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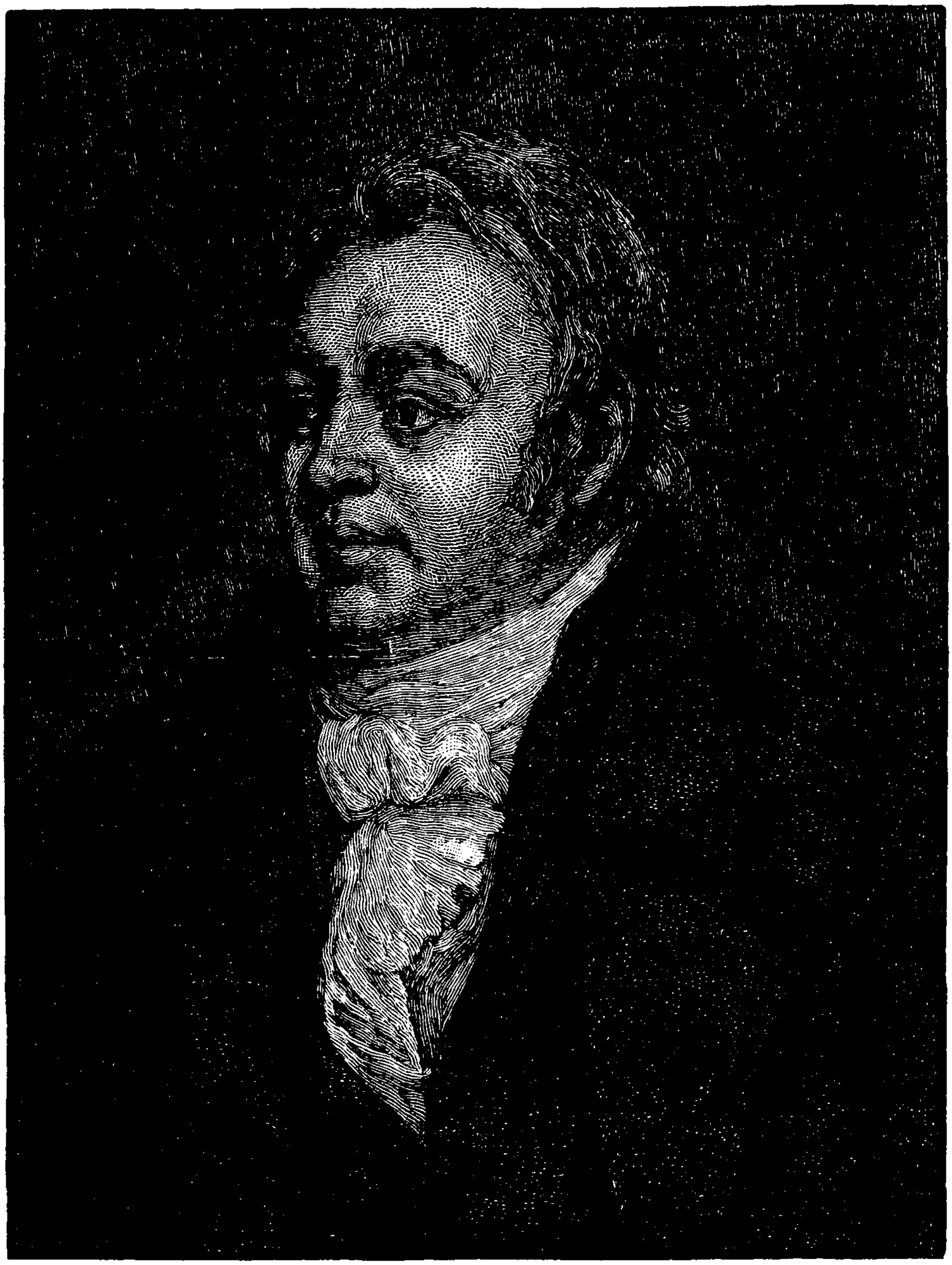
THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

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, numquam attigit. Juvat, interea, non diffiteor, quandoque in animo, tamquam in tabula, majoris et melioris mundi imaginem contemplari: ne mens assuefacta hodiernæ vitæ minutiis se contrahat nimis, et tota subsidat in pusillas cogitationes. Sed veritati interea invigilandum est, modusque servandus, ut certa ab incertis, diem a nocte, distinguamus.

T. Burnet, *Archæol. Phil.*, p. 68.

Translation.

I can readily believe that there are in the universe more Natures unseen than seen. But who shall explain to us their relation, their several ranks and degrees of consanguinity, their differences and their functions? What do they do? Where do they dwell? Man's skill has ever sought, but never attained, a knowledge of these things I cannot deny, however, that it is profitable at times to allow the mind to dwell on the contemplation of a larger and better world, as if seen on a map; otherwise, accustomed as the mind is to the petty details of a daily routine, it may become depressed and sink utterly into trifling thoughts. Still a strict regard must be had for the truth, and moderation is to be observed that we may distinguish the definite and the doubtful between the day and the night.



SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

STANDARD LITERATURE SERIES

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

BY

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

AND

THE VISION OF SIR LAUNFAL

BY

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

EDITED WITH NOTES AND INTRODUCTION BY

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EDITORIAL NOTE

"THE ANCIENT MARINER" and "THE VISION OF SIR LAUNFAL" have for some time been among the books recommended for reading in the secondary schools. The two poems may well be studied together. They have things about them that are alike, and things that are different, and therefore may readily be compared so as to cultivate the literary taste by a definite, systematic method. This is, of course, not the only way of cultivating the taste; in fact it is not the best way from a purely general standpoint. The best way to cultivate one's literary taste is, probably, to be much with people who love literature and to read much of the best literature one's self. But where one cannot do that, as in the class-room, the other plan, the plan of carefully cultivating the taste by some definite method, seems to promise most. One well-understood method is that of comparison. By a careful comparison of two or more masterpieces, we may succeed in determining their essential characteristics, and having determined them, we shall be able to recognize them again when we meet them, and perhaps to feel their essential quality.

If we put these poems together and ask, How are they alike and how do they differ? we shall observe several things.

In respect to substance each of the two poems has a story and an idea; and in each the story is a romantic one, something that stirs our sense of wonder and beauty, and the idea one of deep moral significance, one that aims to get beneath the thoughts of everyday intercourse into the springs and secrets of life itself. Look a little into each.

The story of the young knight who went out in golden

armor to seek for the Holy Grail, and returned broken with years and troubles to find at his own castle gate what he had sought so long, is such a tale as one might find in the mediæval romances of King Arthur. The story of the sailor who brought a curse upon himself and his shipmates by killing a bird that had sought refuge on their ship, and who expiates that wrong by a strange and bitter experience, is an imaginative creation very different. Yet different as the stories are, they seem alike when we compare them with the story of Sir Roger de Coverley or the Vicar of Wakefield. These last are figures of the real world, though not of the world we know; the others are figures of romance.[1]

The two ideas are also of the same character. The conception of heartfelt love as the true spirit of the Saviour of the world, and the conception of an all-embracing love as the true prayer, the true approach to God, are both ideas for the guidance of the practical life, and both are ideas that dip beneath the surface of life and get something that does not appear to every-day view.

The precise connection of story and idea is one of the most difficult subjects for literary study. If one thinks of the story only as a means of conveying thought, one must lose much. So also if one thinks of the story only, without any idea at all. In each case, probably, the idea was one often in the poet's mind. With Lowell this was certainly the case;[2] with Coleridge we cannot be so sure, although the idea has much in common with the poet's early thinking and with many thoughts of the time. It seems probable that in "Sir Launfal" the idea was really the moulding force, while with "The Ancient Mariner" it was less influential. Still in neither case is it the bare idea that has made the poem. In each the poetic imagination has given the idea a form which for the time

[1] For further comment on the romantic movement, see p. xxii.

[2] Compare "A Parable" noted on p. xxxviii and "The Search" printed on p. 49.

seems all-important. After the time of reading, when the original interest is less strongly in mind, one thinks of the idea which then perhaps takes something of a place by itself in our thoughts.

As to the literary form of the poems there is more difference. Both are written under the influence of the so-called ballad movement. In "The Ancient Mariner" the ballad spirit is everywhere prominent, as is pointed out on p. xxviii. Its directness of narrative, its repetitions, its language, its metrical form, all are fully in the spirit of the ballads that Coleridge found in Percy's *Reliques*. Lowell was farther away in time from the original inspiration, and his poem, therefore, has less of the ballad spirit. The subject of a knightly quest is full of the spirit of old popular poetry, and there are a few archaic words and phrases, but otherwise it has but little of the ballad about it. "Sir Launfal," however, though lacking the ballad element, has much else: it has a rather elaborate structure, it has the more figured form of literary poetry, the rich description of nature which one never finds in ballads. It is full of imagination which expresses itself richly and freely, as in the passages on nature, rather than in the suggestive manner of the ballad.

If we read these two poems together we shall see how they are alike and yet different. That will call our attention to certain things: the farther we go in such comparisons, the more correctly shall we make them, the more sure will be our appreciation of the true things of interest in the poem. For one of the great things in poetic appreciation is to feel keenly each thing for itself, as different from others. We do not want to confuse these two poems, to think that they are much the same sort of thing without separate individuality or character, any more than we should want to confuse our friends and think it was all the same which of them was with us. We want to know each for itself. Yet all poetry has some

common qualities, and each kind of poetry has some common qualities, and we certainly want to know what these qualities are. Some people feel such things instinctively; even if we do not, it is a very good thing to try to get at them by comparison.

EDWARD E. HALE, JR.

INTRODUCTION

THE LIFE OF COLERIDGE

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE was born on the 21st of October, 1772, at the vicarage of Ottery St. Mary, in the county of Devonshire. His father, the vicar of the parish and the master of the Free Grammar School, was a visionary, eccentric man, well beloved by his people. By a rather abundant use of quotations from the Hebrew he gained the unbounded respect of many of his simple parishioners as using the language of the Holy Ghost. The poet's mother seems to have possessed some of the shrewdness her husband lacked. She was a plain woman, uneducated, a good housekeeper and manager, and possessed a great contempt for young ladies who played the harpsichord. Coleridge was a precocious child, and at three years of age he was sent to a dame's school. As the pet of his mother he gained the ill-will of his brother and his companions; he took little or no part in their sports and games, but gave himself over to his inordinate love of reading. He read all the children's books he could find as well as many beyond his age, lived in this land of imagination, and went about "cutting down weeds and nettles, as one of the 'Seven Champions of Christendom.'"[1]

In his sixth year the boy was stricken with a fever; and we may, perhaps, see something of the thought of the Ancient Mariner in his belief that four angels guarded the bed on which he lay, and that they kept away the armies of ugly things that were ready to burst in upon him. Another incident of this period should be mentioned. On one occasion,

[1] Biog. Supplement to "Biographia Literaria," 1847. II, 320.

fearing a thoroughly merited punishment, he ran away from home. After wandering for several miles he fell asleep on the damp, cold bank of the river Otter. Here he was rescued the next morning by a neighbor, one of the searching party. It is doubtful whether Coleridge's system ever recovered from the exposure of that night.

Coleridge's father died rather suddenly when the boy was about nine years of age; and through the efforts of one of the pastor's old pupils, Sir Francis Buller, afterwards famous as a judge, the lad received a presentation to Christ's Hospital, a London charity school. The lot of the poet after he was enrolled among the blue-coated, yellow-stockinged, hatless students seems to have been anything but a happy one. The family, being proud, felt themselves disgraced by the boy's admission to a charity school. His brothers refused to permit him to visit them in the school garb, and Coleridge would not go in any other. "Oh, what a change," he wrote in after years to his friend, Thomas Poole, "from home to this city school; depressed, moping, friendless, a poor orphan, half starved." Charles Lamb, who as a student at Christ's Hospital during Coleridge's time became the life-long friend of the poet, has left us two pictures of the school in two essays, *Recollections of Christ's Hospital,* and *Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago.* One famous passage from the latter essay, a passage often quoted, may be cited here as perhaps the best picture we have of Coleridge in his youth:

"Come back into memory, like as thou wert in the day-spring 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 Jamblicus 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 with the accents of the *inspired charity boy.*"

On one occasion, when Coleridge was about thirteen, he went to a shoemaker and begged to be taken as an apprentice. The shoemaker, Crispin by name, an honest fellow, took him to Boyer, then headmaster of the school, who got into a great rage, knocked down the boy, and pushed the shoemaker violently out of the room. Upon the lad's declaring that he desired to learn the shoemaker's trade because he hated the thought of being a clergyman, and that he had become an infidel, Boyer administered to him a sound thrashing—the only just one, Coleridge afterwards remarked, he had ever received.

The training Coleridge gained at Christ's Hospital was both severe and thorough. With all his faults Boyer was an admirable drillmaster; and Coleridge was chosen as one of the Grecians, that little band specially prepared under the severe master's own supervision for scholarships at the universities. This master's labors did not end when he had trained the boys to be good Latin and Greek students—his most difficult lessons were those in English; and to his severe criticisms and repressions Coleridge was deeply indebted. About this time the young poet was attracted by the sonnets of Bowles, a writer long since forgotten. Bowles was by no means a great poet; but he was a sincere one, and his sonnets show the influence of the new forces active in the world of poetry. What little Coleridge had produced before this time bore the conventional marks of the eighteenth century. We have preserved several poems that he wrote in the Christ Hospital book, one of them an anthem for the children of the school—verses of little or no value except as specimens of his early handicraft. One poem, *The Raven,* written about the time he left Christ's Hospital, is interesting for the last two lines, in which we have in crude form the thought of the Ancient Mariner:

"We must not think so; but forget and forgive,
And what Heaven gives life to, we'll still let it live."

In 1791, when Coleridge was nineteen years of age, he was appointed to an exhibition at Jesus College, Cambridge. Later in his course there he was further aided by certain fellowships. During the first portion of his residence he worked steadily and successfully, and gained the Browne gold medal for a sapphic Ode on the Slave Trade. One of Coleridge's college friends has left us an interesting account of how the poet's room became the rendezvous of a number of companions, all eager to discuss the questions of the day, and how, when a new pamphlet appeared from the pen of Burke, Coleridge would repeat for them whole pages *verbatim*. Stirring times were these, the earlier days of the French Revolution, when new ideas of liberty and of the dawn of a better day were permeating the whole world, and when men felt that it was bliss even to be alive. Coleridge was one of the most radical of the many young men who gave their sympathy and their influence to what they conceived to be the cause of human liberty. The poet's enthusiasm, however, was temporarily checked by his solicitude over some college debts and possibly over a love affair of the time. At any rate we find him drifting about in London, penniless and ready for whatever might offer. The recruiting office of the 15th Light Dragoons invites him, and he enlists under the name of Silas T. Comerback. A sorry soldier he made, not even able to groom his own horse. After two miserable months he disclosed his whereabouts to his oldest brother, who secured his release and sent him back to the University.

Upon his return to Cambridge, Coleridge was not satisfied. He fell off in his studies and left the University without taking a degree. We soon find him enlisted with Robert Southey, a young friend from Oxford, in an attempt to establish an idealistic colony. This community, which they called a Pantisocracy, was to consist of twelve men and their wives, and

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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 the prayer might have floated in a solemn silence through the universe. . . . The preacher then launched into his subject like an eagle dallying with the wind."

The following pen picture gives us a good idea of the poet's personal appearance during this period of his life:[1] "In person he was a dark, tall, handsome young man, with long, black, flowing hair; eyes not merely black, but black and keenly penetrating; a fine forehead; a deep-toned, harmonious voice; a manner never to be forgotten, full of life, vivacity and kindness; dignified in person; and, added to all these, exhibiting the elements of his future greatness."

But it is about this time that we first read in one of his letters of his having suffered from neuralgia of the face, and of his having alleviated the pain with laudanum—the first cloud of the many that were to darken his intellect, his will, and his life.

With 1797 came the harvest year of Coleridge's poetical life. His faculties seemed to ripen almost as if by magic, and in twelve months he had produced nearly all his greatest poetry. "The Ancient Mariner," "Christabel," "The Ode to France," "Remorse," and "Kubla Khan" were all the products of this year's labor. One cause, perhaps the main one, of this poetic fruitage is not far to seek. In the earlier part of the year Coleridge and his family had moved among the Quantock hills to the village of Nether Stowey; and here the poet came in contact with two remarkable people, Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy. The friendship between the two poets meant much to both. To Wordsworth Coleridge supplied the enthusiasm and the faith and courage necessary for carrying out

[1] Smith's "Reminiscences of an Octogenarian," quoted in Coleridge's Letters. I, 181.

his poetic labors; to Coleridge Wordsworth supplied a calmness and steadiness which the former, carried away by his tumultuous vitality, especially required; while Dorothy Wordsworth, with her quick, delicate perception and quiet encouragement, stimulated him to his most artistic and most imaginative efforts. The results of the united work of these two poets appeared in the Spring of 1798, when the *Lyrical Ballads* were published, a thin volume, to which Wordsworth had contributed four or five times as much as had his less steady co-worker. This volume, which began with *The Ancient Mariner,* and also contained the *Lines Written Above Tintern Abbey,* created little stir in the literary world, though we of to-day have come to regard it as the culmination of the revolt against the standards that prevailed through a large part of the eighteenth century.

About this same time Coleridge received from the Wedgwood brothers, the great English pottery makers, an annuity which, though not large, enabled him to devote his entire time to literature. In company with William and Dorothy Wordsworth he visited Germany, where he busied himself with a study of Kant and the transcendental philosophy. "Instead of troubling others with my own crude notions and juvenile compositions," he writes, "I was thenceforward better employed in attempting to store my head with the wisdom of others."[1] He passed the winter hard at work, and made considerable progress with the language; though his letters of the time are filled with his homesickness and his yearning to see his wife and baby Hartley. Two results came from this winter thus spent: Coleridge became imbued with the German transcendental philosophy, and upon his return did more than any other man to propagate it in England. Another and more immediate result was the translation of Schiller's *Wallenstein* soon after his return—one of the best translations ever made of a foreign work into English.

[1] "Biographia Literaria," I, 300.

Upon the remainder of Coleridge's career we need dwell but briefly; for his poetic life had practically closed. Under the influence of severe bodily pain he resorted to the use of opium; and his will-power, never very strong, was shattered by the use of the drug. The story of much of the remainder of his life, especially of the succeeding decade when his powers should have been at their best, is the story of repeated failures. Coleridge's was a life of magnificent projects, destined never to be fulfilled. He undertook various employments, such as newspaper work, another magazine, along much the same lines as the *Watchman,* and lecturing.

As a lecturer he was perhaps more successful than in any other line. His audiences certainly heard the finest critical lectures ever delivered in English. Yet he was notoriously untrustworthy in keeping these appointments, and depended upon the inspiration of the moment to carry him along. At last, after many troubles, he found a refuge under the care of Dr. Gillman, a London physician, whose family, as Leigh Hunt remarks, "had sense and kindness enough to know that they did themselves honor by looking after the comfort of such a man." Carlyle has left us a vivid description of the poet as he appeared in his last days:[1]

"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 to German and other transcendentalisms; knew the sublime secret of believing by 'the reason' what 'the understanding' had been obliged to fling out as

[1] Carlyle's "Life of John Sterling."

incredible—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 praetical intellects of the world did not much heed him, or carelessly reckoned him a metaphysical dreamer: but to the rising spirits of the younger generation he had this dusky, sublime character; and sat there a kind of *Magus* girt in mystery and enigma. . . . The good man, he was now getting old, towards sixty, perhaps; and gave you the idea of a life that had been full of suffering; 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 looking mildly from them, as in a kind of mild astonishment—A heavy-laden, high-aspiring, and surely much-suffering man."

In some respects Coleridge resembles his own Ancient Mariner. Like the Mariner, he too knew the curse of Life-in-Death. We may well end this sketch of his life with the Epitaph he wrote shortly before his death, which came July 25, 1834:

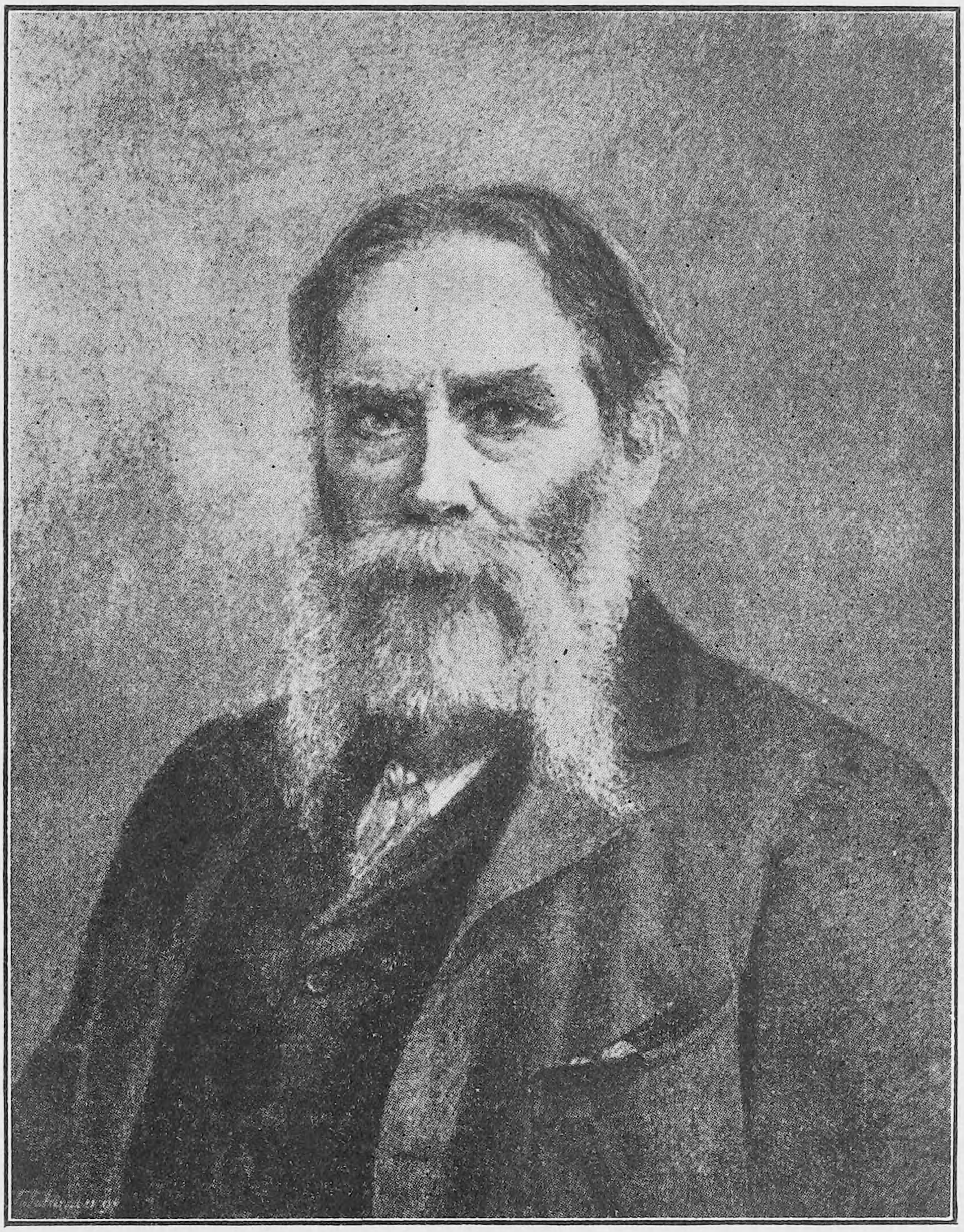
"Stop, Christian passer-by! Stop, child of God,
And read with gentle breast. Beneath this sod
A poet lies, or that which once seemed he.
O, lift one thought in prayer for S. T. C.;
That he who many a year with toil and breath
Found death in life, may here find life in death;
Mercy for praise—to be forgiven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

THE LIFE OF LOWELL

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL, the youngest of six children, was born February 22, 1819, at Elmwood, the family home, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. His father, the Rev. Charles Lowell, was minister of one of the largest churches in Boston —a well-educated, kindly pastor whom his renowned son has characterized as "a Doctor Primrose in the comparative degree." The Lowell family had been among the early settlers of Massachusetts; many of them had gained distinction; and the gracious minister was "as proud of his pedigree as ever a Talbot or a Stanley could be." In his college days he had studied medicine as well as theology, so he went among his parishioners healing and carrying the Bible. The poet's mother, whose maiden name was Spence, loved to trace a fancied relation to Sir Patrick Spens of ballad fame and to claim the traditional family gift of second sight. She showed the usual mother fondness for a youngest child, and delighted to listen for the little fellow's cheery whistle announcing for her his return from school, or to receive the nosegays of wild white-weed and blue-eyed grass which he loved to bring her.

At Elmwood, with its large, square, frame, colonial house, its noble elms, and its few acres half meadow and half farm, the poet passed his youth and early manhood. Fish Pond, a small lake not far from the home, was one of Lowell's favorite haunts. Here he would sail in the summer, and in winter was happy when allowed to help the ice-cutters gather their harvest. Many of the scenes of these early years live in his poems; the line of heavy willows at the end of the New Road is commemorated first in "The Indian Summer Reverie," and later in "Under the Willows."

As might be expected Lowell entered Harvard College, where he says he read everything except the prescribed books. His letters written during these years are filled with a boyish enthusiasm for the English poets, and he tells with delight of



JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

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The seven years following the publication of his first volume, "A Year's Life," in 1841, show a wonderful development of his powers as a poet. We noted how Coleridge produced in one splendid year nearly all the poems on which his fame rests. Fifty years late, 1848, Lowell, too, had his remarkable harvest. As he himself expressed it, his brain required a long brooding time before it could hatch anything; but that time had now come. In this one year he wrote the first series of the "Biglow Papers," the best of American satires, "A Fable for Critics," and "The Vision of Sir Launfal."

In 1857 Lowell succeeded Longfellow at Harvard as Smith Professor of Modern Languages, a position which he held for about twenty years. He was not a methodical teacher; but the students soon came to love the keen, thoughtful professor, wearing a rather shabby sack coat, who gave them some of the finest literary comment ever heard in an American college class-room. Despite his popularity in later years, Lowell loved the life of the student and was happy in sitting for hours with his book and pipe among his well-filled bookshelves, whose worn volumes, the margins crowded with comments and notes, bore witness of his industry and scholarship.

In addition to his teaching he soon assumed the responsible position of editor of the newly-founded *Atlantic Monthly*. When he accepted he made it a condition precedent that Holmes should be the first contributor engaged, and the wisdom of this demand was amply justified by the "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table," which appeared in serial form. Almost all of our great American writers contributed to these first volumes of the *Atlantic*, which under Lowell's management became one of the best magazines published in English.

Later he was associated with Charles Eliot Norton in editing the *North American Review*. In his younger days he had declared that if he had a vocation it was the making of verse, and that he found writing prose difficult; but later he did his best work in prose, contributing to the Review both the de-

lightful essays on out-door life and his penetrating, suggestive studies of authors and their books which have marked him as America's foremost literary critic. Nor must we forget his Political Essays of the years of the Civil War and the Reconstruction. Lowell failed, as did most of his friends, to appreciate Lincoln at the beginning of his administration, and wished that Seward had been chosen as the party leader. But his impatience at Lincoln's cautious policy gradually gave way to admiration for the far-seeing statesmanship, and in 1864 he warmly championed the president's re-election. In the "Commemoration Ode," recited at the Harvard memorial service in honor of her sons who had fallen in the Civil War, Lowell pays a beautiful tribute to the dead president—"New birth of our new soil, the first American."

Late in life Lowell entered a new field of labor. In 1877 he was appointed minister to Spain. Though he possessed a very fair knowledge of Spanish, he set himself to master the language, and wrote about this time:[1] "I am working now at Spanish as I used to work at Old French—that is, all the time and with all my might; I mean to know it better than they do themselves, which is not saying much." He loved to spend his brief vacations prowling around the book-stores, especially in Paris, and was pleased to purchase rare sets, consoling himself after every extravagance with the thought that upon his death these works should go to the library of his beloved Harvard. So well did he perform his duties at the Spanish court that in 1880 he was made Minister to England, the highest position in the American diplomatic service. Here he became in truth "The American embassador to the court of Shakespeare." It has been said that no other American has ever been welcomed to so many English homes, and that, too, in spite of Lowell's patriotism which made him more than willing to defend his country. In these years he gained many new friends and was drawn closer to some old ones, especially

[1] Hale's "James Russell Lowell and his Friends," p. 229.

to Leslie Stephen and to Thomas Hughes, whom he addresses affectionately as "My dear Tom Brown."

Toward the close of his life Lowell suffered a great deal; but he bore it all cheerfully, and his letters to his friends are bright and hopeful. He died August 12, 1891, at Elmwood, the home where he had been born and had passed the greater part of his life. His remains lie in the Mt. Auburn Cemetery at Cambridge, not far from those of his friends Longfellow and Holmes. England has honored Lowell by placing in Westminster Abbey his bust and a memorial window. In the centre of this great window is the figure of Sir Launfal; beneath stands an angel bearing the Holy Grail; while in the lowest compartment is represented the story of Sir Launfal and the leper.

THE ROMANTIC MOVEMENT

When John Dryden assumed the literary dictatorship of England toward the close of the seventeenth century, there began what has been termed the Classical Age of English literature. Literary history, like all other history for that matter, shows the influence of two forces, the assertion of the individual as opposed to established standards, and the maintenance of a set authority, a law to which all must conform. Sometimes one tendency is stronger in literature, sometimes the other. The age of Elizabeth had been one in which free play had been given to the imagination; it was but natural that there should be a reaction in favor of some definite standards of authority, and such a reaction came in the time of Dryden and his successor, Pope. This Classical Age, then, is marked by the suppression of the individual and the recognition of authority. A great deal of attention was paid to the form of expression; literature became a matter of "what oft was thought, but ne'er *so well expressed*"; the heroic couplet reigned as the proper verse form. Interest in literature was

confined largely to the Greek and Roman classics; and because this period took these writings as its models, it has gained the name of the Classical Age. The age is characterized by its lack of mystery and of aspiration: all display of anything emotional was rigorously repressed, and interest was centred in the intellectual side of things. Practically the range of literary interests and themes was the very narrow one of the fashionable life of London. A distaste for the wild and grand in Nature prevailed. Mountains and the rugged aspects of the sea were regarded as hostile to man; and the landscape gardening of the age attempted to force Nature to conform to rule and square. The poverty of the times in lyrical verse is especially significant. Naturally the best work of the period was in satire, burlesque, and travesty. But we must not condemn the age too severely; it passed away in due season, but it left with English writers a regard for form that has been of inestimable value to our literature.

The Classical Age with its respect for authority finally brought a reaction which for the want of a better name is called the Romantic Movement. This movement arose from the desire of men to escape from the conventional, the formal, the established. It was not confined to literature alone: in the Church we find this tendency manifesting itself in the great religious movement headed by the Wesleys; in politics and philosophy we find it culminating in the assertion of the individual, "All men are created free and equal," and finally in the great French Revolution. Critics generally date the beginning of the Romantic Movement from 1726, when Thomson's "Winter" was published. In this poem we note an increased interest in Nature, which is no longer regarded as hostile toward man. Here, too, we discern the distinguishing mark of all romanticism—a freer play of the imagination, and an increased sympathy with and interest in things appealing to it. This greater sympathy with Nature finds its manifestation in nearly all the poets of the time—Gray,

Cowper, Crabbe, and Blake. Another mark of the Romantic Movement is the increased interest in things remote. McPherson, a Scotchman, brought forth the "Ossian," which he declared was a translation of the old Celtic stories, and the volume was received with unbounded enthusiasm. Coleridge alludes to this work in the preface of his first collection of poems, and in this collection gives two verses in imitation of the Ossian. Chatterton, too, the boy poet who passed his own poems as the work of the mediæval monk Rowley, did much toward rousing not only Coleridge's interest, but that of the whole land, in the ages past. It would be difficult to prove that the Rowley poems exerted much influence in shaping Coleridge's style; but we catch the strain of *The Ancient Mariner* in such passages as:

"Before him went the council men,
In scarlet robes and gold,
And tassels spangling in the sun,
Most glorious to behold."

But it is probably to Percy's *Reliques of Ancient Poetry* more than to any one other source that we owe the increased interest in the past. In the Reliques were published for the first time many of the old English ballads; and after this publication interest in English ballad poetry grew rapidly. Wordsworth said that English poetry had been "absolutely redeemed" by them. He adds, "I do not think that there is a writer of verse of the present day who would not be proud to acknowledge his obligations to the Reliques; I know that it is so with my friends; and for myself I am happy on this occasion to make a public avowal of my own."[1] We cannot help believing that without Percy's Reliques *The Ancient Mariner* would have been far different from what it is.

Still another characteristic of this movement is a heightened interest in things strange and mysterious. Walpole's

[1] Appendix to the Preface to the 2d edition of "Lyrical Ballads."

Castle of Otranto is a good illustration; a tale of ghost-haunted castles, secret passages, unnatural deeds, and mysteriously waving helmets. This same tendency finds its best manifestation in the works of a novelist of the last of the century, "Monk" Lewis. The hermit, a solitary figure appealing to the imagination, becomes a common character appearing in much of the poetry and romance of the time.

The imagination finds its freer play not alone in the realm of the mysterious, but also in the things of every-day life. Crabbe describes with photographic minuteness the life of the simple village; the conception that all men are brothers, and that the affairs of the humblest were fit subjects for poetry gained ground; and the interest thus excited did much to better the condition of the poor. Nor was this interest confined to mankind alone. All through the century we note protests against cruelty to dumb animals, as in the works of Beattie, who objected strongly to the English field sports. This spirit grew till it found its best expression in Coleridge, who asks, in his *Religious Musings:* "Are not cattle and plants permeated through and through with the divinity who has created things to form one harmonious whole? Does not the same great heart beat in the lowest as well as in the highest creature?"

But it is in *The Ancient Mariner* that this feeling for animals finds its best expression. The poem is in many respects the perfect flower of the Romantic Movement. It is romantic in its aspiration, and in its symbolism and mysticism, as in its use of mystical numbers, "seven days and seven nights," "nine fathoms," "one of three" guests. More than any other poem, possibly, it exemplifies what we have designated as the distinguishing mark of romanticism—the free play of the imagination and an interest in things appealing to it.

Lowell was of the second generation of Romanticists, or perhaps the third. At any rate he was aroused, like other young

men of his time, not only by the poetry of Coleridge, Keats, Shelley, but by the literature which had given them ideas, notably the ballad poetry and the Elizabethan drama. It is the former that gives the chief suggestion to "Sir Launfal" in the matter of form as it had also to "The Ancient Mariner."

Note.—The student will be interested in examining for himself the literature of the period here discussed. The fourth volume of Ward's "English Poets" contains representative extracts from most of the authors cited. Pope's "Essay on Criticism" and his "Essay on Man" are good illustrations of the work of the Classical Age. Various phases of the Romantic Movement are illustrated in Gray's "Elegy," Goldsmith's "Deserted Village," parts of Cowper's "Task," the first book of Crabbe's "Village," Chatterton's "An Excellent Ballad of Charity," and Blake's "To an Evening Star."

THE ANCIENT MARINER

The Composition of the Poem

Both Wordsworth and Coleridge have left us interesting accounts of the genesis of *The Ancient Mariner.* In the autumn of 1797, Coleridge's wonderful year, the poet, in company with Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy, started on a tramp through the beautiful Quantock Hills. To meet the expenses of the trip, it was proposed that the two young men conjointly write a poem to be sent to the *New Monthly Magazine.* From this work they hoped to realize at least five pounds. As the two walked along the hills they planned the poem. Most of the story was Coleridge's; he proposed to base the poem upon the dream of a friend, a certain Mr. Cruikshank, a dream "of a skeleton ship with figures in it." Wordsworth suggested that some crime be committed, bringing with it persecution; and, as he had just been reading *Shelvocke's Voyages,* with its account of the albatrosses of the region round Cape Horn, proposed that the sailor should be represented as killing one of the birds and then being

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title, "A Poet's Reverie," was added. This was wisely discarded in the edition of 1817 when the pruning process was continued—resulting in almost every instance in an improvement of the poem. At this time, too, was added the beautiful gloss.

"The Ancient Mariner" a Literary Ballad

We may class "The Ancient Mariner" as a literary ballad: literary as opposed to the folk song-stories which grew up among the people; a ballad as possessing many of the characteristics of that primitive form of literature. It is true that most of the older ballads tell a story without attempting to enforce a moral, and that this poem embodies the lesson of the redemption of the Mariner; but the allegorical aspect of this masterpiece is not the thing of greatest importance. Just as in the folk songs, the chief interest lies in the story itself and in the manner of telling. One finds in this poem but few questions and answers, a characteristic of the older ballads, though there are frequent instances of lines repeated entire or with but slight variation. In its directness of narration, too, "The Ancient Mariner" is akin to the old-time song-stories. The language of the poem is quaint, and while not so archaic as to be unintelligible—gives an impression of time that is past and blends well with the indefinite setting in an earlier age, when all lands had not been explored, and there were still undiscovered seas where such adventures as those of the Ancient Mariner *might* happen. Occasionally, too, the last syllable of a word is accented in old ballad fashion, alsó, marinér, and countrée.

Suggestions for Teaching and Study

Generally speaking, the work in literature should be intensive and extensive. The teacher in the secondary school should aim to acquaint the student with as many good books as possible, but the large majority of his students must plead

ignorance of any knowledge of better literature outside of the few prescribed books. There is much to be gained simply from the careful reading of the masterpieces of the vernacular. The teacher makes a mistake who does not set aside two or three days of each month when students shall report upon their reading of some of the great works of English literature. Then certain books should be studied carefully and thoroughly. Too often, it is true, such a study has been made mechanical and deadening; in noting the details there is a danger of losing the spirit of the entire poem. In spite of a good deal of valid objection to closely analytic methods of study, a certain amount of such work is absolutely essential to any intelligent enjoyment of literature; and such work may be highly disciplinary and thoroughly delightful. No other poem, perhaps, offers a better field for such analysis of the poet's art than does "The Ancient Mariner," and one's enjoyment and appreciation are greatly heightened in studying its wonderful beauty and perfection of form.

In taking up the study of the poem, the teacher should see that the students read and re-read it, not only till they are thoroughly acquainted with the story, but till they have succeeded in entering into its spirit and in feeling the beauty, the quaintness of style, and the simple directness of the narrative. It is not well at first to emphasize the moral of the poem. True, there is woven into the warp of the story the lesson of the redemption of the Ancient Mariner—how he violates the law of love, and how he is punished by being given over to the power of Life-in-Death. But this lesson is by no means the most important part of the poem. If beauty is its own excuse for being, the existence of "The Ancient Mariner" is certainly justified. Try, above all else, to help the student to enter into this Coleridge-land, this region of the silent sea, of the vast, dead calm with its intense heat, of weird moonlight, and of the mysterious, beautiful figures that conduct the Mariner home.

The verse of "The Ancient Mariner" is marked by the haunting quality that distinguishes the best of Poe's poems. The swing of the rhythm impresses the lines upon the memory, so that most students will find it an easy and pleasant task to commit to memory many stanzas. The teacher should encourage the pupils to select and to commit those portions of the poem that impress them for the beauty and vividness of the scene presented, for the musical flow of the verse, for the sweet, simple moral, for the quaint archaic diction, or for whatever reason the stanzas may appeal as of special worth. In almost every class seven students will be willing each to commit one of the parts of the poem, and thus by each repeating his portion in turn, to recite the whole in a single class hour.

Naturally the teacher must pay a certain amount of attention to the grammatical structure and the allusions, not so much as valuable in themselves as helpful in grasping the meaning and beauty of the whole. The questions, too, aim primarily to emphasize the wonderful art of the poet in the composition of "The Ancient Mariner," and of his marvellous ability to paint beautiful word pictures. The teacher must impress upon the student that when he has grasped all the notes and answered all the questions he will not have gained all from the poem. To each pupil will come thoughts, suggestions, and comparisons that will be worth more to him than the contributions of either teacher or editor. As these ideas arise, it is well to jot them along the margin of the page or in a special notebook. While students are studying "The Ancient Mariner," they should be encouraged to read other poems by the same author. Some of the best of Coleridge's poems are "Christabel," "Kubla Khan," "Ballad of the Dark Ladie," "Fears in Solitude," "Hymn before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouni," "Frost at Midnight," "Dejection," and "The Pains of Sleep."

After the student has studied the poem thoroughly, he

should re-read it once or twice to enjoy it; for here, after all, lies its value—to enjoy it with the added ability for appreciation which study has brought.

The Metrical Form

The normal stanza of "The Ancient Mariner" is made up of four lines, the first and the third consisting of four feet, the second and fourth of three. The normal line we may say consists of four iambic feet, that is four feet each containing one unaccented and one accented syllable:

Ĭ clósed | mў eýes | aňd képt | thĕm clósed.

A number of exceptions are to be noted. For example, when the poet wishes to give a rapidity of movement to the line, he frequently employs the trochaic foot, consisting of one accented and one unaccented syllable. Occasionally in these trochaic lines the last foot is incomplete:

Swíftlў | swíftlў | flew thĕ | shíp;
Fóur timěs | fíftў | livíňg | mén;
Sóftlў | shé wăs | góiňg | úp.

Sometimes the anapæstic foot—two unaccented and one accented syllables—is used:

Fŏr thĕ skў | aňd thĕ seá | aňd thĕ séa | aňd thĕ skў.

In a few instances we find several successive lines beginning with an anapæstic foot as in Stanza LXIII. Almost always, though, the anapæstic and the trochaic feet are employed in combination with the iambic foot. Now and then all of the three different kinds of metre are used in the same line:

Láy lĭke | ă loád | oň mў weá | rў eyé

We have just noted how some trochaic lines are incomplete. Occasionally, partly for the sake of variety and partly in imitation of the old ballads, Coleridge has employed an extra unaccented syllable:

Bŭt nó | sŭweet bírd | dĭd fól | lŏw.

Rapidity or slowness of movement is sometimes secured not through any variation of the metre, but by the choice of short, rapid words, or their opposites, as the case demands, and by their repetition. Coleridge is especially happy in his combination of vowel sounds to produce any given effect:

Alone, alone, all, all *alone.*

Most of the rhymes of the poem are good ones; the number of imperfect rhymes is comparatively small. There are a few illustrations of shifting the accent to the last syllable of a word for the sake of the rhyme, as was done in the old ballads. Now and then the use of the medial rhyme adds beauty and force to the stanza:

Around, around, flew each sweet sound.

While the normal stanza consists of four lines, we find frequent variations; sometimes the stanza is composed of five, six, or even in one instance of nine lines. Usually this variation occurs in the stanzas which contain striking portions of the story, such stanzas, for example, as those that mark important transitions: the entrance of the ship into the mysterious region in Stanza XII, and its return in Stanza CII. Occasionally by this variation is enhanced the beauty of some musical or picturesque passage, as in Stanza LXXXIV. Now and then, as in Stanza XXXV, the increased number of the lines emphasizes the monotony of the situation.

Questions for General Study and Review

Would the poem be as effective if written in some other metre, *e.g.*, the dactylic hexametre of Longfellow's "Evangeline," or the blank verse of Bryant's "Thanatopsis"? Give as many reasons as you can for your answer.

Do you find any imperfect rhymes in the poem?

Select three illustrations of where the sound of the line reflects the sense.

Why are we not told anything more definite regarding the time and place of the story?

What different indications are there in the poem that the Ancient Mariner was a Roman Catholic?

Describe the typical sailor as you imagine him. Make out a description of the Ancient Mariner from the poem. Compare the two pictures.

In what different ways does the poet secure our faith in his story?

Is the punishment of the Ancient Mariner and of his messmates out of proportion to their offence?

Trace the different steps in the spiritual development of the Ancient Mariner.

Is the moral of the story too evident?

Try to select titles for each of the divisions of the poem. Such titles should be brief and should not suggest more than each division actually contains. When you have selected these titles, see if they contain in miniature the entire story of the Ancient Mariner.

What would have been the effect if there had been employed in this poem a homely, peasant-like style, as Wordsworth wished?

Could any stanzas be omitted without materially affecting the poem?

Select several passages that seem to you good ones for an artist to illustrate. Give reasons for your choice.

Are there any passages where the interest in the description is more powerful than in the story itself?

Are any lines of the poem suggestive of the Scriptures?

Where is the movement of the story very rapid? Where very slow? Account for the changes.

Select five figures that seem especially apt or especially beautiful, and try to determine the source of their effectiveness.

Can you form any idea of the writer's character from the poem?

Would the poem be better if it "had more in it of the air and savor of the sea?"

What elements characteristic of romanticism do you find in the Ancient Mariner?

External nature may be employed in a poem (1) as a setting for the story; (2) to contrast with the spirit of the poem; (3) to harmonize with the spirit of the poem and to enforce it. Which of these uses do we find in this poem?

Coleridge's Methods of Description: (a) Epithets. A single vivid word is given; (b) Description by Effect; (c) Description brought out incidentally by the use of narrative. Can you find illustrations of these different methods of description?

What does Coleridge gain by the use of the gloss? Does it ever serve to explain the course of events? Does it add to the beauty of the scene? Does it add to the quaintness of the poem? Which do you consider the most beautiful of all the glosses, and why?

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THE VISION OF SIR LAUNFAL

In considering the theme of "The Vision of Sir Launfal," we need add little to the prefatory note Lowell has left us. Though the name, Sir Launfal, is not original, having been used before in a few obscure poems, Lowell has made the knight peculiarly his own. We must credit the poet both with the invention of the plot and with the extension of the significance of the quest. In the older stories of the Grail only the chaste could hope to catch sight of it; Lowell has broadened the requisite to the love of one's fellow-men. Into the poem, too, Lowell has put much of the life he was then living; the landscape described is essentially that of New England. In a letter written about the time he composed the poem he says:

"Last night I walked to Watertown over the snow, with the new moon before me. Orion was rising before me, the stillness of the fields around me was delicious, broken only by the people of the little brook which runs too swiftly for Frost to catch. My picture of the brook in *Sir Launfal* was drawn from it."

The mode of writing the poem is characteristic of Lowell. Forty years after its composition he commented thus in one of his letters: "—how easily I used to write! too easily I think now. But I couldn't help it. Everything came at a jump and all of a piece." The first of the "Biglow Papers," "A Fable for Critics," "The Vision of Sir Launfal," and the "Commemoration Ode," not to mention others, were all written under such inspirations. Lowell often commented on his dependence upon moods for producing any satisfactory work.

In judging "Sir Launfal," then, we must remember that it was written in a few hours, and that it shows the advantages and the disadvantages of such a mode of composition. Lowell disliked exceedingly to revise and to polish his work. Poe, a far less prolific artist, returned time and time again to his

poems, and at each revision he usually improved them. Perhaps the very ease with which Lowell wrote when in the mood made him careless of correcting. Moreover, despite his protest that he is a good versifier, we cannot help feeling that many lines in "Sir Launfal," such, for example, as "And the wanderer is welcomed to the hall," are unjustifiably rough, and that Lowell did not possess the firmness or the delicacy of touch so marked in the great melodists. Then, too, like Tennyson's "Princess," the poem is wanting in marked structural unity. The parts are beautiful; and we can see, when we think, what they have to do with each other; but they do not so grow together into one, that we feel that every part is absolutely necessary to the rest of the poem.

We may, however, recognize these defects, but maintain that the poem is great in spite of them. If "The Vision of Sir Launfal" has lost anything from the rapidity of its composition, it has gained more. It has caught in a manner perhaps unequalled by any other writer the spirit of "the high tide of the year." It fairly throbs with the vitality so infectious as to carry us along with a delight few poems can inspire. Again, if we accept Lowell's belief that "the proof of poetry is that it reduces to a single line the vague philosophy which is floating in all men's minds," we must accord a high place to "The Vision of Sir Launfal." The poem is the flower of the strong conviction of young manhood, a power making for righteousness. Lastly, if Lowell possessed the double nature he so often claimed, and the "Biglow Papers" show the humorous side at its finest, "The Vision of Sir Launfal" best represents the other; it is the work of Lowell the enthusiast with his slight touch of mysticism.

Suggestions for Teaching and Study

In studying "The Vision of Sir Launfal," it is well first of all to note carefully the significance of the opening stanza.

If we take the poem from what this stanza would have us, as an improvisation, and as such permitted the liberty allowed in such composition, we shall more thoroughly catch its spirit and understand its structure.

A teacher must use his own judgment in determining just how much study is called for by the text, just how much study of the meaning of words, of allusions, and of constructions. We must recognize that Lowell is not easy reading, and at the outset the teacher must see that the class have a fair understanding of the meaning of the more difficult lines. All definitions of words to be found in the usual dictionaries have been omitted, as have also, in most instances, the explanation of the numerous lines requiring class discussion and comment. Many passages to be committed so readily present themselves as to require practically no suggestions. Again, each teacher must decide for himself what emphasis he will place on the moral of the Vision; he may well realize that the lesson is an integral part of the poem and has a distinct ethical value. Even as a lesson to be learned by heart, if it can be remembered, it is worth having; but if the student can actually realize a small part of what the poet felt in conceiving these face-to-face words with Christ, not to speak of what such a vision actually could be to one so privileged as to have it, if one's spirit actually is vitalized by such a thing as this, then other matters will seem of much less importance.

A few books and poems for collateral reading may be suggested. Tennyson has treated the story of the search for the Holy Grail in his "Sir Galahad" and "The Holy Grail." Chatterton's "An Excellent Balade of Charity," Longfellow's "The Legend of the Beautiful Gate," and William Vaughn Moody's "Good Friday Night" offer some interesting points of comparison with "Sir Launfal." Lowell's "A Parable" gives us another presentation of the false and the true worship and love of Christ; while the beginning of "Under the Willows" and "Al Fresco" present two delightful descriptions

of June. Through his poems Lowell has commemorated many of the events of his life. "She Came and Went," "The Changeling," and "The First Snowfall" are among the best of his autobiographic verses. Scudder's "Life of Lowell" (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.) is the best biography. Charles Eliot Norton has edited two volumes of Lowell's letters (Harper & Bros.). Lowell ranks among the best of letter writers in English. Edward Everett Hale's "James Russell Lowell and His Friends" (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.) is also to be recommended.

Questions for General Study and Review

Why is it usually considered that the scene of the story is laid in England?

What do we learn from the poem of the customs of chivalry?

What lines sum up the lesson of the poem?

Make a list of the archaic words in the poem. Try to explain in each instance why the poet chose the older form.

What marked changes in the movement of the poem do you note? Try to discover in each instance how Lowell's mood shows itself in these variations.

Study Lowell's use of contrasts. How has he employed it in the structure of the poem? in its spirit? in the movement?

Has the poet drawn many of his comparisons from nature? Why?

Compare the attitude shown toward nature in "The Ancient Mariner" with that in "The Vision of Sir Launfal."

Compare this description of June with Riley's "Knee-deep in June." How does the spirit of the one differ from that of the other? What things are of common interest to the two poets?

THE RIME[1] OF

THE ANCIENT MARINER

IN SEVEN PARTS

PART I.

I.

It is [2] an ancient Mariner,[3]
And he stoppeth one of three.[4]
"By thy long gray beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?[5]

An ancient Mariner meeteth three gallants bidden to a wedding feast, and detaineth one.

II.

"The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide,
And I am next of kin;[6]
The guests are met, the feast is set:
May'st hear the merry din."

III.

He holds him with his skinny hand,
"There was a ship," quoth he.[7]
"Hold off! unhand me, graybeard loon!"
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

[1] *Rime.*—Look up the derivation of the word.

[2] What is gained by such an abrupt beginning of the story?

[3] Some one has said that the reader of the poem is the Wedding Guest. What does the statement mean, and is it true? Would anything be lost by referring through the poem to the Ancient Mariner as the *old sailor?*

[4] There are several artistic reasons for Coleridge's introducing the Wedding Guest instead of telling the story directly to the reader. Can you name three such reasons?

[5] Who utters lines 3 and 4?

[6] How is the effect of abruptness produced in lines 6 and 7?

[7] What is gained by having the Ancient Mariner tell the story as happening to himself rather than to some one else?

IV.

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

He holds him with his glittering eye [1]—
The wedding-guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child:
The Mariner hath his will.

V.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone;
He cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed [2] Mariner.

VI.

"The ship was cheered, the harbor cleared,
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the lighthouse top.[3]

VII.

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

The Sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he!
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea.[4]

VIII.

Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon"—
The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.[5]

[1] Such a line as this, repeating with a slight variation a preceding line, is called a repetend. What is gained by means of this device? Find other illustrations of its use in this poem. Compare l. 13 with l. 9. Which force indicates the greater power?

[2] Which is the better epithet as applied to the Ancient Mariner's eyes, *glittering* or *bright?* Why?

[3] Why at this point in his narrative should the Poet hurry so? What does the word "kirk" imply as to the place?

[4] A poetical way of telling us what about the course of the vessel?

[5] Bassoon. "During Coleridge's residence in Stowey his friend Poole reformed the church choir and added a bassoon to its resources. Mrs. Stanford ("T. Poole and his

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XIII.

And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold:
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald.[1]

XIV.

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

And through the drifts[2] the snowy clifts
Did send a dismal sheen:[3]
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken—
The ice was all between.

XV.

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![4]

XVI.

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

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

XVII.

It ate the food it ne'er had eat,[5]
And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-fit;
The helmsman steered us through!

This stanza implies perhaps as much as it expresses. What are some of the emotions it suggests? "*treads the shadow of his foe*": what do you understand by this expression?

[1] Read aloud this stanza, and determine what is its most significant word. Why?

[2] "*Drifts*" probably means banks or clouds of mist. Would some such verb as *cast* be as effective as *send*?

[3] *Sheen.* What difference between the use of the word here and that in line 314?

[4] What suggestion in this comparison, "like noises in a swound," makes it very effective?

[5] How does the reception of the albatross by the mariners and its actions during the succeeding days increase the guilt of killing the bird?

XVIII.

And a good south wind [1] 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 thè ship as it returned northward, through fog and floating ice.

XIX.

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perched for vespers nine; [2]
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmered the white moon-shine."

XX.

"God save thee, ancient Mariner!
From the fiends, that plague thee thus!—
Why look'st thou so?" [3]—"With my cross-bow
I shot the Albatross.

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

PART II.

XXI. [4]

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.

XXII. [4]

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!

[1] Note how the change in the direction of sailing is indicated.

[2] What do you understand by "*vespers nine*"?

[3] What caused the Wedding Guest to interrupt the Ancient Mariner at this point? Should the Mariner have told us more about the death of the bird? What induced him to kill the albatross? Keep the last few lines in mind; you will have occasion to use them later.

[4] Of what preceding lines are the four of this stanza repetends? Why does the poet lay such emphasis on the fog and mist?

XXIII.

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

And I had done an hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe:[1]
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!

XXIV.

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

Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,
The glorious Sun uprist:[2]
Then all averred, I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist.
'T was right, said they, such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.[3]

XXV.

The fair breeze continues; the ship enters the Pacific Ocean, and sails northward, even until it reaches the Line.

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free;[4]
We were the first that ever burst[5]
Into that silent sea.[6]

XXVI.

The ship hath been suddenly becalmed.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'T was sad as sad could be;

[1] What considerations induced the sailors to blame or to praise the Ancient Mariner for killing the bird?

[2] What other beautiful descriptions of sunrise do you find in poetry? Compare this description with that given in Shakespeare's 33d Sonnet, and with that in "L'Allegro."

[3] In thus excusing the death of the albatross, have the sailors done a greater or a less wrong than the Ancient Mariner?

[4] "*The furrow followed free.*" "In the Sibylline Leaves the line was printed 'The furrow stream'd off free.' And Coleridge puts this footnote: 'In a former edition the line was "The furrow followed free"; but I had not been long on board the 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 1828 and after the old line was restored." Campbell's Note.

[5] Why is the word *burst* as used in this connection especially expressive? Describe this "silent sea," as you imagine it.

[6] Point out some other stanzas that have a rapid movement given by the rush of the rhythm.

And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea![1]

XXVII.

All in a hot and copper[2] sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.

XXVIII.

Day after day, day after day,[3]
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

XXIX.

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

And the Albatross begins to be avenged.

XXX.

The very deep did rot: O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy[4] things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.

XXXI.

About, about, in reel and rout[5]
The death-fires danced at night;

[1] How is the movement in this stanza retarded? What is the effect of the alliteration in this stanza?

[2] What qualities of the sky are implied in "copper"?

[3] What is suggested by the repetition? Can you find other passages in the poem where the same effect is produced by this same device? What are the two most forceful words in this stanza? What parts of speech are most powerful in giving life to a description?

[4] Why does the Poet dwell upon the rather disagreeable word "slimy"?

[5] Compare with l. 354. How is rapidity of movement secured in these lines? Can you select any one adjective to express the impression made by this stanza?

The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green, and blue, and white.

XXXII.

A spirit had followed them; one of the invisible inhabitants of this planet, neither departed souls nor angels; concerning whom the learned Jew, Josephus, and the Platonic Constantinopolitan, Michael Psellus, may be consulted. They are very numerous, and there is no climate or element without one or more.[2]

And some in dreams assured were
Of the Spirit that plagued us so:
Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist and snow.[1]

XXXIII.

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.

XXXIV.

The ship-mates in their sore distress would fain throw the whole guilt on the ancient Mariner; in sign whereof they hang the dead sea-bird round his neck.

Ah! well-a-day! what evil looks
Had I from old and young!
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.[3]

PART III.

XXXV.

There passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parched, and glazed each eye.
A weary time! a weary time![4]

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

How glazed each weary eye,
When looking westward, I beheld
A something in the sky.[5]

[1] Why should the spirit be angered at the death of the albatross? Why nine fathoms, instead of eight or ten fathoms?

[2] What is the Poet's purpose in naming the authorities he cites in the gloss?

[3] Is there any other reason, besides the desire of his companions to fix the guilt on the Ancient Mariner, for hanging the albatross about his neck?

[4] What is the purpose of the repetitions in this stanza? Is the same device used elsewhere in the poem for producing a similar effect?

[5] Why are we not told at once what the Mariner sees?

XXXVI.

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.

XXXVII.

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist![1]
And still it neared and neared:
As if it dodged a water-sprite,
It plunged and tacked and veered.

XXXVIII.

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
We could not laugh nor wail;
Through utter drought all dumb we stood!
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
And cried, A sail! a sail![2]

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.

XXXIX.

With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
Agape they heard me call:
Gramercy![3] they for joy did grin,[4]
And all at once their breath drew in,
As they were drinking all.

A flash of joy

XL.

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

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

[1] What is the Poet's purpose in thus gathering the content of the preceding stanza into a single line? How are we made aware of the supernatural character of the approaching ship?

[2] Which is the more poetic, this stanza or the gloss?

[3] Derivation and meaning?

[4] *For joy did grin.* "I took the thought of grinning for joy from poor Burnett's remark to me when we had climbed to the top of Plinlimmon and were nearly dead with thirst. We could not speak for the constriction till we found a little puddle under a stone. He said to me, 'You grinned like an idiot.' He had done the same." Coleridge, "Table-talk." May 31, 1830 (second edition), ll. 185–189.

XLI.

The western wave was all a-flame.
The day was well-nigh done![1]
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad bright Sun;
When that strange shape drove[2] suddenly
Betwixt us and the Sun.

XLII.

It seemeth him but the skeleton of a ship.

And straight the Sun was flecked with bars,
(Heaven's Mother send us grace!)
As if through a dungeon-grate he peered,
With broad and burning face.[3]

XLIII.[4]

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?[5]

XLIV.

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.

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?

XLV.

Like vessel, like crew!

Her lips were red, her looks were free,
Her locks were yellow as gold:[6]

[1] Why is it especially effective to have the ship appear at sunset?

[2] What is the significance of the *drove?* Can you substitute a better word?

[3] Describe the sight the Ancient Mariner witnessed.

[4] What device through this stanza and the next makes more vivid the growing terror of the Ancient Mariner?

[5] Look up the derivation of *gossameres.*

[6] Is anything gained by making Life-in-Death partially beautiful? Cf. with Lady Geraldine in "Christabel." *Life-in-Death.* Cf. Tennyson's "Tears, Idle Tears": "O

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The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed
white;
From the sails the dew did drip—
Till clomb above the eastern bar
The horned Moon, with one bright star
Within the nether tip.[1]

XLIX.

One after another,

One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed[2] me with his eye.

L.

His shipmates drop down dead;

Four times fifty living men,
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan)
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,[3]
They dropped down one by one.

LI.

But Life-in-Death begins her work on the ancient Mariner.

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

PART IV.

LII.

The wedding-guest feareth that a spirit is talkingtohim;

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner![4]
I fear thy skinny hand!
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.[5]

[1] Can you see any reason for the Poet's making this the longest stanza of the poem? What feeling is delicately suggested in the first line? Notice carefully the details used in this stanza, and then describe the night. Does the moon add brightness to the scene? The meaning of *bar?* It has been objected that a star could not be within the tips of the moon. Should Coleridge have changed these lines to accord with facts?

[2] Where later in the poem is the curse again referred to? Does it become more or less terrible to the Ancient Mariner?

[3] Does the Poet gain or lose by using the rather ordinary words rhymed in l. 218?

[4] What causes the Wedding Guest to fear?

[5] Ll. 226-227 were suggested by Wordsworth. Is the comparison a happy one?

LIII.

I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand so brown."—
"Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest!
This body dropped not down.

LIV.

Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide, wide sea![1]
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

LV.

The many men, so beautiful![2]
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.

LVI.

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.

LVII.

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.[3]

[1] Can you conceive of any punishment more terrible for the Mariner than to be shut up alone with these dead men? What is the effect of the repetition of the word *alone?* How is this feeling of isolation of the Ancient Mariner preserved throughout the whole poem?

[2] Why should he call the men beautiful? The student will be interested in comparing the experiences of the Ancient Mariner with those of Christian in the first portion of Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," especially when Christian sees the Cross. Notice the adjectives used in describing the scene.

[3] Would the effect have been more terrible if we had been told what the wicked whisper was?

LVIII.

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.[1]

LIX.

But the curse liveth for him in the eye of the dead men.

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

LX.

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

LXI.[2]

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

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

LXII.[2]

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

[1] Compare with "Macbeth," Act I, Sc. III, l. 19, sq. Note how Coleridge fills out the suggestions made by Shakespeare. If you have ever had a severe fever, recall how your eyes and temples throbbed. How does the movement of the third line reflect the suffering of the Ancient Mariner?

[2] Which is more beautiful, these two stanzas or the accompanying gloss? Defend your answers. Does any word suggest the possibility of coming relief?

But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
The charmed [1] water burnt alway
A still and awful red.

LXIII.

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.[2]

By the light of the Moon he beholdeth God's creatures of the great calm.

LXIV.

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.

LXV.

O happy living things! [3] no tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart,[4]
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.

LXVI.

The selfsame moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off and sank
Like lead into the sea.[5]

The spell begins to break.

[1] *Charmed* has an interesting and significant derivation.

[2] How do the contrasting colors of the water within and without the shadow of the ship reflect the Mariner's spiritual condition? What words in this description hint at the supernatural in the scene? Compare the appearance of the snakes within the shadow of the ship with that of those beyond. Which are the more beautiful?

[3] How has he spoken of the water snakes before? What induces him now to regard them differently?

[4] With what preceding line may we contrast l. 284?

[5] Would this division have been more effective if the punishment of the Mariner had

Part V.

LXVII.

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.[1]

LXVIII.

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

The silly[2] buckets on the deck,
That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled with dew;
And when I awoke, it rained.[3]

LXIX.

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.[4]

LXX.

I moved, and could not feel my limbs:
I was so light—almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessed ghost.[5]

LXXI.

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;

been described more fully? Can you find other illustrations in literature or in life where men by blessing others have blessed themselves? Is there any reason for having the release of the Ancient Mariner come in the middle division of the poem?

[1] How has Coleridge spoken of sleep in "Christabel"? How has Shakespeare, in the second act of "Macbeth"? What is the effect of the alliteration in the last line? Do you note in this part any other cases of effective alliteration?

[2] Trace in the dictionary the changes in meaning of *silly*.

[3] How long has his torture from thirst lasted?

[4] Is any word of this stanza employed in an unusual manner?

[5] Is this change of feeling due to more than one cause? What is the exact significance of a *blessed* ghost?

But with its sound it shook the sails,
That were so thin and sere.[1]

LXXII.

The upper air burst into life!
And a hundred fire-flags sheen,[2]
To and fro they were hurried about!
And to and fro, and in and out,[3]
The wan stars danced between.[4]

LXXIII.

And the coming wind did roar more loud,
And the sails did sigh like sedge;[5]
And the rain poured down from one black cloud;
The Moon was at its edge.

LXXIV.

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,[6]
A river steep and wide.[7]

LXXV.

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 inspired,[8] and the ship moves on;

[1] Why are the adjectives used in describing the sails especially good ones?

[2] What must we supply in l. 314 to complete the sentence?

[3] What is the effect of the additional line in this stanza?

[4] Compare this scene with that described in stanza XXXI. Which is the more vivid, and why? Would the picture have been more effective if the stars had been hidden from view?

[5] Why does the Poet refer so repeatedly to the sound made by the sails?

[6] What previous illustrations have we noted of Coleridge's use of strong, homely words?

[7] Describe this scene in your own words.

[8] Can you discover later in the poem the force that causes the ship to move on? What is the Poet's purpose in representing the ship's crew as "*inspired*"?

LXXVI.

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

LXXVII.

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.[1]

LXXVIII.

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."

LXXIX

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

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!"[2]
"Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest!
'T was not those souls that fled in pain,
Which to their corses came again,
But a troop of spirits blest:[3]

LXXX.

For when it dawned—they dropped their arms,
And clustered round the mast;

1 Wordsworth suggested that the dead men sail the ship. What word in this stanza well represents the feelings of the Ancient Mariner? How does this stanza accord with the fate allotted to the Mariner?

2 The last interruption of the Wedding Guest. Does his fear seem as great as at the preceding interruptions?

3 Where later in the poem are these spirits again mentioned?

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LXXXV.

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

LXXXVI.[1]

The lonesome spirit from the south pole carries on the ship as far as the line, in obedience to the angelic troop, but still requireth vengeance.

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

LXXXVII.

The Sun, right up above the mast,
Had fixed her to the ocean:
But in a minute she 'gan stir,[2]
With a short uneasy motion—
Backwards and forwards half her length
With a short uneasy motion.

LXXXVIII.

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 swound.

the beauty of the stanza? Why do you imagine the poet chose to drop these four stanzas which followed stanza LXXXIV in the version of 1798?

"Listen, O listen, thou Wedding-guest!"
"Marinere! thou hast thy will:
For that which comes out of thine eye, doth make
My body and soul to be still."

"Never sadder tale was told
To a man of woman born:
Sadder and wiser than wedding-guest
Thou 'lt rise to-morrow morn.

Never sadder tale was heard
By a man of woman born:
The Marineres all return'd to work
As silent as beforne.

The Marineres all 'gan pull the ropes,
But look on me they n' old:
Thought I, I am as thin as air—
They cannot me behold."

[1] Compare the gloss with that of stanza XXV. Are they contradictory? Have we any hint given as to the subsequent course of the vessel?

[2] What purpose is served by the shifting of accents in this line and 387?

LXXXIX.

How long in that same fit I lay,
I have not to declare;
But ere my living life[1] returned,
I heard and in my soul discerned
Two voices in the air.

The Polar Spirit's fellow-demons, 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.

XC.[2]

'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.

XCI.

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.'[3]

XCII.

The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honey-dew:
Quoth he, 'The man hath penance done,
And penance more will do.'[4]

[1] Would *conscious* life express all Coleridge would imply in *living life?*

[2] What does the Poet mean by speaking in the gloss of these spirits as demons? Reread the motto at the beginning of the poem. Compare the nature of these spirits with that of the witches of "Macbeth." What motive is represented by each of these voices? Why are these special two chosen? Is there any significance in the kind of bow used by the Mariner?

[3] Where does the Ancient Mariner himself lay emphasis on the value of love?

[4] Why not *shall do* instead of *will do?* Trace through the remainder of the poem the fulfilment of the spirit's prophecy of the further penance of the Ancient Mariner. Is the penance shown in the rest of the poem as severe as that of the past?

Part VI.

xciii.

First Voice.[1]

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

xciv.

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—[2]

xcv.

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.'

xcvi.

First Voice.

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

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

Second Voice.

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

xcvii.

Fly, brother, fly! more high, more high!
Or we shall be belated:

[1] Why does the Poet resort to the device of introducing these two voices? Why not begin this part with l. 430?

[2] State in your own language the central thought of this stanza. Do you find any other instances of the Poet's stating common facts in very beautiful language?

For slow and slow that ship will go,
When the Mariner's trance is abated.'

XCVIII.

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

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

XCIX.

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

C.

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.[1]

CI.

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.

CII.

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.[2]

[1] Why cannot the Mariner pray?

[2] What causes the Mariner's fear? Cf. with stanza XII. In what sense are they corresponding stanzas?

CIII.

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.[1]

CIV.

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.

CV.

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

CVI.

And the ancient Mariner beholdeth his native country

Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed
The light-house top I see?
Is this the hill? is this the kirk?
Is this mine own countree?[2]

CVII.

We drifted o'er the harbor-bar,
And I with sobs did pray—
O let me be awake, my God!
Or let me sleep alway.[3]

[1] Where do we receive the first intimation that the voyage is about to end? Would this portion of the poem have been more effective if we had been told more in detail of the return of the ship? Where have we noted a similar rapidity in the movement of the story?

[2] In what preceding passage has strong emotion been indicated by the use of the interrogation? Compare with stanza VI. Cf. also with Longfellow's "Lighthouse":

"The mariner remembers when a child
On his first voyage he saw it fade and sink;
And when returning from adventures wild,
He saw it rise again o'er ocean's brink."

[3] Why is it natural the Mariner should fear this sight is but a dream?

CVIII.

The harbor-bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn!
And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow [1] of the moon.

CIX.

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,
That stands above the rock:
The moonlight steeped in silentness [2]
The steady weathercock.[3]

CX.

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

The angelic spirits leave the dead bodies,

CXI.

A little distance from the prow
Those crimson shadows were:
I turned my eyes upon the deck—
Oh, Christ! what saw I there! [4]

And appear in their own forms of light.

[1] Is *shadow* here used in its ordinary sense?

[2] Suggestive of *Remorse*, iv, 3.

"The many clouds, the sea, the rocks, the sands
Lie in the silent moonshine."

[3] Which is the more impressive, the departure of the ship amid cheers or its return in silence? Here were inserted in the edition of 1798 five stanzas:

The moonlight bay was white all o'er
Till rising from the same,
Full many shapes, that shadows were,
Like as of torches came.

A little distance from the prow
Those dark-red shadows were;
But soon I saw that my own flesh
Was red as in a glare.

I turn'd my head in fear and dread,
And by the holy rood,
The bodies had advanc'd and now
Before the mast they stood.

They lifted up their stiff white arms,
They held them straight and tight;
And each right arm burnt like a torch,
A torch that's borne upright,
Their stony eyeballs glittered on
In the red and smoky light.

I pray'd and turn'd my head away
Forth looking as before.
There was no breeze upon the bay,
No wave against the shore.

[4] Why had the Ancient Mariner failed to notice this spectacle before?

CXII.

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

CXIII.

This seraph-band, each waved his hand;
It was a heavenly sight!
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light;[1]

CXIV.

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

CXV.

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.[2]

CXVI.

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.[3]

[1] Compare this scene with that of stanza LXXIX.

[2] After this stanza appeared in the 1798 version the following:

Then vanished all the lovely lights;
The bodies rose anew:
With silent pace, each to his place,
Came back the ghastly crew.
The wind that shade nor motion made,
On me alone it blew,

[3] The meaning of *blast*?

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The planks looked warped! and see those sails,
How thin they are and sere![1]
I never saw aught like to them,
Unless perchance it were

CXXII.

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."[2]

CXXIII.

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

CXXIV.

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.

CXXV.[3]

The ship suddenly sinketh.

Under the water it rumbled on,
Still louder and more dread:
It reached the ship, it split the bay;
The ship went down like lead.[4]

CXXVI.

Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound,
Which sky and ocean smote,

[1] What adjectives have been used before in describing the appearance of the sails?

[2] With what feelings does the hermit regard the ship?

[3] What is the effect of the irregularity in the metrical structure of the first line of this stanza?

[4] Where has the comparison in this line been used before? In which place is the comparison the more appropriate?

Like one that hath been seven days drowned
My body lay afloat;
But swift as dreams, myself I found
Within the Pilot's boat.

CXXVII.

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.

CXXVIII.

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.

CXXIX.

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.'[1]

CXXX.

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 shrive him; and the penance of life falls on him.

CXXXI.

'O shrive me, shrive me, holy man!'[2]
The Hermit crossed his brow.

[1] What, besides the mysterious disappearance of the ship, induces the pilot's boy to mistake the Ancient Mariner for the Devil, and the hermit to ask, "*What manner of man art thou?*"

[2] What added idea of the Ancient Mariner's penance do we get from the gloss?

'Say quick,' quoth he, 'I bid thee say—
What manner of man art thou?'

CXXXII.

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

CXXXIII.

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.

CXXXIV.

I pass, like night, from land to land;[1]
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.

CXXXV.

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![2]

CXXXVI.

O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide wide sea:

[1] "*I pass, like night.*" What different ideas are implied in this comparison? Should this explanation of the spell exerted by the Ancient Mariner have been given us at the beginning of the poem? "Coleridge had the striking thought that possibly the punishment of a future life may consist in bringing back the consciousness of the Past." Robinson's Diary: II, 129.

[2] To what preceding stanza are we here brought back? How do the last two lines prepare us for the rest of the poem?

So lonely 't was, that God himself
Scarce seemed there to be.

CXXXVII.

O sweeter than the marriage-feast,
'T is sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company!—[1]

CXXXVIII.

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!

CXXXIX.[2]

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 reverence to all things that God made and loveth.

CXL.

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

CXLI.

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,

[1] Why should the Mariner now love to walk to the kirk with a goodly company?

[2] What is the key word of this and the succeeding stanza? Has this same word served a similar purpose in any preceding portion of the poem? Cf. with "Religious Musings":

"There is one Mind, one omnipresent Mind,
Omnific, His most holy name is Love,
Views all creation: and He loves it all,
And blesses it and calls it very good."

Is gone: [1] and now the Wedding-Guest
Turned from the bridegroom's door.

CXLII.

He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn:
A sadder and a wiser man,
He rose the morrow morn.[2]

[1] Would anything have been gained or lost by telling more of the life of the Ancient Mariner? Why not end the poem with stanza CXL?

[2] What was the effect of the story upon the Wedding Guest? Why this effect, rather than amazement and terror such as have characterized him before?

THE VISION OF SIR LAUNFAL

NOTE BY THE AUTHOR.—According to the mythology of the Romancers, the San Greal, or Holy Grail, was the cup out of which Jesus partook of the last supper with his disciples. It was brought into England by Joseph of Arimathea, and remained there, an object of pilgrimage and adoration, for many years in the keeping of his lineal descendants. It was incumbent upon those who had charge of it to be chaste in thought, word, and deed; but one of the keepers having broken this condition, the Holy Grail disappeared. From that time it was a favorite enterprise of the knights of Arthur's court to go in search of it. Sir Galahad was at last successful in finding it, as may be read in the seventeenth book of the Romance of King Arthur. Tennyson has made Sir Galahad the subject of one of the most exquisite of his poems.

The plot (if I may give that name to anything so slight) of the following poem is my own, and, to serve its purposes, I have enlarged the circle of competition in search of the miraculous cup in such a manner as to include, not only other persons than the heroes of the Round Table, but also a period of time subsequent to the date of King Arthur's reign.

PRELUDE TO PART FIRST

OVER his keys the musing organist,[1]
  Beginning doubtfully and far away,[2]
First lets his fingers wander as they list,
  And builds a bridge from Dreamland for his lay:
Then, as the touch of his loved instrument
  Gives hope and fervor, nearer draws his theme,
First guessed by faint auroral flushes sent
  Along the wavering vista of his dream.

[1] The first stanza, though printed as a part of the Prelude to Part First, is really a little introduction to the whole poem. It gives the idea of the poet's reverie as he follows his thought without the rigidity of a fixed construction.

[2] *Far away* from whom or what?

Not only around our infancy
Doth heaven with all its splendors lie;[1]
Daily, with souls that cringe and plot,
We Sinais climb and know it not;[2]

Over our manhood bend the skies;[3]
Against our fallen and traitor lives
The great winds utter prophecies;
With our faint hearts the mountain strives;
Its arms outstretched, the druid[4] wood
Waits with its benedicite;
And to our age's drowsy blood
Still shouts the inspiring sea.

Earth[5] gets its price for what Earth gives us;
The beggar is taxed for a corner to die in,
The priest hath his fee who comes and shrives us,
We bargain for the graves we lie in;
At the Devil's booth are all things sold,[6]
Each ounce of dross costs its ounce of gold;
For a cap and bells our lives we pay,
Bubbles we earn with a whole soul's tasking;
'Tis heaven alone that is given away,
'Tis only God may be had for the asking;
There is no price set on the lavish summer,
And June may be had by the poorest comer.

[1] The allusion is to Wordsworth's "Ode on the Intimations on Immortality," the first line of stanza v, "Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting." Line 20 probably refers to the last part of stanza IX of the same poem. Possibly line 21 may have been suggested as a comment on Wordsworth's "Earth fills her lap with treasures of her own." The student should read the ode.

[2] See Exodus XIX, 3. Is Lowell's statement in these lines true?

[3] Nature is more loyal to God than we.

[4] Where has Longfellow spoken of the forest as standing like Druids? In poetry words are often more valuable for what they imply than for what they express. What is suggested by *druid?*

[5] Just what does Lowell mean by *Earth?*

[6] What is the emphatic word in this line?

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No matter how barren the past may have been,
'Tis enough for us now that the leaves are green;
We sit in the warm shade and feel right well
How the sap creeps up and the blossoms swell;
We may shut our eyes, but we cannot help knowing
That skies are clear and grass is growing;

The breeze comes whispering in our ear
That dandelions are blossoming near,
That maize has sprouted, that streams are flowing,
That the river is bluer than the sky,
That the robin is plastering his house hard by;
And if the breeze kept the good news back,
For other couriers we should not lack;
We could guess it all by yon heifer's lowing,—
And hark! how clear bold chanticleer,
Warmed with the new wine of the year,
Tells all in his luty crowing![1]

Joy comes, grief goes, we know not how;
Everything is happy now,
Everything is upward striving;
'Tis as easy now for the heart to be true
As for the grass to be green or skies to be blue,—
'Tis the natural way of living:
Who knows whither the clouds have fled?
In the unscarred heaven they leave no wake;
And the eyes forget the tears they have shed,
The heart forgets its sorrow and ache;
The soul partakes the season's youth,
And the sulphurous rifts of passion and woe

[1] What is the effect of the changing movement of these lines? How has Lowell secured his effects in this description—by the use of especially appropriate words, or by the selection of typical details?

Lie deep 'neath a silence pure and smooth,
  Like burnt-out craters healed with snow.
What wonder if Sir Launfal[1] now
Remembered the keeping of his vow?

PART FIRST[2]

I.

"My golden spurs[3] now bring to me,
  And bring to me my richest mail,
For to-morrow I go over land and sea
  In search of the Holy Grail;
Shall never a bed for me be spread,
Nor shall a pillow be under my head,
Till I begin my vow to keep;
Here on the rushes[4] will I sleep,
And perchance there may come a vision true
Ere day create the world anew."
  Slowly Sir Launfal's eyes grew dim,
  Slumber fell like a cloud on him,
And into his soul the vision flew.[5]

II.

The crows flapped over by twos and threes,
In the pool drowsed the cattle up to their knees,
  The little birds sang as if it were
  The one day of summer in all the year,
And the very leaves seemed to sing on the trees:

[1] Why does Lowell begin to speak of Sir Launfal suddenly, without telling us who and what he was?

[2] Show how this section sustains the spirit of the prelude.

[3] Golden spurs were the symbol of knighthood. When a knight disgraced himself his golden spurs were hacked off his heels by the cook's cleaver.

[4] What is the significance of Sir Launfal's sleeping on the rushes?

[5] What is the purpose of this appeal to sounds dying into silence at the close of the stanza?

The castle alone in the landscape lay
Like an outpost of winter, dull and gray;
'Twas the proudest hall in the North Countree,[1]
And never its gates might opened be,
Save to lord or lady of high degree;
Summer besieged it on every side,[2]
But the churlish stone her assaults defied;
She[3] could not scale the chilly wall,
Though round it for leagues her pavilions tall
Stretched left and right,
Over the hills and out of sight;
Green and broad was every tent,
And out of each a murmur went
Till the breeze fell off at night.

III.

The drawbridge dropped with a surly clang,[4]
And through the dark arch a charger sprang,
Bearing Sir Launfal, the maiden knight,
In his gilded mail, that flamed so bright
It seemed the dark castle had gathered all
Those shafts the fierce sun had shot over its wall
In his siege of three hundred summers long,
And binding them all in one blazing sheaf,
Had cast them forth: so, young and strong,
And lightsome as a locust leaf,
Sir Launfal flashed forth in his unscarred mail,
To seek in all climes for the Holy Grail.

IV.

It was morning on hill and stream and tree,
And morning in the young knight's heart;

[1] What rhyme of "The Ancient Mariner" is here recalled?
[2] What is the idea of this and the few following lines? Cf. ll. 140–144.
[3] What other notable instances of personification do you find in the poem?
[4] Point out some good examples of alliteration in this stanza.

Only the castle moodily
Rebuffed the gifts of the sunshine free,
And gloomed by itself apart;
The season brimmed all other things up
Full as the rain fills the pitcher-plant's cup.

V.

As Sir Launfal made morn through the darksome gate,
He was 'ware of a leper [1] crouched by the same,
Who begged with his hand and moaned as he sate;
And a loathing over Sir Launfal came;
The sunshine went out of his soul with a thrill,
The flesh 'neath his armor did shrink and crawl,
And midway its leap his heart stood still
Like a frozen waterfall;
For this man, so foul and bent of stature,
Rasped harshly against his dainty nature,
And seemed the one blot on the summer morn,—
So he tossed him a piece of gold in scorn.

VI.

The leper raised not the gold from the dust:
"Better to me the poor man's crust,
Better the blessing of the poor,
Though I turn me empty from his door;
That is no true alms which the hand can hold;
He gives nothing but worthless gold
Who gives from a sense of duty; [2]
But he who gives a slender mite,[3]
And gives to that which is out of sight,

[1] How did Christ once receive a leper?

[2] Do the gloomy castle and the brilliant Sir Launfal stand for the same thing in the poet's mind?

[3] What biblical story is here suggested?

That thread of the all-sustaining Beauty
Which runs through all and doth all unite,—
The hand cannot clasp the whole of his alms,
The heart outstretches its eager palms,
For a god goes with it and makes it store
To the soul that was starving in darkness before."

PRELUDE TO PART SECOND [1]

Down swept the chill wind from the mountain peak,[2]
From the snow five thousand summers [3] old;
On open wold and hill-top bleak
It had gathered all the cold,
And whirled it like sleet on the wanderer's cheek;
It carried a shiver everywhere
From the unleafed boughs and pastures bare;
The little brook heard it and built a roof
'Neath which he could house him, winter-proof;
All night by the white stars' frosty gleams
He groined [4] his arches and matched his beams;
Slender and clear were his crystal spars
As the lashes of light that trim the stars;
He sculptured every summer delight
In his halls and chambers out of sight;
Sometimes his tinkling waters slipt
Down through a frost-leaved forest-crypt,[5]
Long, sparkling aisles of steel-stemmed trees
Bending to counterfeit a breeze;

[1] What different reason for introducing second prelude? Which prelude is the more beautiful? Which the more suggestive? Which season do you imagine the poet preferred?

[2] Compare this description of winter with that in Whittier's "Snowbound." The student will be interested in reading Lowell's essay, "A Good Word for Winter."

[3] Why *summers* instead of *winters?*

[4] See the illustrations in the dictionaries.

[5] *Crypt* because it was down underneath, as if in a cellar; *forest* because the ice froze in form of trees.

Sometimes the roof no fretwork knew
But silvery mosses that downward grew;
Sometimes it was carved in sharp relief
With quaint arabesques of ice-fern leaf;
Sometimes it was simply smooth and clear
For the gladness of heaven to shine through, and here
He had caught the nodding bulrush-tops
And hung them thickly with diamond drops,
Which crystalled the beams of moon and sun,
And made a star of every one:
No mortal builder's most rare device
Could match this winter-palace of ice;
'Twas as if every image that mirrored lay
In his depths serene through the summer day,
Each flitting shadow of earth and sky,
  Lest the happy model should be lost,
Had been mimicked in fairy masonry
  By the elfin builders of the frost.

Within the hall are song and laughter,[1]
  The cheeks of Christmas glow red and jolly,
And sprouting is every corbel and rafter
  With the lightsome green of ivy and holly;
Through the deep gulf of the chimney wide
Wallows the Yule-log's roaring tide;
The broad flame-pennons droop and flap
  And belly and tug as a flag in the wind;
Like a locust shrills the imprisoned sap,
  Hunted to death in its galleries blind;
And swift little troops of silent sparks,
  Now pausing, now scattering away as in fear,
Go threading the soot-forest's tangled darks
  Like herds of startled deer.

[1] Study the details of this picture and then describe it. What word in the stanza first shows the change in Sir Launfal?

But the wind without was eager and sharp,
Of Sir Launfal's gray hair it makes a harp,[1]
And rattles and wrings
The icy strings,
Singing, in dreary monotone,
A Christmas carol of its own,
Whose burden still, as he might guess,
Was—"Shelterless, shelterless, shelterless!"
The voice of the seneschal flared like a torch
As he shouted the wanderer away from the porch,
And he sat down in the gateway and saw all night[2]
The great hall-fire, so cheery and bold,
Through the window-slits of the castle old,
Build out its piers of ruddy light
Against the drift of the cold.[3]

PART SECOND

I.

There was never a leaf on bush or tree,
The bare boughs rattled shudderingly;
The river was dumb and could not speak,
For the frost's swift shuttles its shroud had spun;[4]
A single crow on the tree-top bleak[5]
From his shining feathers shed off the cold sun;
Again it was morning, but shrunk and cold,
As if her veins were sapless and old,
And she rose up decrepitly
For a last dim look at earth and sea.

[1] Is the figure beginning in this line especially good? especially appropriate? Would the poem have gained or lost by its omission?

[2] Scan the line.

[3] What is the most picturesque word in this stanza?

[4] In another edition this line is given, "For the weaver Winter its shroud had spun." Which reading do you prefer, and why?

[5] With what preceding line may we contrast this? Why a single crow?

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The leper, lank as the rain-blanched bone,[1]
That cowered beside him, a thing as lone
And white as the ice-isles of Northern seas,
In the desolate horror of his disease.

V.

And Sir Launfal said,—"I behold in thee
An image of Him who died on the tree;
Thou also hast had thy crown of thorns,—
Thou also hast had the world's buffets and scorns,—
And to thy life were not denied
The wounds in the hands and feet and side;
Mild Mary's Son, acknowledge me;[2]
Behold, through him, I give to thee!"[3]

VI.

Then the soul of the leper stood up in his eyes
And looked at Sir Launfal, and straightway he
Remembered in what a haughtier guise
He had flung an alms to leprosie,
When he caged[4] his young life up in gilded mail
And set forth in search of the Holy Grail,
The heart within him was ashes and dust.
He parted in twain his single crust,
He broke the ice on the streamlet's brink,
And gave the leper to eat and drink;
'Twas a moldy crust of coarse brown bread,
'Twas water out of a wooden bowl,—
Yet with fine wheaten bread was the leper fed,
And 'twas red wine he drank with his thirsty soul.

[1] What different passages in "The Ancient Mariner" are recalled by this line and by ll. 278, 281?

[2] See Matthew x. 32.

[3] See Matthew xxv. 40.

[4] Why is *caged* especially well chosen?

VII.

As Sir Launfal mused with a downcast face,
A light shone round about the place;
The leper no longer crouched at his side,
But stood before him glorified,
Shining and tall and fair and straight [1]
As the pillar that stood by the Beautiful Gate,—[2]
Himself the Gate [3] whereby men can
Enter the temple of God in Man.

VIII.

His words were shed softer [4] than leaves from the pine,
And they fell on Sir Launfal as snows on the brine,
Which mingle their softness and quiet in one
With the shaggy unrest they float down upon;
And the voice that was calmer than silence said.
"Lo, it is I, be not afraid! [5]
In many climes, without avail,
Thou hast spent thy life for the Holy Grail;
Behold it is here,—this cup which thou
Didst fill at the streamlet for me but now;
This crust is my body broken for thee,
This water His blood that died on the tree; [6]
The Holy Supper is kept, indeed,
In whatso we share with another's need,—
Not that which we give, but what we share,—
For the gift without the giver is bare;

[1] What is the effect in this line of the repetition of *and*?

[2] Acts III, 2.

[3] John X, 9.

[4] Is this word better than *calmer*, the reading of an another edition? Why?

[5] "Disease, poverty, death, sorrow, all come to us with unbenign countenances; but from one after another the mask falls off, and we behold faces which retain the glory and calm of having looked in the face of God." Letters, I, 78.

[6] The student must here recall the belief that the bread and wine of the Holy Sacrament became the actual body and blood of Christ.

Who bestows himself with his alms feeds three,—
Himself, his hungering neighbor, and me." [1]

IX.

Sir Launfal awoke, as from a swound:—[2]
"The Grail in my castle here is found!
Hang my idle armor up on the wall,
Let it be the spider's banquet-hall;
He must be fenced with stronger mail
Who would seek and find the Holy Grail."

X.

The castle-gate stands open now,
And the wanderer is welcome to the hall
As the hangbird is to the elm-tree bough;
No longer scowl the turrets tall,
The Summer's long siege at last is o'er;
When the first poor outcast went in at the door,
She entered with him in disguise,
And mastered the fortress by surprise;
There is no spot she loves so well on ground,
She lingers and smiles there the whole year round;
The meanest serf on Sir Launfal's land
Has hall and bower [3] at his command;
And there's no poor man in the North Countree
But is lord of the earldom as much as he.[4]

[1] With this compare Leigh Hunt's little poem "Abou Ben Adhem."

[2] To what preceding line does the story return? Where, in "The Ancient Mariner," do we notice a similar device?

"Mr. Lowell told me that since boyhood he had been subject to visions, which appeared usually in the evening. Commonly he saw a figure in mediæval costume which kept on one side of him. The last vision he had was while staying at an English country house. After dinner, in the drawing-room he saw a figure in the dress of a mediæval scholar. The form was very distinct. It beckoned to him; and, determined to see where it would go, he followed it out on the terrace, where of a sudden it disappeared." Note by Dr. S. W. Mitchell, quoted in Letters, II, 371.

[3] *Hall and bower* is one of the old ballad phrases: just what is meant by each word.

[4] What is gained by ending the poem with a ballad note?

THE SEARCH

Compare carefully with the "Vision of Sir Launfal" these lines written about a year before. Show how the two poems develop the same central thought. What part of "Sir Launfal" is most closely paralleled by "The Search"?

I went to seek for Christ,
And Nature seemed so fair
That first the woods and fields my youth enticed,
And I was sure to find him there:
The temple I forsook,
And to the solitude
Allegiance paid; but Winter came and shook
The crown and purple from my wood;
His snows, like desert sands, with scornful drift,
Besieged the columned aisle and palace-gate;
My Thebes, cut deep with many a solemn rift,
But epitaphed her own sepulchred state:
Then I remembered whom I went to seek,
And blessed blunt Winter for his counsel bleak.

Back to the world I turned,
For Christ, I said, is King;
So the cramped alley and the hut I spurned,
As far beneath his sojourning:
Mid power and wealth I sought,
But found no trace of him,
And all the costly offerings I had brought
With sudden rust and mould grew dim:
I found his tomb, indeed, where, by their laws,
All must on stated days themselves imprison,
Mocking with bread a dead creed's grinning jaws,
Witless how long the life had thence arisen;
Due sacrifice to this they set apart,
Prizing it more than Christ's own living heart.

So from my feet the dust
Of the proud World I shook;
Then came dear Love and shared with me his crust,
And half my sorrow's burden took.
After the World's soft bed,
Its rich and dainty fare,
Like down seemed Love's coarse pillow to my head,
His cheap food seemed as manna rare;
Fresh-trodden prints of bare and bleeding feet,
Turned to the heedless city whence I came,
Hard by I saw, and springs of worship sweet
Gushed from my cleft heart smitten by the same;
Love looked me in the face and spake no words,
But straight I knew those footprints were the Lord's.

I followed where they led,
And in a hovel rude,
With naught to fence the weather from his head,
The King I sought for meekly stood;
A naked, hungry child
Clung round his gracious knee,
And a poor hunted slave looked up and smiled
To bless the smile that set him free;
New miracles I saw his presence do,—
No more I knew the hovel bare and poor,
The gathered chips into a woodpile grew,
The broken morsel swelled to goodly store;
I knelt and wept: my Christ no more I seek,
His throne is with the outcast and the weak.

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