow and head were round, and of massive weight, but the face was flabby and irresolute. The deep eyes, of a light hazel, were as full of sorrow as of inspiration; confused pain looked mildly from them, as in a kind of mild astonishment. The whole figure and air, good and amiable otherwise, might be called flabby and irresolute; expressive of weakness under possibility of strength. He hung loosely on his limbs, with knees bent, and stooping attitude; in walking, he rather shuffled than decisively stepped; and a lady once remarked, he never could fix which side of the garden-walk would suit him best, but continually shifted, in corkscrew fashion, and kept trying both. A heavy-laden, high-aspiring, and surely much-suffering man. His voice, naturally soft and good, had contracted itself into a plaintive snuffle and sing-song; he spoke as if preaching, you would have said, preaching earnestly and also hopelessly the weightiest things. I still recollect his "object" and "subject," terms of continual recurrence in the Kantean province; and how he sung and snuffled them into "om-m-mject" and "sum-m-mject" with a kind of solemn shake or quaver, as he rolled along. No talk, in his century or in any other, could be more surprising. — THOMAS CARLYLE.

To pass an entire day with Coleridge was a marvellous change, indeed [from the talk of daily life]. It was a Sabbath past expression, deep, and tranquil, and serene. You came to a man who had travelled in many countries, and in critical times; who had seen and felt the world in most of its ranks, and in many of its vicissitudes and weaknesses; one to whom all literature and art were absolutely subject; and to whom, with a reasonable allowance as to technical details,

all science was, in a most extraordinary degree, familiar. Throughout a long-drawn summer's day, would this man talk to you in low, equable, but clear and musical tones, concerning things human and divine; marshalling all history, harmonizing all experiment, probing the depths of your consciousness, and revealing visions of glory and terror to the imagination; but pouring, withal, such floods of light upon the mind that you might for a season, like Paul, become blind in the very act of conversion. And this he would do without so much as one allusion to himself, without a word of reflection upon others, save when any given art fell naturally in the way of his discourse; without one anecdote that was not proof and illustration of a previous position; gratifying no passion, indulging no caprice, but, with a calm mastery over your soul, leading you onward and onward forever through a thousand windings, yet with no pause, to some magnificent point in which, as in a focus, all the parti-colored rays of his discourse should converge in light. In all these, he was, in truth, your teacher and guide; but, in a little while, you might forget that he was other than a fellow-student and the companion of your way, so playful was his manner, so simple his language, so affectionate the glance of his eye! — NELSON COLERIDGE.

Visionary Coleridge, who
Did sweep his thoughts, as angels do
Their wings, with cadence up the blue.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

HINTS ON THE HANDLING OF A POEM.

“POETRY,” says Coleridge, “is the blossom and the fragrance of all human knowledge, human thoughts, human passions, emotions, language.”

Essentially a poem cannot be taught. The student learns his deepest lesson from the poet and from no other. A teacher does well to be on his guard, lest he obtrude his own personality between the two. It is the poet himself, who, arresting the attention by song, holding it by vision after vision, can best impart to the young intellect the truth he has to tell, can alone inspire in the young heart a sympathetic passion for that truth. The function of the teacher, in dealing with any particular poem, is, first and foremost, to help the student fix his attention upon it. This can usually be done by questioning, better than in any other way. A running fire of questions, searching, varied, stimulates the mental activity, pricks into life the sluggish perceptions, gives form and color to those poem-pictures which are often so dimly and vaguely reproduced by the untutored imagination; and thus securing the vivid presentment of the scene, the clear comprehension of the thought, does away with the intellectual barrier, and brings the heart of the student into free contact with the glowing heart

of the poet. Since definite knowledge is a requisite basis for true sympathy, such questions would relate in part to the meaning of terms and phrases employed; and rigid must be the will of that teacher who is not sometimes tempted aside from his main object by the "fossil poetry" of individual words, and led to inquire into the secrets of their origin and growth; yet the study of literature is more than philology. Such questions might relate, in part, to the structure of sentences; the significance of allusions, geographical, historical, mythological; the value of an illustration; the force of an argument; the development of a thought;—all this to insure a firm intellectual grasp of the subject-matter. Yet this done, the half has not been done. To understand the poet's message is one thing; to feel it, know it, and reach out beyond it toward the purer message he suggests, but has not words to utter, is another. Indeed, care should constantly be taken that these more superficial questions be kept in the background and not suffered to distract the student's mind from the poetic essence. For the study of literature must not be mistaken for the study of syntax, geography, history, mythology or logic. All questions that awaken the imagination and enable it to glorify the printed words into such clear-colored visions as dazzled the "mind's eye" of the poet while he wrote are of peculiar value. Questions that quicken the ear to the music of the poet's verse, and all other questions that render the student aware of poetic artifice, responsive to poetic effects, indirectly serve to deepen the central impression of the poem;

since these very melodies and rhetorical devices are not idle ornament, but the studied emphasis of the poet's word. Questions that lead the student to recognize and define in himself the emotions aroused by one passage or another in the poem, questions that call forth an attempt to supply missing links in the chain of events, questions that carry the reason and imagination forward on the lines suggested by the poet, all tend to mould the student's mood into sympathy with that higher mood, sensitive, eager, impassioned, in which the singer first conceived his song.

The question-method may be well supplemented by topical recitation, class discussion, citation of parallel passages, comparison with kindred poems and, under due precautions, the reading of criticisms. The committing a poem to memory, that its virtue may gradually distil into the mind and become a force in the unconscious life, is most desirable wherever it is possible to train the student to learn poetry by heart and not by rote. The slavish and mechanical engrossing of words, lines and stanzas upon some blank tablet of the brain, is of questionable benefit; but where the student is able to learn the poem as a *poem*, not as a column of verses, — to possess himself, by the powers of attention and analysis, of the sequence of events and grouping of images, remembering these in the poet's own language, because on trial he finds that language the most natural and best; this surpasses for poetic education every exercise that the ingenuity of teacher can devise.

At all events, leave the student alone with the poet at

the first and at the last. Let him have his earliest reading of the poem with fresh, unprejudiced mind, and when teacher, classroom and critics have done their best and their worst with him, return him to the poet again. If possible, let a little time intervene, and then let the poem be read aloud before the class; or, better still, recited by some one who has entered deeply into its spirit, and whose voice is musical and expressive. So will the first impression be intensified, and the seed-sowing of analysis and criticism be harvested in a richer renewal of poetic sympathy. For poetry is not knowledge to be apprehended; it is passion to be felt, — passion for the truth revealed in beauty, and for the hinted truth too beautiful to be revealed.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER.

IN SEVEN PARTS.

(1797.)

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? quæ 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 hodiernæ vitæ 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 · ARCHÆOL. PHIL. p. 68.

TRANSLATION. — I readily believe that there are more invisible beings in the universe than visible. But who will declare to us the nature of all these, the rank, relationships, distinguishing characteristics and qualities of each? What is it they do? Where is it they dwell? Always the human intellect circles around the knowledge of these mysteries, never touching the centre. Meanwhile it is, I deny not, oft-times well pleasing to behold sketched upon the mind, as upon a tablet, a picture of the greater and better world; so shall not the spirit, wonted to the petty concerns of daily life, narrow itself over-much, nor sink utterly into trivialities. But meanwhile we must diligently seek after truth, and maintain a temperate judgment, if we would distinguish certainty from uncertainty, day from night.

T. BURNET: ARCHÆOL. PHIL. p. 68.

PART I.

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:
Mayst 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.

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 is spell-bound by the eye of the old seafaring man, and constrained to hear his tale,

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 light-house top.

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.

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

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

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 heareth the bridal music; but the Mariner continueth his tale.

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

The ship, drawn 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.

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!

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;
 Through 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 !

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

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

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."

"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.

The ancient Mariner inhospitably killeth the pious bird of good omen.

PART II.

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 !

His ship-mates
cry out against
the ancient Mari-
ner, 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 !

But when the fog
cleared off, they
justify the same,
and thus make
themselves ac-
complices 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.
'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.

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.

The ship hath
been suddenly
becalmed.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'Twas 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.

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

And the Albatross
 begins to be
 avenged.

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.

A spirit had fol-
 lowed them; one
 of the invisible
 inhabitants of
 this planet,
 neither departed
 souls nor angels;
 concerning which
 the learned Jew,
 Josephus, and
 the Platonic Con-
 stantinopolitan,
 Michael Psellus,
 may be consulted.
 They are very
 numerous, and
 there is no cli-
 mate or element
 without one or
 more.

And some in dreams assurèd 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.

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

The ship-mates,
 in their sore dis-
 tress, would fain
 throw the whole
 guilt on the an-
 cient Mariner; in
 sign whereof they
 hang the dead
 sea-bird round
 his neck.

PART III.

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.

The ancient Mariner beholdeth a sign in the element afar off.

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.

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!

A flash of joy;

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
 Agape they heard me call:
 Gramercy! they for joy did grin,
 And all at once their breath drew in,
 As they were drinking all.

And horror follows. For can it be a *ship* that comes onward without wind or tide?

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.

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.

It seemeth him
 but the skeleton
 of a ship.

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?

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?

And its ribs are
 seen as bars on
 the face of the
 setting Sun. The
 Spectre-Woman
 and her Death-
 mate, and no
 other on board
 the skeleton ship.

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.

Like vessel, like
 crew!

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.

Death and Life-
 in-Death have
 dived for the
 ship's crew and
 she (the latter)
 winneth the an-
 cient Mariner.

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.

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 hornèd Moon, with one bright star
Within the nether tip.

At the rising of
the Moon.

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.

One after another,
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.

But Life-in-
Death begins her
work on the an-
cient 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 IV.

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

The Wedding-Guest feareth that a spirit is talking to him ;

I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
 And thy skinny hand, so brown.” —

“ Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest !
 This body dropt not down.

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

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

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

He despiseth the creatures of the calm.

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

And envieth that they should live, and so many lie dead.

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.

But the curse liv-
 eth 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 the curse in a dead man's eye !
 Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
 And yet I could not die.

In loneliness and
 fixedness he
 yearneth towards
 the journeying
 Moon, and the
 stars that still
 sojourn, yet
 still move on-
 ward ; 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 ex-
 pected, and yet
 there is a silent
 joy at their ar-
 rival.

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 alway
 A still and awful red.

By the light of
 the Moon he be-
 holdeth 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.

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.

Their beauty and
their happiness.

He blesseth them
in his heart.

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

The spell begins
to break.

PART V.

O 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.

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

By grace of the
holy Mother, the
ancient Mariner
is refreshed with
rain

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 blessèd ghost.

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.

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

The bodies of the
 ship's crew are
 inspirited, and
 the ship moves
 on.

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." —

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

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

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 skylark sing;
 Sometimes all little birds that are,
 How they seemed to fill the sea and air
 With their sweet jargoning!

And now 'twas 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.

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 alsó.

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.

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.

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.

The Polar Spirit's fellow-dæmons, 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.

'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 VI.

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.

The Mariner hath
 been cast into a
 trance; for the
 angelic power
 causeth the vessel
 to drive north-
 ward 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.’

I woke, and we were sailing on
As in a gentle weather :
'Twas night, calm night, the Moon was high ;
The dead men stood together.

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

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.

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, —

The curse is finally expiated.

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.

And the ancient
 Mariner behold-
 eth 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, —
 Oh, let me be awake, my God!
 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.

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

The angelic
 spirits leave the
 dead bodies.

And the bay was white with silent light,
 Till rising from the same,
 Full many shapes, that shadows were,
 In crimson colors came.

A little distance from the prow
 Those crimson shadows were :
 I turned my eyes upon the deck, —
 O 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.

And appear in
 their own forms
 of light.

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 shrive my soul, he'll wash away
 The Albatross's blood.

PART VII.

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 mariners
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?'

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 afeared.’ — ‘ 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.

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.

The ship sud-
 denly sinketh.

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.

The ancient Mar-
 iner is saved in
 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.

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.

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 'twas, that God himself
 Scarce seemèd there to be.

O, sweeter than the marriage-feast,
 'Tis 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!

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

And to teach by
 his own example
 love and rever-
 ence to all things
 that God made
 and loveth.

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.

NOTES ON THE ANCIENT MARINER.

IN the manuscript notes which Wordsworth left behind him stands this record: "In the autumn of 1797, Mr. Coleridge, my sister, and myself started from Alfoxden pretty late in the afternoon with a view to visit Linton and the Valley of Stones near to it; and as our united funds were very small, we agreed to defray the expense of the tour by writing a poem to be sent to the *New Monthly Magazine*. Accordingly, we set off, and proceeded along the Quantock Hills towards Watchet; and in the course of this walk was planned the poem of the 'Ancient Mariner,' founded on a dream, as Mr. Coleridge said, of his friend Mr. Cruikshank. Much the greatest part of the story was Mr. Coleridge's invention, but certain parts I suggested; for example, some crime was to be committed which should bring upon the Old Navigator, as Coleridge afterwards delighted to call him, the spectral persecution, as a consequence of that crime and his own wanderings. I had been reading in Shelvocke's 'Voyages,' a day or two before, that while doubling Cape Horn, they frequently saw albatrosses in that latitude, the largest sort of sea fowl, some extending their wings twelve or thirteen feet. 'Suppose,' said I, 'you represent him as having killed one of these birds on entering the South Sea, and that the tutelary spirits of these regions take upon them to avenge the crime.' The incident was thought fit for the purpose, and adopted accordingly. I also suggested the navigation of the ship by the dead men, but do not recollect that I had anything more to

do with the scheme of the poem. The gloss with which it was subsequently accompanied was not thought of by either of us at the time, at least, not a hint of it was given to me, and I have no doubt it was a gratuitous afterthought. We began the composition together on that, to me, memorable evening. I furnished two or three lines at the beginning of the poem, in particular, —

‘ And listened like a three years’ child :
The Mariner had his will.’

These trifling contributions, all but one, which Mr. C. has with unnecessary scrupulosity recorded,

‘ And thou art long, and lank, and brown
As is the ribbed sea sand,’

slipped out of his mind, as well they might. As we endeavored to proceed conjointly (I speak of the same evening) our respective manners proved so widely different that it would have been quite presumptuous in me to do anything but separate from an undertaking upon which I could only have been a clog. . . . The ‘ Ancient Mariner ’ grew and grew till it became too important for our first object, which was limited to our expectation of five pounds ; and we began to think of a volume which was to consist, as Mr. Coleridge has told the world, of poems chiefly on supernatural subjects.”

Says De Quincey in his “ Lake Poets : ” —

“ In the year 1810, I happened to be amusing myself by reading, in their chronological order, the great classical circumnavigations of the earth ; and, coming to Shelvocke, I met with a passage to this effect : — That Hatley, his second captain (*i. e.* lieutenant), being a melancholy man, was possessed by a fancy that some long season of foul weather was due to an albatross which had steadily pursued the ship ; upon which he shot the bird, but without mending their condition.

There at once I saw the germ of the ‘Ancient Mariner :’ . . . though it is very possible, from something which Coleridge said on another occasion, that before meeting a fable in which to embody his ideas, he had meditated a poem on delirium, confounding its own dream scenery with external things, and connected with the imagery of high latitudes.”

Part the First. If this poem be compared for ballad characteristics with other sea ballads, as the “The Wreck of the Hesperus,” “The Ship o’ the Fiend,” and, in Coleridge’s own words, — “The grand old ballad of ‘Sir Patrick Spence,’” it will be noticed how closely the first stanza of this last resembles in form the introductory stanza of the ‘Ancient Mariner.’

“The king sits in Dunfermline town,
Drinking the blude-red wine;
‘O whare will I get a skeely skipper
To sail this new ship o’ mine?’”

Part the Second: stanza fifth. In the “Sibylline Leaves” (1817), the second line is printed, —

“The furrow stream’d off free,”

with the foot-note by Coleridge: “In the former edition the line was, —

‘The furrow follow’d free;’

but I had not been long on board a ship before I perceived that this was the image as seen by a spectator from the shore, or from another vessel. From the ship itself the *wake* appears like a brook flowing off from the stern.” But in later editions the earlier and more musical expression was restored.

Part the Third: stanza tenth. Notice Milton’s picture of Death:

“That other shape —
If shape it might be called that shape had none
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb;
Or substance might be called that shadow seemed,

For each seemed either — black it stood as Night,
 Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as Hell,
 And shook a dreadful dart: what seemed his head
 The likeness of a kingly crown had on."

Paradise Lost, II., 666-673.

Stanza twelfth. In the early editions this was followed by the stanza:

"A gust of wipd sterte up behind,
 And whistled through his bones;
 Through the holes of his eyes and the hole of his mouth,
 Half whistles and half groans."

Part the Fourth: stanza fourth. Compare Milton's

"Attended with ten thousand thousand saints;"

Paradise Lost, VI., 767.

and Spenser's

"All these, and thousand thousands many more."

The Faerie Queene, II., XII., 25.

Stanza seventh, line fifth. The earlier editions have "cloud" for "load."

Part the Fifth: stanza sixteenth. See poems to "The Skylark," by Shelley, Wordsworth, and Hogg.

Stanza twenty-second. Notice this same echo-effect as a favorite device of Poe, in "Lenore," "Ulalume," "Annabel Lee," etc.

Part the Sixth: stanza tenth. Compare Spenser's

"So soone as Mammon there arrivd, the dore
 To him did open and afforded way;
 Him followed eke Sir Guyon evermore,
 Ne darkeness him ne daunger might dismay.
 Soone as he entred was, the dore streightway
 Did shutt, and from behind it forth there lept
 An ugly feend, more fowle than dismall day,
 The which with monstrous stalke behind him stept,
 And ever as he went dew watch upon him kept.

“ Well hoped hee, ere long that hardy guest,
 If ever covetous hand, or lustfull eye
 Or lips he layd on thing that likte him best,
 Or ever sleepe his eie-strings did untye,
 Should be his pray; and therefore still on hye
 He over him did hold his cruell clawes,
 Threatning with greedy gripe to doe him dye,
 And rend in peeces with his ravenous pawes,
 If ever he transgrest the fatall Stygian lawes.”

The Faerie Queene, II., VII., 26-27.

Stanza sixteenth, fourth line. Compare Longfellow's

“ I stood on the bridge at midnight,
 As the clocks were striking the hour,
 And the moon rose o'er the city,
 Behind the dark church-tower.

“ I saw her bright reflection
 In the waters under me,
 Like a golden goblet falling
 And sinking into the sea.

“ And forever and forever,
 As long as the river flows,
 As long as the heart has passions,
 As long as life has woes,

“ The moon and its broken reflection
 And its shadows shall appear,
 As the symbol of love in heaven,
 And its wavering image here.”

The Bridge.

Stanza eighteenth, first line. Compare Coleridge's

“ Hark! the cadence dies away
 On the yellow, moonlight sea.”

Remorse, Act III., Sc. I., Song.

Part the Seventh: stanza second. Compare Goldsmith's hermit in “Edwin and Angelina.”

Stanza twenty-second. Compare Wordsworth's

“The Being, that is in the clouds and air,
That is in the green leaves among the groves,
Maintains a deep and reverential care
For the unoffending creatures whom he loves.

“One lesson, Shepherd, let us two divide,
Taught by what Nature shows, and what conceals;
Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels.”

Hart-Leap Well.

Compare also the conclusion of Tennyson's “Two Voices.”

QUESTIONS ON THE ANCIENT MARINER.

PART THE FIRST.

WHY should not the poem open less abruptly, — with a description, for example, of the surrounding scenery, as in Longfellow's "Evangeline"? Would the first scene be equally effective, if the Wedding-Guest were alone, instead of "one of three"? Is there any gain in thus giving us the picture of the Ancient Mariner, — not directly, but in the words of the Wedding-Guest? What is the impression made on the Wedding-Guest at the outset by the "long grey beard and glittering eye"? What poetic purpose is served by setting this tale of the Ancient Mariner against the background of a wedding feast? What indication of hurry and impatience is there in the last line of the second stanza? What is the meaning of *eftsoons*? How is it that the "glittering eye" holds the Wedding-Guest better than the "skinny hand"? What do the interruptions of the Wedding-Guest, as the tale proceeds, indicate in regard to his successive states of mind? Are there more reasons than one for giving this picture of the harbor here? How does the poem tell us in what direction the ship is sailing? Where is the ship when the sun stands over the mast at noon? What makes the beauty of the ninth stanza? Does the tenth stanza gain or lose in force from the fact that every line is the repetition of a former line? How do you understand the line

"Still treads the shadow of his foe"?

What is the main force of the comparison in the twelfth stanza? How do the following three stanzas contrast with the twelfth? What impressions are made upon the ship's crew by this Antarctic

sea? How do you understand the word *drifts* in this connection? Why was it a "*dismal sheen*"? What is the obvious and what the suggested significance of the comparison in the last line of the fifteenth stanza? What is the appearance of an albatross? How does the greeting given the Albatross make the Mariner's crime the more revolting? How do the actions of the Albatross enhance the guilt of the Mariner? What advantage is believed by the sailors to accrue to them from the presence of the Albatross? Why, as suggested in the phrase "vespers nine," with later references to the saints, "Mary Queen" and the "holy Hermit" who has power to shrive the soul of sin, does Coleridge choose Roman Catholicism for the religious setting of his poem? Is the snow-fog, glimmering white in the moonshine, white or dark by day? By what device does the poet increase the effect upon us of the Mariner's confession? What have been so far the sounds of the voyage? Can you find a line farther on in the poem which vividly depicts the last, ominous sound hinted at in this division of the tale?

PART THE SECOND.

When and how did the ship turn northward? Why did the Mariner shoot the Albatross? Why do his shipmates cry out against him? Have his shipmates any share in his crime, or is it unjust that they should share his punishment? What change is there in the appearance of the rising sun, as they pass from fog to clear weather? What is the "silent sea"? Would the first line of the sixth stanza be as effective written thus:

"Down dropt the breeze, down dropt the sails"?

At what point is the ship becalmed? What does the poet mean by a "*copper sky*"? What is the effect of the repetition in the eighth and ninth stanzas? Can you substitute a better word for *stuck* in the eighth stanza? What gives its peculiar force to the simile of the eighth stanza? In the ninth stanza, what is the syntax of *water*? What figure of speech prevails in this ninth stanza? Do the last two lines of the tenth stanza help or hinder

the poetic effect? Are the words "with legs" superfluous? Why is the rhyming effect emphasized in the first line of the eleventh stanza? What is the meaning of *rout* in this connection? What do you understand by *death-fires*? What suggestions come with the words "witch's oils"? Does the eleventh stanza, with its dance and color, produce upon you an impression of gladness? Why does not the poet make the avenging spirit visible? Can you find two lines, farther on in the poem, descriptive of this spirit? What are the numbers referred to in the poem, and why should these numbers be selected rather than others? What picture in strong contrast to this tropic belt of calms, is suggested to memory by the last line of the twelfth stanza? What is the derivation of *well-a-day*? Why do the sailors hang the Albatross about the Mariner's neck?

PART THE THIRD.

Does the word *weary* occur too often in the first stanza? What lines earlier in the poem convey a like idea with: "Each throat was parched," and which expression seems to you the stronger? Why does the poet place the spectral ship in the west? How does he arouse our expectation and interest as regards the ship? What picture is called up by the third line of the third stanza? How is this suggestion of a water-sprite in accordance with the rest of the poem? How does the fourth stanza compare with the gloss upon it? What is the derivation of *Gramercy*? Why does the poet use the word *grin* in this connection? What is the significance of the last two lines of the fifth stanza? How do you picture the group of mariners that stand watching the progress of the coming ship? Are their eyes still glazed? What successive changes pass over their faces, as the ship draws near? What feeling does the Ancient Mariner express in the sixth stanza? Is there any indication in the seventh stanza that he regards the ship as supernatural? Why should the picture sketched in the eighth stanza fill the Ancient Mariner with fear? What reason have we for assuming that his feeling is one of fear?

What is the meaning of the gloss: "Like vessel, like crew"? What is the gain in poetic effect from placing this scene at the hour of sunset? What is the derivation of *gossameres*? What does the word *gossameres* suggest in regard to the sails? What figure of speech gives force to stanzas ninth and tenth? Why is the attention of the Ancient Mariner concentrated from the first upon the Woman rather than upon Death? Is there any culmination of horror in the questions of the Ancient Mariner? Does the Woman, with her red lips and yellow locks, impress us as beautiful? What feeling does she arouse in us? What is there in the description to justify this feeling? How do you picture that group of the twain casting dice? (See *Notes* for Milton's conception of Death.) What is the demeanor of the Woman? What do you imagine to be the demeanor of Death? What was the stake in this game which the Woman has won? Has Death won anything by the dice? How does the gloss enhance the beauty of the description given in the first two lines of the thirteenth stanza? How does the sentence structure in those two lines heighten the effect? What are the peculiarly expressive words in those lines? To what sense does the first half of the thirteenth stanza appeal? To what sense the second? What causes the "far-heard whisper"? Why is the swift motion of the spectre-bark so appalling? What is signified by the looking *sideways* up? What is the force of the comparison in the fourteenth stanza? How do the dim stars and thick night correspond with the Mariner's mood? What is the value of the fifth and sixth lines of this stanza? What is the eastern *bar*? Can you sketch

"The hornèd Moon, with one bright star
Within the nether tip"?

What is the function, in the narrative, of this long stanza? Is the expression "the star-dogged Moon" pleasant or unpleasant to you? Why does the poet throw moonlight, rather than darkness, over so terrible a scene? Why does he make the deaths so swift and sudden? What seems to the horror-stricken Mariner most strange

about these deaths? What is the peculiarity of certain words employed in the third line of the sixteenth stanza? Why should the poet arrange that the close of the sixteenth stanza suggest the beginning of the fifteenth? Has the Ancient Mariner a heavier or lighter punishment than his shipmates? When does his torment of conscience begin? Why should the poet close each division of the tale with an allusion to the Albatross?

PART THE FOURTH.

Why does the Wedding-Guest fear the Ancient Mariner? What do you understand by the expression "the *ribbed* sea sand"? What does that expression modify? What in form goes to constitute the peculiar power of the third stanza? What in substance? How do the glosses interpret that mood of the Ancient Mariner suggested in the fourth stanza? How does the Ancient Mariner regard himself? What is the feeling which constrains him to turn his eyes from "the rotting sea"? What is the feeling which constrains him to turn his eyes from "the rotting deck"? What is the feeling which constrains him to turn his eyes from Heaven? What figures of speech occur in the sixth stanza? Do you detect any technical fault in this stanza? Does the Mariner escape his punishment by closing his eyes? What line earlier in the poem is formed like the third line of the seventh stanza? What similarity in poetic effect follows upon this similarity of structure? What is the climax of the Mariner's suffering? What is the effect upon him of the seven days and nights of penance? What first beguiles him from the consciousness of his own guilt and wretchedness? How is the verse suggestive here of the motion of the Moon? How does this tenth stanza contrast, in music and in vision, with the earlier part of the poem? What corresponding change may we infer is coming over the spirit of the Mariner? Why does his heart yearn toward "the journeying Moon," with her attendant stars? What added beauty does the gloss lend to the vision? Does the Mariner recognize the peaceful joy of the stars? In seeing the moon and the stars,

what have his tortured eyes at last forgotten to see? How do the Moon's beams *bemock* the main? What suggestion does the word *charmèd* throw upon this tropical sea-picture? What effect does the silence throughout all this scene produce? How is it that the Mariner can now bear to look upon the sea? With what feeling does he now watch those "slimy things," — "God's creatures of the great calm"? How do the water-snakes without the shadow of the ship contrast with those within the shadow? Why does the poet speak of "the *elfish* light"? What colors have we in the picture now? How is the Mariner able to distinguish beauty where before he had seen but the loathsome and the horrible? What is the force of the metaphor in the third line of the fourteenth stanza? What word in the following line enforces that metaphor? With what lines earlier in the poem do the last two lines of the fourteenth stanza contrast? What change in the Mariner's spirit is indicated by this contrast? In blessing the water-snakes, whom else does the Mariner bless? Why could he not pray before? How is it that he can pray now? Why at this point should the Albatross fall from his neck? Why is the Albatross described as sinking

" Like *lead* into the sea " ?

Why should not the poem end here ?

PART THE FIFTH.

How is it that the Ancient Mariner can sleep at last? What other praises of sleep do you find in poetry? How is the second line of the first stanza especially suited to the general range of this poem? How is the musical effect of the last two lines produced? What is the meaning of *silly* in this connection? Was the Mariner's dream unnatural? In what terms has he mentioned his lips and throat before? Would it have been better for the Mariner if he had died in sleep and become "a blessed ghost"? What further allusions have we to the "roaring wind"? What is the significance of *burst* in stanza sixth? What are the *fire flags*? What is the picture suggested by the sixth stanza? Why is the rhyming effect emphasized? How is the expression "*wan* stars"

peculiarly appropriate here? Does the comparison in the seventh stanza seem to you good? In the eighth stanza, what is the most forceful word? What is the meaning of *jag* here? What has been the progress of events since the Mariner awoke? What is the climax of that progress? Why should the poet resort to this device of inspiriting the bodies of the crew? What is the effect on the Mariner of the rising of the dead men? How does his present mood contrast with his mood as described in the first half of Part Fourth? Has the curse faded from the dead eyes of the sailors? Why does the Wedding-Guest again shrink back from the Ancient Mariner? At what hour do the blest spirits leave the bodies? In what form do the spirits ascend? Why is the rhyming effect emphasized in the first line of the fifteenth stanza? Why do the sounds seek the Sun? What is the suggestion in the word *darted*? Why should the poet select the *skylark* for special mention? What is the meaning of *jargon* here? Why does the poet change the tense in the seventeenth stanza? How does the simile in the eighteenth stanza compare with, —

“And the sails did sigh like sedge”?

Why “the *sleeping woods*”? Why “a *quiet tune*”? Why this sound of a breeze in the sails? When do the sails leave off their tune? Where is the ship then? How do you reconcile the gloss here with the gloss on the sixth stanza of Part Second? Why cannot the Polar Spirit carry the ship beyond the Line? Why has he borne on the ship so far? Is this restless, violent motion of the ship better or worse than her previous becalmed condition? What does the poet mean by “*living life*”? What are these voices in the air? Wherein is the Mariner’s deed a contrast to the deed of “*Him Who died on cross*”? What does the first voice tell us that makes the crime of the Mariner darker than before? What feeling is expressed by the first voice? What by the second?

PART THE SIXTH.

As you seem to hear the two voices, what is the difference in their sound and tone? Which does the poet represent as wiser, the

pitiful or the indignant spirit? Which spirit sees effect? Which sees cause? What scientific truth have we in stanzas second and third? What addition of poetic beauty? What bears on the ship? Why is the rhyming effect emphasized in the converse of the spirits? What further penance awaits the Mariner on awaking? How has it come to pass that the dead men stand together on the deck? What horror does the Mariner behold in the moonlight? When the spell is snapt and he draws his eyes from the glittering eyes of the dead, why cannot he clearly see the sights of the ocean? What corresponds in his experience to the frightful fiend of the comparison? What in the description leads us to feel that this wind is a symbol of hope? What would you select as the two most beautiful lines of the description? What poetic device is employed in the thirteenth stanza? What significance in the last line of that stanza? How does the poet make the fourteenth stanza expressive of strong emotion? Why does the Mariner take the sight of his "own countree" for a dream? How does his prayer connect with this first exclamation? Where have we seen already a picture of this same harbor? Was that also a moonlight picture? What reason is there for the change of order in these two mentions of hill and kirk and light-house top? What is the meaning of *strewn* in stanza sixteenth? Is the phenomenon described in the latter part of this stanza true to nature? What is the effect of the silence here as contrasted with the effect of that pervading Part Fourth? How does the phrase "the *steady* weathercock" deepen this impression? Is moonlight always white? How has the moon-picture prepared us for this second shadow-picture? Why does the poet show us the crimson reflections of the seraphs on the moonlight bay before we see the "men of light" themselves? How had the troop of blessed spirits been manifest before? Is there any expression here linking this scene to that? Why should the poet select the color crimson for the seraph-men? Instead of angel songs, what sounds does the Mariner hear? What is his chief reason for rejoicing in these sounds?

PART THE SEVENTH.

Has the poet any design in the number of these divisions? Why has he changed his usual term to *marineres*? Has he taken a like liberty with any other word in the poem? By what hint does the poet bring before us a vivid picture of the Hermit's oratory? Why is it natural for the Hermit to liken the thin sails to wintry leaves? What is the *ivy-tod*? What impression is made by the last two lines of the fifth stanza? How does the fourth stanza help to prepare us for the eighth? What causes the sinking of the ship? What general truth is there in the comparison "swift as dreams"? Is there peculiar value in such a comparison in this poem? Why is the rhyming effect emphasized in the tenth stanza? What else conduces to make the latter part of this stanza musical? Is the beauty of these two lines altogether in the music? What is the penance which the Hermit lays on the Mariner? In the seventeenth stanza, why would not the simile "like morn," for instance, be as good as "like night"? What did the Ancient Mariner see in the Wedding-Guest to lead him to declare his tale? What is your impression of the character of the Wedding-Guest? What contrast of sounds is there in the eighteenth stanza? What previous stanza is recalled by the second line of the nineteenth? Why does the Mariner find the kirk sweeter than the feast? Why does the Wedding-Guest turn from the bridegroom's door? What change has taken place in him? Does wisdom always bring sadness? How many successive sea-pictures can you find in the entire poem? How many moonlight pictures? Why does the poet have most of the scenes take place by moonlight? Why is the vocabulary of this poem so largely Anglo-Saxon? From what sources are the similes drawn? What is the general character of the similes? What are the most striking contrasts of the poem? What would you say of the melody? What of the imagery? What is the superficial falsehood of the poem? What the fundamental truth? What the central teaching?

INTERPRETATION OF THE ANCIENT MARINER.

How much does the Ancient Mariner mean? Is it true, as is ingeniously argued by a contributor to the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* (July, 1880), that this poem embodies a complete system of Christian theology, presenting "the Fall from the innocence of ignorance, from the immediacy of natural faith; and the return, through the mediation of sin and doubt, to conscious virtue and belief"? Does the Ancient Mariner represent mankind? the ship, the physical environment of the soul? the Albatross, faith in spiritual things? the snow-fog, ignorance? the golden sun, knowledge of good and evil? the tropic seas, the weary calm of "mere finite subjectivity"? the demon woman, unbelief? the spirit under the keel, divine grace? the Pilot and the Pilot's boy, "sensuous knowing and finite understanding"? the Hermit, reason? and the happy outcome, the loss of "all particularity" and recognition of "the true Universal"?

However edifying such a hieroglyphic reading between the lines may be to the philosophers, there is little reason to suppose that Coleridge and Wordsworth, in their merry tramp over the Quantock Hills, had the faintest suspicion of their own profundity, as they planned together, with young imaginations aglow, this wild, picturesque, melodious ballad of dreamland. Certainly any attempt to expound to youthful students of the "Ancient Mariner" an interpretation so technical — may philosophy forgive the term! — would result for them in mental bewilderment and disgust and an echo of Endymion's cry, —

"And now, by Pan,
I care not for this old mysterious man!"

Yet few teachers will be content to pass the poem by without an effort to impress upon their classes not merely its marvellous poetic beauty, the elfin sweetness of the music, the vivid imagery of the swiftly shifted scenes, the terse energy of phrase, and artistic order and harmony of the whole, but also its undoubted, inmost teaching that the soul makes its own world, and that in alliance with the living spirit of love is the only life of man. "My endeav-

ors," says Coleridge, distinguishing between his work and that of Wordsworth in the *Lyrical Ballads*, "were to be directed to persons and characters supernatural, yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest, and a semblance of truth, sufficient to procure from these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith." And throughout the "Ancient Mariner" we clearly perceive it to be the "inward nature" which is mirrored upon the changing face of that magical, moonlight ocean. It is the storm of life that rages there so "tyrannous and strong"; it is the dreary, stagnant selfishness of the soul which by wanton act has severed itself from the living principle of love — the wretched soul, "alone, alone," and perishing of thirst — that paints the ghastly waters of that awful tropic sea; it is the revival of love in the heart that calls down from Heaven the sweet rain of refreshment. "Coleridge's 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner,'" writes Professor Corson of Cornell University, in his "Introduction to Browning," "is an imaginative expression of that divine love which embraces all creatures, from the highest to the lowest, of the consequences of the severance of man's soul from this animating principle of the universe, and of those spiritual threshings by and through which it is brought again under its blessed influence."

The temptation is strong to carry on this thought into minute illustration, but it is dangerous for prose to attempt to speak for poetry. The "Ancient Mariner" is its own best interpreter. Every reader who becomes subject to its subtle spell will prefer to be left free to read his own meanings into its flashing hints. For that it teaches by inspired suggestion rather than by infolding within itself an elaborate system of thought or even a detailed history of human experience follows from its essential character as the most poetical of poems, as first and foremost a *tour de force* of the imagination. Rev. Stopford Brooke, in "Theology in the English Poets," insists upon the simplicity of its lesson. "We see in it how childlike the philosophic man could be in his faith, how little was enough for him. Its religion is all contained in the phrase — 'He prayeth well who loveth well both man and bird and

beast.' On this the changes are rung throughout; the motiveless slaughter of the bird is a crime; the other mariners who justify the killing of the bird because of the good it seems to bring them are even worse sinners than the ancient mariner. He did the ill deed on a hasty impulse; they deliberately agree to it for selfish reasons. They sin a second time against love, by throwing the whole guilt on him, and again for selfish reasons. They are fatally punished; he lives to feel and expiate his wrong. And the turning point of his repentance is in the re-awakening of love, and is clearly marked. Left all alone on the sea, 'he despiseth the creatures of the calm, and envieth that so many should live and so many lie dead,' and in that temper of contempt and envy Coleridge suggests that no prayer can live. But when seven days had passed, he looked again on God's creatures of the great calm, and seeing their beauty and their happiness, forgot his own misery, and the curse, and himself in them, and blessed and loved them, and in that temper of spirit, prayer became possible."

On this at least all the interpreters are agreed, — that the kernel of the whole poem is love, — love as the living link between man and nature, — love as the atmosphere wherein alone spirit life is possible, — that love of God which involves the love of the least of His beloved. In one of Coleridge's early poems, a meditative essay in blank verse entitled "Religious Musings," which is believed by certain critics to present in a didactic form the meanings of the "Ancient Mariner," this chief burden of the ballad is distinctly voiced:

"There is one Mind, one omnipresent Mind,
Omnific. His most holy name is Love.
Truth of subliming import! with the which
Who feeds and saturates his constant soul
He from his small particular orbit flies
With blest outstarting! from himself he flies,
Stands in the sun, and with no partial gaze
Views all creation; and he loves it all,
And blesses it, and calls it very good!"

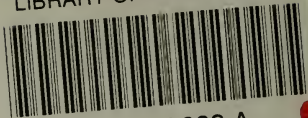
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