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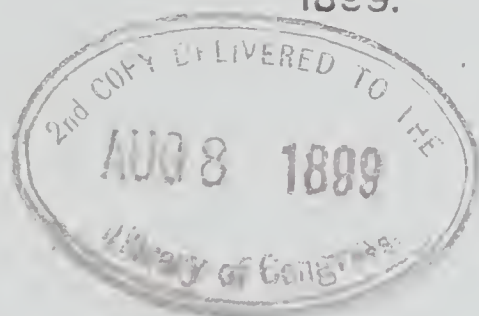
ENGLISH READINGS  
FOR HIGH SCHOOLS.....  
~~~~~  
Lakeside Series.

SELECTIONS FROM  
THE LAKE POETS.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER  
COLERIDGE.

AINSWORTH & COMPANY  
... CHICAGO ...

SECOND COPY,  
1889.





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## INTRODUCTION.

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THE life of Coleridge, except his early manhood, yields little but sorrow in the reviewing. He was a dreamy, introspective child, “born old,” without any taste for the outdoor sports natural to his years, his only amusement being books and the acting out of scenes either read or imagined. He says of himself : “Alas ! I had all the simplicity, all the docility of the child, but none of the child’s habits. I never thought as a child — never had the language of a child.”

The first eight years of his life he was instructed at home. In his ninth year his first sorrow came, the death of his dearly loved father and instructor. In his eleventh year, already a poet, he entered the “Blue Coat” school, where he remained till he was eighteen. Charles Lamb, his schoolmate and lifelong friend, gives us this picture of him : “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 *Iamblichus* or *Plotinus* (for even in those days thou waxedst not pale at such philosophic draughts), or reciting *Homer*



in the Greek, or Pindar, while the walls of the old Grey Friars re-echoed with the accents of the inspired charity boy."

He showed his precocity not so much by his scholarship, nor even by his youthful verses, which were of unusual merit, as by his speculative turn of mind. Coleridge, in his "*Biographia Literaria*," writes: "At a very premature age, even before my fifteenth year, I had bewildered myself in metaphysics and in theological controversy. Nothing else pleased me. History and particular facts lost all interest in my mind. Poetry (though for a schoolboy of that age I was above par in English versification, and had already produced two or three compositions which, I may venture to say, were somewhat above mediocrity, and which had gained me more credit than the sound good sense of my old master was at all pleased with),—poetry itself, yea, novels and romance, became insipid to me."

He was wiled back to the paths of poetry through the perusal of the sonnets of Bowles (an extraordinary explanation, but his own). Coleridge himself regarded this turn for metaphysical speculation as a mental disease, and did not again indulge it until he was no longer master of himself. To this sad time he alludes in his "*Biographia*:" "But if, in after-time, I have sought a refuge from bodily pain and mismanaged sensibility in abstruse researches, which exercised the



strength and subtlety of the understanding without awakening the feelings of the heart, there was a long and blessed interval, during which my natural faculties were allowed to expand, and my original tendencies to develop themselves,—my fancy and the love of nature and the sense of beauty in forms and sounds.”

Of his university days, we know little. He read much, but his reading was desultory and uneven ; he won a gold medal for a Greek ode on the slave-trade ; his room was the rendezvous of the ardent young spirits of the college, fired with the burning topic of the French Revolution, and with zeal for political reform. Lovell, and Seward, and Burnett were of the group ; but Coleridge was the center and heart of it all, fascinating them with his wonderful voice and grace of manner, and copious and eloquent flow of language.

The escapade of his college life is not well understood. One explanation is disappointment in love ; another, despondency over debts ; his natural disquietude of mind might be offered as a third. Whatever the cause, the circumstances are these : He came up to London with a slender purse, and, after a few days, was compelled, through sheer want, to enlist as a private in the Fifteenth Light Dragoons, under the name of Silas Titus Comberback, a name he considered appropriate because of his poor horsemanship. A

Latin quotation betrayed his probable disguise. The matter was investigated. His discharge was obtained, and after four months' service, he returned to Cambridge.

In June of 1794, he met Southey, whose lifelong friendship was an important influence in the life of both. In the same year Southey introduced him to Lovell, the brother-in-law of his future wife. He also met Cottle, his first publisher.

Coleridge and Southey and Lovell, in a spirit of fun, conceived the idea of writing a joint drama, to be called, "The Fall of Robespierre." Lovell was to write the first act, Southey the second, Coleridge the third and last. Lovell's was discarded as inharmonious with Southey's; Coleridge's characteristically was not done. So Southey rewrote the first, Coleridge finished the third. Curiously enough, it is usually included in Coleridge's poems.

The next project which engaged the young enthusiasts was the founding of a model republic on the banks of the Susquehanna. Twenty-eight members were secured, but they were a penniless lot; and to raise funds, Coleridge and Southey gave each a course of lectures in Bristol. But they brought in but little money, and Southey, the leader, departing to Spain in search of health, Coleridge, whose emotions soon cooled, threw up the matter in disgust and the whole scheme of pantisocracy was finally abandoned.

Previous to this, however, Coleridge had married Sara Fricker, thus fulfilling one of the conditions of membership in the new scheme, a second condition being an agreement to labor two hours a day, the rest of the time to be occupied with literary work. The Misses Fricker had more than done their part. One was already the wife of Lovell, another was engaged to Southey, a third had now become Mrs. Coleridge ; but a fourth had refused Burnett, remarking that if he was in such a hurry for a wife, he might look elsewhere.

Coleridge withdrawing from his lectureship, retired to Clevedon to spend his honeymoon. Here he spent some of the quietest and most contented days of his troubled life ; here' he wrote : —

“ Low was our pretty cot ; our tallest rose  
Peeped at the chamber window. We could hear  
At silent noon, and eve, and early morn,  
The sea's faint murmur. In the open air,  
Our myrtles blossomed ; and across the porch  
Thick jasmines twined ; the little landscape round  
Was green and woody, and refreshed the eye.  
It was a spot which you might aptly call  
The Valley of Seclusion ! ”

Here he revised the poems he had up to this composed ; and in the spring of 1797 they were published by his friend Cottle, who gave him thirty guineas for the copyright. The work was a collection of odes, sonnets, invocations, and a more imposing poem,

“ Religious Musings,” passages of which are almost Miltonic in grandeur of thought, in verbal construction and sonorousness.

“ There is one mind, one omnipresent mind, omnific,  
His most holy name is Love,—  
Truth of subliming import! — with the which  
Who feeds and saturates his constant soul,  
He from his small particular orbit flies  
With bliss outstarting ! from himself he flies,  
Stands in the sun and with no partial gaze,  
Views all creation ; and he loves it all,  
And blesses it, and calls it very good !  
This is indeed to dwell with the Most High !  
The cherubs and the trembling seraphim  
Can press no nearer to the Almighty's throne.”

But Coleridge's restless spirit could not long be content; stirring events drew him away from his quiet life.

“ Was it right,  
While my unnumbered brethren toiled and bled,  
That I should dream away the entrusted hours  
On rose-leaf beds, pamp'ring the coward heart  
With feelings all too delicate for use ! ”

He chose journalism as the medium of his propaganda of liberty. The paper was called the “ Watchman,” and in order to avoid the stamp act, was issued every eighth day. It lived but through ten numbers, as might have been expected from the peculiarity of its issue and the heaviness of its contents.

Freed from editorial work, Coleridge retired to Stowey, entering upon the happiest and most satisfactory period of his life. He revised his poetical works, discarding some poems, and adding new ones. He was visited by the Lambs, and by Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy. The Wordsworths were so charmed with him that they removed to Nether Stowey for the sole purpose of being near him. The attraction was mutual, and, on Wordsworth's part at least, strong and enduring. The two young men became inseparable companions, taking daily rambles among the Quantock Hills, and discussing their theories in regard to the province and expression of poetic thought. Their close and sympathetic observation of the beauties of nature suggested to them what Coleridge called "the two cardinal points of poetry." That as the accidents of light and shade, of sunlight and moonlight, over a familiar landscape, make the poetry of nature, so in literature a series of poems might be written to correspond : one, the incidents and agents to be, in part at least, supernatural, the interest growing out of the dramatic truth of the emotions which naturally accompany such literature ; the other, the incidents and agents to be chosen from ordinary life—the life of any village or hamlet where there is a meditative and feeling mind to seek after them or notice them when they present themselves. The romantic or supernatural section was assigned to Coleridge, while



Wordsworth was to take the realistic, "to give the charm of novelty to things of every day." "Lyrical Ballads" was the result, the "Ancient Mariner" the notable illustration of Coleridge's theory.

The inception of the poem, its prosaic origin, is interesting, being in such marked contrast to its weirdness. The following is taken from Wordsworth's notes: "Mr. Coleridge, my sister, and myself started from Alfoxden pretty late in the afternoon with a view to visit Linton and the Valley of Stones near to it; and as our united funds were very small, we agreed to defray the expense of the tour by writing a poem to be sent to the *New Monthly Magazine*. Accordingly we set off, and proceeded along the Quantock Hills toward Watchet; and in the course of this walk was planned the poem of the "Ancient Mariner," founded on a dream, as Mr. Coleridge said, of his friend Mr. Cruikshank. Much of the greater part of the story was Mr. Coleridge's invention, but certain parts I suggested: for example, some crime was to be committed which should bring upon the Old Navigator (as Coleridge always delighted to call him) the spectral persecution, as a consequence of that crime and his own wanderings. I had been reading in "Shelvocke's Voyages," a day or two before, that while doubling Cape Horn they frequently saw albatrosses in that latitude, the largest of sea-fowl, some extending their wings twelve or thirteen feet. 'Suppose,'

said I, ‘you represent him as having killed one of these birds on entering the South Sea, and that the tutelary spirits of those regions take upon them to avenge the crime.’ The incident was thought fit for the purpose, and accordingly adopted. I also suggested the navigation of the ship by the dead men, but do not recollect that I had anything more to do with the scheme of the poem. The gloss with which it was subsequently accompanied was not thought of by either of us at the time, at least not a hint of it was given to me ; and I have no doubt it was a gratuitous afterthought. We began the composition together on that, to me, memorable evening. I furnished two or three lines at the beginning of the poem, in particular : —

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

“ ‘ These trifling contributions, all but one, which Mr. Coleridge has with unnecessary scrupulosity<sup>1</sup> recorded, slipped out of his mind, as well they might. As we endeavored to proceed conjointly (I speak of the same evening), our respective manners proved so widely different that it would have been quite presumptuous in me to do anything but separate from an undertaking upon which I could only have been a clog.” Farther

---

<sup>1</sup> “ And it is long and lank and brown,  
As is the ribbed sea-sand.”



on, Mr. Wordsworth writes : “ The ‘ Ancient Mariner ’ grew and grew till it became too important for our first object, which was limited to our expectation of five pounds.”

Coleridge’s object was “ to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith.” To his success the sensitive reader will bear admiring testimony; for the real world fades away, and around us flows a sea of mystery and wonder, and the skeleton ship and the dead crew and the rearing water-snakes and the sudden coming of night, all are elements of personal horror and fear.

The versification is irregular, being in the style of the old ballads, and is extraordinarily perfect for so long a poem.

During his two years’ stay at Stowey, Coleridge wrote in addition to the “ Ancient Mariner,” which is considered the best of his poetical works, the first part of “ Christabel,” which he considered his masterpiece; “ Hymn on Chamouni,” full of lofty and beautiful thought; “ Ode to France,” which Shelley pronounced the best ode in the English language; and “ Kubla Khan,” a fragment written from the recollection of a dream. The first and last are fine examples of the metrical harmony of which Coleridge was a master.

The second part of “Christabel” was not written until 1800. It is inferior to the first part, but contains the lines which Coleridge considered the best he had ever written : —

“ Alas ! they had been friends in youth ;  
 But whispering tongues can poison truth ;  
 And constancy lives in realms above ;  
 And life is thorny ; and youth is vain ;  
 And to be wroth with one we love,  
 Doth work like madness in the brain.

\* \* \* \* \*

They parted ne’er to meet again !  
 But never either found another  
 To free the hollow heart from paining.  
 They stood aloof, the scars remaining,  
 Like cliffs which had been rent asunder ;  
 A dreary sea now flows between,  
 But neither heat nor frost nor thunder  
 Shall wholly do away, I ween,  
 The marks of that which once hath been.

These lines have an added interest, as it has been conjectured that Coleridge, when he wrote them, had in mind his quarrel with Southey.

“ Lyrical Ballads ” was published in the fall of 1798, and immediately Coleridge, accompanied by the two Wordsworths, went to Germany, — Coleridge to “ complete his education,” as he said, by the study of the German language and philosophy. He remained

abroad a year, coming back full of the old enthusiasm and large literary projects for the future.

Then the tragedy of his life began. He had from boyhood been a sufferer from rheumatism and dyspepsia. To allay the pain recourse was made to opium. The old story is again rewritten. Weak-willed by nature, Coleridge soon became addicted to the regular use of the drug; and in the pathetic lines in his "Ode to Dejection," written less than two years after his return from Germany, he epitomizes what life has been to him, and what it has become, his only resource, what he had called his "mental disease : " —

" There was a time when, though my path was rough,

    This joy within me dallied with distress,  
And all misfortunes were but as the stuff

    Whence Fancy made me dreams of happiness ;  
And fruits and foliage not my own seemed mine.

    But now afflictions bow me down to earth ;  
    Nor care I that they rob me of my mirth,  
But oh ! each visitation

    Suspends what nature gave me at my birth,  
My shaping spirit of Imagination.

    For not to think of what I needs must feel,  
But to be still and patient, all I can ;

    And haply by abstruse research to steal  
From my own nature all the natural man —  
This was my sole resource, my only plan ;  
Till that which suits a part infects the whole,  
And now is almost grown the habit of my soul."

The “shaping spirit of Imagination” was indeed suspended. The creative period of Coleridge’s literary life had passed away. His study in Germany bore fruit in a most excellent translation of *Wallenstein*, the best of his dramas ; but from 1802 to 1816, we have but a broken record of occasional lectures, of fitful newspaper work, of the flaring up of the old genius in the old self-delusion of huge plans for the future, of disappearances from the ken of faithful friends.

Persuaded at last that he could not conquer the habit alone, Coleridge in 1816 became an inmate of the home of Mr. Gillman, a London physician, expecting his stay to be temporary, but he remained there till his death in 1834. These eighteen years were by no means fruitless. The judicious care of Mr. Gillman, the regular habits enforced, the wise and loving espionage, restored to a great extent the giant intellect. The creative faculty was dead, indeed dead ; but the wonderful author of the “*Ancient Mariner*” had become the first great critic of Shakespeare, and it may be there is no second.

In his “*Biographia Literaria*” he expounds with great clearness the doctrine of the “*Lake School*,” of which Wordsworth was the great head. He compiled his “*Literary Remains* ;” he wrote “*Aids to Reflection*,” the best known of his prose works ; he elaborated the plan of his *magnum opus*, “*The His-*

tory of Philosophy," with an immense sweep from Pythagoras to Locke. His "Table Talk," compiled after his death, is full of delightful and stimulating thought; for among the great conversationalists, Coleridge stands without a peer. All this literary work, his later lectures, the friendship and honor, and admiration of that younger circle of literary workers raised him to something of his old position; and he made his exit from what was to him life's troubled stage, with dignity.

Coleridge seems a literary Titan, reckless and prodigal of the rich material of which he was master, fashioning now this, now that, as the fancy seized him, completing nothing, tantalizing us by forcing us to see in the light of what he could do, how little he had done. But he had that worst of all heritages, a weak will, and genius seems always subject to strange vicissitudes.

"Oh! let him pass: he hates him  
Who would upon the rack of this tough world  
Stretch him out longer."



THE RIME  
OF  
THE ANCIENT MARINER.  
IN SEVEN PARTS.



*It is an ancient Mariner,  
And he stoppeth one of three.*

PART I.

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

An ancient Mari-  
ner meeteth three  
gallants bidden  
to a wedding-  
feast, and detain-  
eth one.

“ The Bridegroom’s doors are open wide,  
And I am next of kin;  
The guests are met, the feast is set:  
May’st hear the merry din.”



*Merrily did we drop  
Below the kirk, below the hill.*

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



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

The Wedding-Guest is spell-bound by the eye of the old sea-faring man, and constrained to hear his tale.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Wedding-Guest heareth the bridal music; but the Mariner continueth his tale.

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



*Nodding their heads before her goes  
 The merry minstrelsy.*

The ship drawn  
 by a storm to-  
 ward the south  
 pole.

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



“ With sloping masts and dipping prow,  
As who pursued with yeil and blow  
Still treads the shadow of his foe,



*And ice, mast-high, came floating by,  
As green as emerald.*

And forward bends his head,  
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,  
And southward aye we fled.

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

The land of ice, “ And through the drifts the snowy clifts  
 and of fearful  
 sounds where no Did send a dismal sheen:  
 living thing Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken —  
 was to be seen. The ice was all between.

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

Till a great sea- “ At length did cross an Albatross,  
 bird, called the  
 Albatross, came  
 through the Thorough the fog it came;  
 snow-fog, and As if it had been a Christian soul,  
 was received We hail'd it in God's name.  
 with great joy  
 and hospitality.

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

And lo ! the Al- “ And a good south wind sprung up behind;  
 batross proveth  
 a bird of good The Albatross did follow,  
 omen, and fol- And every day, for food or play  
 loweth the ship Came to the mariners' hollo !  
 as it returned

“ In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,  
It perched for vespers nine;

northward  
through fog and  
floating ice.



*And every day, for food or play,  
Came to the Mariner's hollo.*

Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,  
Glimmered the white moon-shine.”



The ancient  
Mariner inhospitably killeth

“ God save thee, ancient Mariner !  
From the fiends, that plague thee thus !—



*With my cross-bow  
I shot the Albatross.*

the pious bird of  
good omen.

Why look'st thou so ? ”—“ With my cross-bow  
I shot the Albatross.”



*“Ah, wretch!” said they, “the bird to slay,  
That made the breeze to blow!”*

## PART II.

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



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

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

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

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

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

The fair breeze  
 continues; the  
 ship enters the  
 Pacific Ocean,  
 and sails north-  
 ward, even till it  
 reaches the  
 Line.

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

The ship hath  
 been suddenly  
 becalmed.

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

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

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



*As idle as a painted ship,  
Upon a painted ocean.*

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

And the Albatross begins to be  
avenged.

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



*Instead of the cross, the Albatross  
 About my neck was hung*

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

“ And some in dreams assurèd were  
 Of the spirit that plagued us so;  
 Nine fathom deep he had follow’d us  
 From the land of mist and snow.

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

A spirit hath 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, Michæl Psellus, may be consulted. They are very numerous, and there is no climate or element without one or more.

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

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





*When looking westward, I beheld  
A something in the sky.*

### PART III.

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

The ancient  
Mariner behold-  
eth a sign in the  
element afar off

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

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

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

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

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

A flash of joy ;

“ 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 ?

“ The western wave was all a-flame,  
 The day was well-nigh done !

Almost upon the western wave  
Rested the broad bright Sun;



*When that strange shape drove suddenly  
Betwixt us and the sun,*

When that strange shape drove suddenly  
Betwixt us and the Sun.



And straight the Sun was flecked with bars, It seemeth him  
but the skeleton  
of a ship.  
(Heaven's Mother send us grace !)

As if through a dungeon grate he peered  
With broad and burning face.

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

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

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

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

Like vessel, like  
crew !

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

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

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

No twilight  
within the  
courts of the  
Sun.

At the rising of the Moon, “ We listened and looked sideways up !

Fear at my heart, as at a cup,

My life-blood seemed to sip !

The stars were dim, and thick the night,

The steersman’s face by his lamp gleamed white,

From the sails the dew did drip —

Till clomb above the eastern bar

The horned Moon, with one bright star

Within the nether tip.

One after another,

“ One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,

Too quick for groan or sigh,

Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,

And cursed me with his eye.

His shipmates drop down dead.

“ Four times fifty living men,

(And I heard nor sigh nor groan,)

With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,

They dropped down one by one.

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

“ The souls did from their bodies fly,—

They fled to bliss or woe !

And every soul, it passed me by,

Like the whiz of my cross-bow ! ”



*I fear thee, ancient Mariner!  
I fear thy skinny hand!*

#### PART IV.

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

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

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

But the ancient  
Mariner assureth  
him of his bodily  
life, and pro-  
ceedeth to re-  
late his horrible  
penance.

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

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

He despiseth  
the creatures of  
the calm.

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

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

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

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

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



“ 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.

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

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

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

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 be-

longs 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.

“ Her beams bemocked the sultry main,  
Like April hoar-frost spread;  
But where the ship’s huge shadow lay,  
The charmed water burnt alway  
A still and awful red.

“ 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.

By the light of  
the Moon he be-  
holdeth God’s  
creatures of the  
great calm,

“ Within the shadow of the ship  
I watched their rich attire:



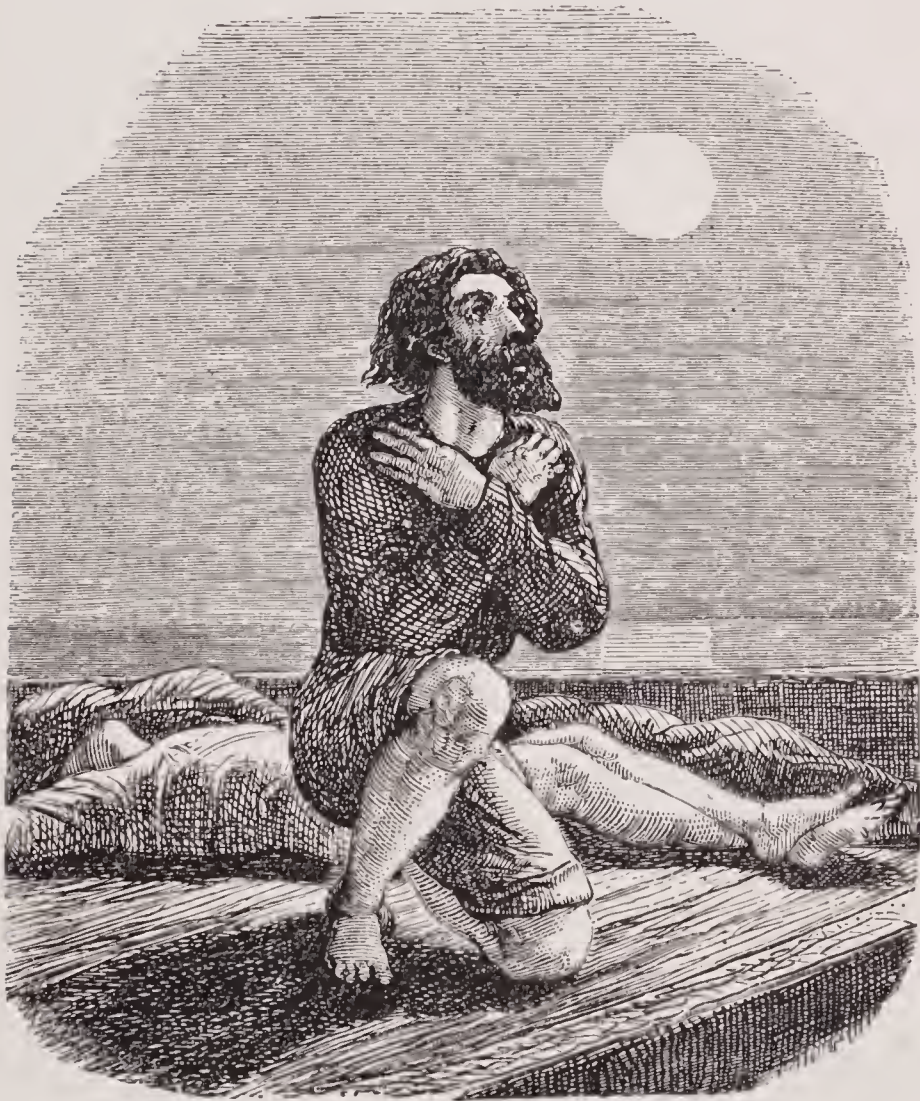
*The moving Moon went up the sky,  
And nowhere did abide.*

Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,  
They coiled and swam; and every track  
Was a flash of golden fire



“O happy living things! no tongue  
Their beauty might declare:  
A spring of love gushed from my heart,

Their beauty  
and their hap-  
piness.



*A spring of love gushed from my heart,  
And I blessed them unaware.*

And I blessed them unaware:  
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,  
And I blessed them unaware.

He blesseth  
them in his  
heart.

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

## PART V.

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

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

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

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

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



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

He heareth  
sounds, and seeth  
strange sights  
and commotions  
in the sky and  
the elements.

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

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

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

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

The bodies of  
the ship's crew  
are inspired,  
and the ship  
moves on ;

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

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

“ The body of my brother’s son  
 Stood by me, knee to knee:  
 The body and I pulled at one rope,  
 But he said naught to me.”

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

“ I fear thee, ancient Mariner ! ”  
 “ Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest !  
 ’ T was not those souls that fled in pain,  
 Which to their corpses came again,  
 But a troop of spirits blest:  
 For when it dawned — they dropped their arms,  
 And cluster’d round the mast;  
 Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths,  
 And from their bodies passed.

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

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

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



*Till noon we quietly sailed on,  
Yet never a breeze did breathe.*

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

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

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

The lonesome  
 spirit from the  
 south-pole  
 carries on the  
 ship as far as the  
 Line, in obedi-  
 ence to the  
 angelic troop,  
 but still requir-  
 eth vengeance.

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

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

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



“ How long in that same fit I lay,  
I have not to declare;

The Polar Spir-  
it's fellow de-  
mons, the invis-  
ible inhabitants



*I heard, and in my soul discerned  
Two voices in the air.*

But ere my living life returned,  
I heard, and in my soul discerned  
Two voices in the air,

of the element,  
take part in his  
wrong; and two  
of them relate,  
one to the other,

that penance  
long and heavy,  
for the ancient  
Mariner hath  
been accorded to  
the Polar Spirit,  
who returneth  
southward.

“ ‘ Is it he ? ’ quoth one, ‘ Is this the man ?  
By Him who died on cross,  
With his cruel bow he laid full low  
The harmless Albatross.

“ ‘ The spirit who bideth by himself  
In the land of mist and snow,  
He loved the bird that loved the man  
Who shot him with his bow.’ ”

“ ‘ The other was a softer voice,  
As soft as honey-dew;  
Quoth he, ‘ The man hath penance done,  
And penance more will do.’ ”

---

## PART VI.

### FIRST VOICE.

“ ‘ BUT tell me, tell me ! speak again,  
Thy soft response renewing —  
What makes that ship drive on so fast ?  
What is the ocean doing ? ’ ”

### SECOND VOICE.

“ ‘ Still as a slave before his lord.  
The Ocean hath no blast;  
His great bright eye most silently  
Up to the Moon is cast —

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

FIRST VOICE.

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

The Mariner  
hath been cast  
into a trance ; for  
the angelic  
power causeth  
the vessel to  
drive northward  
faster than hu-  
man life can  
endure.

SECOND VOICE.

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

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

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

The supernatural  
motion is re-  
tarded ; the Ma-  
riner awakes,  
and his penance  
begins anew.

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

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

The curse is  
finally expiated;

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

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

“ But soon there breathed a wind on me,  
Nor sound nor motion made:  
Its path was not upon the sea,  
In ripple or in shade.

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

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

And the ancient  
Mariner be-  
holdeth his na-  
tive country.

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



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



*And on the bay the moonlight lay,  
And the shadow of the moon.*

“ The harbour-bay was clear as glass,  
So smoothly it was strewn !  
And on the bay the moonlight lay,  
And the shadow of the moon.

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

The angelic  
 spirits leave the  
 dead bodies,

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

and appear in  
 their own forms  
 of light.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

---

## PART VII.

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

The Hermit of  
 the wood

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



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



*The skiff-boat neared: I heard them talk,  
 “Why, this is strange, I trow.”*

Approacheth the ship with wonder. “ ‘Strange, by my faith !’ the Hermit said —

‘And they answered not our cheer.

The planks looked warped ! And see those sails,  
 How thin they are and sere !



I never saw aught like to them  
Unless perchance it were

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

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

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

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

The ship suddenly sinketh.

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

The ancient Mariner is saved in the Pilot’s boat.

“ Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,  
The boat spun round and round;



*The boat came closer to the ship,  
But I nor spake nor stirred.*

And all was still, save that the hill  
Was telling of the sound.

“ I moved my lips — the Pilot shrieked  
And fell down in a fit;



*I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,  
Who now doth crazy go.*

The holy Hermit raised his eyes,  
And prayed where he did sit.



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

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

The ancient Ma-  
 riner earnestly  
 entreateth the  
 Hermit to  
 shrieve him ;  
 and the penance  
 of life falls on  
 him :

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

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

And ever and  
 anon throughout  
 his future life an  
 agony constrain-  
 eth him to travel  
 from land to  
 land,

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

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



“ What loud uproar bursts from that door !  
The wedding-guests are there:



*To walk together to the kirk,  
And all together pray.*

But in the garden-bower the bride  
And bride-maids singing are:  
And hark the little vesper bell,  
Which biddeth me to prayer !

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

“ O sweeter than the marriage-feast,  
 ’Tis sweeter far to me,  
 To walk together to the kirk  
 With a goodly company ! —

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

And to teach, by <sup>his own exam-  
 ple, love and  
 reverence to all  
 things that God  
 made and  
 loveth.</sup> “ Farewell, farewell ! but this I tell  
 To thee, thou Wedding-Guest !  
 He prayeth well, who loveth well  
 Both man and bird and beast.

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

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

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



*He prayeth best, who loveth best  
All things both great and small.*









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