

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

- poems -

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Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834)

Coleridge was the son of a vicar. He was educated at Christ's Hospital, London, where he became friendly with Lamb and Leigh Hunt and went on to Jesus College Cambridge, where he failed to get a degree. In the summer of 1794 Coleridge became friends with the future Poet Laureate Southey, with whom he wrote a verse drama. Together they formed a plan to establish a Pantisocracy, a Utopian community, in New England. They married sisters, but the scheme fell apart and they argued over money and politics.

Coleridge at this time was an ardent non-conformist and in 1796 preached throughout the West Country, deciding, however, not to become a minister. In 1797 he met William Wordsworth and for the next year and a half lived and worked closely with him, collaborating to produce the Lyrical Ballads. In 1798, disillusioned with English politics, Coleridge set out for Germany, where he studied Kant, Schiller and Schelling. On his return he moved to the Lake District to be with the Wordsworths, but suffered from his failing marriage and an increasing dependence on opium. He also fell hopelessly in love with Wordsworth's future sister-in-law, Sara Hutchinson, the inspiration for his love poems of this period, and separated from his wife in 1807. Coleridge failed to restore his health or mental balance and quarrelled irrevocably with Wordsworth in 1810, alienating also Dorothy and Sara, with whom he had been editing a periodical *The Friend*. Winter 1813-14 brought a rebirth of his religious beliefs and for the first time he openly admitted his opium addiction and sought medical help. In 1816 he lodged in the London household of a young surgeon Dr James Gilman, where he was to remain for the rest of his life. The publication of *Christabel* in this year assured his reputation as a poet but the end of his life was taken up with religious and philosophical prose works.

A Soliloquy Of The Full Moon, She Being In A Mad Passion

Now as Heaven is my Lot, they're the Pests of the Nation!

Wherever they can come

With clankum and blankum

'Tis all Botheration, & Hell & Damnation,

With fun, jeering

Conjuring

Sky-staring,

Loungering,

And still to the tune of Transmogrification--

Those muttering

Spluttering

Ventriloquogusty

Poets

With no Hats

Or Hats that are rusty.

They're my Torment and Curse

And harass me worse

And bait me and bay me, far sorer I vow

Than the Screech of the Owl

Or the witch-wolf's long howl,

Or sheep-killing Butcher-dog's inward Bow wow

For me they all spite--an unfortunate Wight.

And the very first moment that I came to Light

A Rascal call'd Voss the more to his scandal,

Turn'd me into a sickle with never a handle.

A Night or two after a worse Rogue there came,

The head of the Gang, one Wordsworth by name--

`Ho! What's in the wind?' 'Tis the voice of a Wizzard!

I saw him look at me most terribly blue !

He was hunting for witch-rhymes from great A to Izzard,

And soon as he'd found them made no more ado

But chang'd me at once to a little Canoe.

From this strange Enchantment uncharm'd by degrees

I began to take courage & hop'd for some Ease,

When one Coleridge, a Raff of the self-same Banditti

Past by--& intending no doubt to be witty,

Because I'd th' ill-fortune his taste to displease,

He turn'd up his nose,

And in pitiful Prose

Made me into the half of a small Cheshire Cheese.

Well, a night or two past--it was wind, rain & hail--

And I ventur'd abroad in a thick Cloak & veil--

But the very first Evening he saw me again

The last mentioned Ruffian popp'd out of his Den--

I was resting a moment on the bare edge of Naddle

I fancy the sight of me turn'd his Brains addle--

For what was I now?

A complete Barley-mow

And when I climb'd higher he made a long leg,

And chang'd me at once to an Ostrich's Egg--

But now Heaven be praised in contempt of the Loon,

I am I myself I, the jolly full Moon.

Yet my heart is still fluttering--
For I heard the Rogue muttering--
He was hulking and skulking at the skirt of a Wood
When lightly & brightly on tip-toe I stood
On the long level Line of a motionless Cloud
And ho! what a Skittle-ground! quoth he aloud
And wish'd from his heart nine Nine-pins to see
In brightness & size just proportion'd to me.
So I fear'd from my soul,
That he'd make me a Bowl,
But in spite of his spite
This was more than his might
And still Heaven be prais'd! in contempt of the Loon
I am I myself I, the jolly full Moon.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

A Tombless Epitaph

'Tis true, Idoloclastes Satyrane !
(So call him, for so mingling blame with praise,
And smiles with anxious looks, his earliest friends,
Masking his birth-name, wont to character
His wild-wood fancy and impetuous zeal,)
'Tis true that, passionate for ancient truths,
And honouring with religious love the Great
Of elder times, he hated to excess,
With an unquiet and intolerant scorn,
The hollow Puppets of an hollow Age,
Ever idolatrous, and changing ever
Its worthless Idols ! Learning, Power, and Time,
(Too much of all) thus wasting in vain war
Of fervid colloquy. Sickness, 'tis true,
Whole years of weary days, besieged him close,
Even to the gates and inlets of his life !
But it is true, no less, that strenuous, firm,
And with a natural gladness, he maintained
The citadel unconquered, and in joy
Was strong to follow the delightful Muse.
For not a hidden path, that to the shades
Of the beloved Parnassian forest leads,
Lurked undiscovered by him ; not a rill
There issues from the fount of Hippocrene,
But he had traced it upward to its source,
Through open glade, dark glen, and secret dell,
Knew the gay wild flowers on its banks, and culled
Its med'cinable herbs. Yea, oft alone,
Piercing the long-neglected holy cave,
The haunt obscure of old Philosophy,
He bade with lifted torch its starry walls
Sparkle, as erst they sparkled to the flame
Of odorous lamps tended by Saint and Sage.
O framed for calmer times and nobler hearts !
O studious Poet, eloquent for truth !
Philosopher ! contemning wealth and death,
Yet docile, childlike, full of Life and Love !
Here, rather than on monumental stone,
This record of thy worth thy Friend inscribes,
Thoughtful, with quiet tears upon his cheek.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

About The Nightingale

From a letter from STC to Wordsworth after writing The Nightingale:

In stale blank verse a subject stale
I send per post my Nightingale;
And like an honest bard, dear Wordsworth,
You'll tell me what you think, my Bird's worth.
My own opinion's briefly this--
His bill he opens not amiss;
And when he has sung a stave or so,
His breast, & some small space below,
So throbs & swells, that you might swear
No vulgar music's working there.
So far, so good; but then, 'od rot him!
There's something falls off at his bottom.
Yet, sure, no wonder it should breed,
That my Bird's Tail's a tail indeed
And makes it's own inglorious harmony
Æolio crepitû, non carmine.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Aeolian Harp, The

My pensive SARA ! thy soft cheek reclined
Thus on mine arm, most soothing sweet it is
To sit beside our Cot, our Cot o'ergrown
With white-flower'd Jasmin, and the broad-leav'd Myrtle,
(Meet emblems they of Innocence and Love !)
And watch the clouds, that late were rich with light,
Slow saddenning round, and mark the star of eve
Serenely brilliant (such should Wisdom be)
Shine opposite ! How exquisite the scents
Snatch'd from yon bean-field ! and the world so hush'd !
The stilly murmur of the distant Sea
Tells us of silence.

[Image] [Image] And that simplest Lute,
Plac'd length-ways in the clasping casement, hark !
How by the desultory breeze caress'd,
Like some coy maid half-yielding to her lover,
It pours such sweet upbraiding, as must needs
Tempt to repeat the wrong ! And now, its strings
Boldlier swept, the long sequacious notes
Over delicious surges sink and rise,
Such a soft floating witchery of sound
As twilight Elfins make, when they at eve
Voyage on gentle gales from Faery-Land,
Where Melodies round honey-dropping flowers,
Footless and wild, like birds of Paradise,
Nor pause, nor perch, hovering on untam'd wing !
O ! the one Life within us and abroad,
Which meets all motion and becomes its soul,
A light in sound, a sound-like power in light,
Rhythm in all thought, and joyance every where--
Methinks, it should have been impossible
Not to love all things in a world so fill'd ;
Where the breeze warbles, and the mute still air
Is Music slumbering on her instrument.

And thus, my Love ! as on the midway slope
Of yonder hill I stretch my limbs at noon,
Whilst thro' my half-clos'd eye-lids I behold
The sunbeams dance, like diamonds, on the main,
And tranquil muse upon tranquillity ;
Full many a thought uncall'd and undetain'd,
And many idle flitting phantasies,
Traverse my indolent and passive brain,
As wild and various, as the random gales
That swell and flutter on this subject Lute !

And what if all of animated nature
Be but organic Harps diversly fram'd,
That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps
Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
At once the Soul of each, and God of all ?
But thy more serious eye a mild reproof

Darts, O belovéd Woman ! nor such thoughts
Dim and unhallow'd dost thou not reject,
And biddest me walk humbly with my God.
Meek Daughter in the Family of Christ !
Well hast thou said and holily disprais'd
These shapings of the unregenerate mind ;
Bubbles that glitter as they rise and break
On vain Philosophy's aye-babbling spring.
For never guiltless may I speak of him,
The Incomprehensible ! save when with awe
I praise him, and with Faith that inly feels ;
Who with his saving mercies healéd me,
A sinful and most miserable man,
Wilder'd and dark, and gave me to possess
Peace, and this Cot, and thee, heart-honour'd Maid !

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Aplolgia Pro Vita Sua

The poet in his lone yet genial hour
Gives to his eyes a magnifying power :
Or rather he emancipates his eyes
From the black shapeless accidents of size--
In unctuous cones of kindling coal,
Or smoke upwreathing from the pipe's trim bole,
His gifted ken can see
Phantoms of sublimity.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

As some vast Tropic tree, itself a wood (fragment)

As some vast Tropic tree, itself a wood,
That crests its Head with clouds, beneath the flood
Feeds its deep roots, and with the bulging flank
Of its wide base controls the fronting bank,
(By the slant current's pressure scoop'd away
The fronting bank becomes a foam-piled bay)
High in the Fork the uncouth Idol knits
His channel'd Brows; low murmurs stir by fits
And dark below the horrid Faquir sits;
An Horror from its broad Head's branchy wreath
Broods o'er the rude Idolatry beneath--

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Blossing Of The Solitary Date-Tree, The

Beneath the blaze of a tropical sun the mountain peaks are the Thrones of Frost, through the absence of objects to reflect the rays. 'What no one with us shares, seems scarce our own.' The presence of a ONE,

The best belov'd, who loveth me the best,

is for the heart, what the supporting air from within is for the hollow globe with its suspended car. Deprive it of this, and all without, that would have buoyed it aloft even to the seat of the gods, becomes a burthen and crushes it into flatness.

II

The finer the sense for the beautiful and the lovely, and the fairer and lovelier the object presented to the sense ; the more exquisite the individual's capacity of joy, and the more ample his means and opportunities of enjoyment, the more heavily will he feel the ache of solitariness, the more unsubstantial becomes the feast spread around him. What matters it, whether in fact the viands and the ministering graces are shadowy or real, to him who has not hand to grasp nor arms to embrace them ?

III

Hope, Imagination, honourable Aims,
Free Commune with the choir that cannot die,
Science and Song, delight in little things,
The buoyant child surviving in the man ;
Fields, forests, ancient mountains, ocean, sky,
With all their voices--O dare I accuse
My earthly lot as guilty of my spleen,
Or call my destiny niggard ! O no ! no !
It is her largeness, and her overflow,
Which being incomplete, disquieteth me so !

IV

For never touch of gladness stirs my heart,
But tim'rously beginning to rejoice
Like a blind Arab, that from sleep doth start
In lonesome tent, I listen for thy voice.
Belovéd ! 'tis not thine ; thou art not there !
Then melts the bubble into idle air,
And wishing without hope I restlessly despair.

V

The mother with anticipated glee
Smiles o'er the child, that, standing by her chair
And flatt'ning its round cheek upon her knee,
Looks up, and doth its rosy lips prepare
To mock the coming sounds. At that sweet sight

She hears her own voice with a new delight ;
And if the babe perchance should lisp the notes aright,

VI

Then is she tenfold gladder than before !
But should disease or chance the darling take,
What then avail those songs, which sweet of yore
Were only sweet for their sweet echo's sake ?
Dear maid ! no prattler at a mother's knee
Was e'er so dearly prized as I prize thee :
Why was I made for Love and Love denied to me ?

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Brockley Coomb

Lines composed while climbing the left ascent of Brockley Coomb, May 1795

With many a pause and oft reverted eye
I climb the Coomb's ascent: sweet songsters near
Warble in shade their wild-wood melody:
Far off the unvarying Cuckoo soothes my ear.
Up scour the startling stragglers of the flock
That on green plots o'er precipices browse:
From the deep fissures of the naked rock
The Yew-tree bursts! Beneath its dark green boughs
(Mid which the May-thorn blends its blossoms white)
Where broad smooth stones jut out in mossy seats,
I rest:—and now have gained the topmost site.
Ah! what a luxury of landscape meets
My gaze! Proud towers, and Cots more dear to me,
Elm-shadowed Fields, and prospect-bounding Sea.
Deep sighs my lonely heart: I drop the tear:
Enchanting spot! O were my Sara here.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Christabel

PART I

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Cologne

In Köhln, a town of monks and bones,
And pavements fang'd with murderous stones
And rags, and hags, and hideous wenches ;
I counted two and seventy stenchs,
All well defined, and several stinks !
Ye Nymphs that reign o'er sewers and sinks,
The river Rhine, it is well known,
Doth wash your city of Cologne ;
But tell me, Nymphs, what power divine
Shall henceforth wash the river Rhine ?

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Come, come thou bleak December wind (fragment)

Come, come thou bleak December wind,
And blow the dry leaves from the tree!
Flash, like a Love-thought, thro' me, Death
And take a Life that wearies me.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Constancy To An Ideal Object

Since all, that beat about in Nature's range,
Or veer or vanish ; why should'st thou remain
The only constant in a world of change,
O yearning THOUGHT ! that liv'st but in the brain ?
Call to the HOURS, that in the distance play,
The faery people of the future day-- --
Fond THOUGHT ! not one of all that shining swarm
Will breathe on thee with life-enkindling breath,
Till when, like strangers shelt'ring from a storm,
Hope and Despair meet in the porch of Death !
Yet still thou haunt'st me ; and though well I see,
She is not thou, and only thou art she,
Still, still as though some dear embodied Good,
Some living Love before my eyes there stood
With answering look a ready ear to lend,
I mourn to thee and say-- `Ah ! loveliest Friend !
That this the meed of all my toils might be,
To have a home, an English home, and thee !'
Vain repetition ! Home and Thou are one.
The peacefull'st cot, the moon shall shine upon,
Lulled by the Thrush and wakened by the Lark,
Without thee were but a becalméd Bark,
Whose Helmsman on an Ocean waste and wide
Sits mute and pale his mouldering helm beside.

And art thou nothing ? Such thou art, as when
The woodman winding westward up the glen
At wintry dawn, where o'er the sheep-track's maze
The viewless snow-mist weaves a glist'ning haze,
Sees full before him, gliding without tread,
An image with a glory round its head ;
The enamoured rustic worships its fair hues,
Nor knows he makes the shadow, he pursues !

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Dejection: An Ode

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

Ballad of Sir Patrick Spence

I

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

II

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

III

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

IV

O Lady ! we receive but what we give,
And in our life alone does Nature live :
Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her shroud !
And would we aught behold, of higher worth,
Than that inanimate cold world allowed
To the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd,
Ah ! from the soul itself must issue forth
A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
[Image]Enveloping the Earth--
And from the soul itself must there be sent
A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,
Of all sweet sounds the life and element !

V

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

VI

There was a time when, though my path was rough,
This joy within me dallied with distress,
And all misfortunes were but as the stuff
Whence Fancy made me dreams of happiness :

For hope grew round me, like the twining vine,
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 ;
[Image]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.

VII

Hence, viper thoughts, that coil around my mind,
[Image]Reality's dark dream !
I turn from you, and listen to the wind,
Which long has raved unnoticed. What a scream
Of agony by torture lengthened out
That lute sent forth ! Thou Wind, that rav'st without,
Bare crag, or mountain-tairn, or blasted tree,
Or pine-grove whither woodman never clomb,
Or lonely house, long held the witches' home,
Methinks were fitter instruments for thee,
Mad Lutanist ! who in this month of showers,
Of dark-brown gardens, and of peeping flowers,
Mak'st Devils' yule, with worse than wintry song,
The blossoms, buds, and timorous leaves among.
Thou Actor, perfect in all tragic sounds !
Thou mighty Poet, e'en to frenzy bold !
[Image]What tell'st thou now about ?
[Image]'Tis of the rushing of an host in rout,
With groans, of trampled men, with smarting wounds--
At once they groan with pain, and shudder with the cold !
But hush ! there is a pause of deepest silence !
And all that noise, as of a rushing crowd,
With groans, and tremulous shudderings--all is over--
It tells another tale, with sounds less deep and loud !
[Image]A tale of less affright,
[Image]And tempered with delight,
As Otway's self had framed the tender lay,--
[Image][Image]'Tis of a little child
[Image][Image]Upon a lonesome wild,
Not far from home, but she hath lost her way :
And now moans low in bitter grief and fear,
And now screams loud, and hopes to make her mother hear.

VIII

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

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Desire

Where true Love burns Desire is Love's pure flame;
It is the reflex of our earthly frame,
That takes its meaning from the nobler part,
And but translates the language of the heart.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Despair

I have experienc'd
The worst, the World can wreak on me--the worst
That can make Life indifferent, yet disturb
With whisper'd Discontents the dying prayer--
I have beheld the whole of all, wherein
My Heart had any interest in this Life,
To be disrent and torn from off my Hopes
That nothing now is left. Why then live on ?
That Hostage, which the world had in it's keeping
Given by me as a Pledge that I would live--
That Hope of Her, say rather, that pure Faith
In her fix'd Love, which held me to keep truce
With the Tyranny of Life--is gone ah ! whither ?
What boots it to reply ? 'tis gone ! and now
Well may I break this Pact, this League of Blood
That ties me to myself--and break I shall !

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Dungeon, The

[from his play Osorio, later called Remorse]
Song

(Act V, scene i)

And this place our forefathers made for man !
This is the process of our Love and Wisdom,
To each poor brother who offends against us--
Most innocent, perhaps--and what if guilty ?
Is this the only cure ? Merciful God !
Each pore and natural outlet shrivell'd up
By Ignorance and parching Poverty,
His energies roll back upon his heart,
And stagnate and corrupt ; till chang'd to poison,
They break out on him, like a loathsome plague-spot ;
Then we call in our pamper'd mountebanks--
And this is their best cure ! uncomforted
And friendless Solitude, Groaning and Tears,
And savage Faces, at the clanking hour,
Seen through the steams and vapour of his dungeon,
By the lamp's dismal twilight ! So he lies
Circl'd with evil, till his very soul
Unmoulds its essence, hopelessly deform'd
By sights of ever more deformity !

With other ministrations thou, O Nature !
Healest thy wandering and distemper'd child :
Thou pourest on him thy soft influences,
Thy sunny hues, fair forms, and breathing sweets,
Thy melodies of woods, and winds, and waters,
Till he relent, and can no more endure
To be a jarring and a dissonant thing,
Amid this general dance and minstrelsy ;
But, bursting into tears, wins back his way,
His angry spirit heal'd and harmoniz'd
By the benignant touch of Love and Beauty.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Duty Surviving Self-Love

Unchanged within, to see all changed without,
Is a blank lot and hard to bear, no doubt.
Yet why at others' Wanings should'st thou fret ?
Then only might'st thou feel a just regret,
Hadst thou withheld thy love or hid thy light
In selfish forethought of neglect and slight.
O wiselier then, from feeble yearnings freed,
While, and on whom, thou may'st--shine on ! nor heed
Whether the object by reflected light
Return thy radiance or absorb it quite :
And tho' thou notest from thy safe recess
Old Friends burn dim, like lamps in noisome air,
Love them for what they are ; nor love them less,
Because to thee they are not what they were.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Epitaph

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

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Exchange, The

We pledged our hearts, my love and I,
I in my arms the maiden clasping;
I could not tell the reason why,
But, O, I trembled like an aspen!

Her father's love she bade me gain;
I went, and shook like any reed!
I strove to act the man---in vain!
We had exchanged our hearts indeed.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Faded Flower, The

Ungrateful he, who pluck'd thee from thy stalk,
Poor faded flow'ret! on his careless way;
Inhal'd awhile thy odours on his walk,
Then onward pass'd and left thee to decay.
Ah! melancholy emblem! had I seen
Thy modest beauties dew'd with Evening's gem,
I had not rudely cropp'd thy parent stem,
But left thee, blushing, 'mid the enliven'd green.
And now I bend me o'er thy wither'd bloom,
And drop the tear - as Fancy, at my side,
Deep-sighing, points the fair frail Abra's tomb -
'Like thine, sad Flower, was that poor wanderer's pride!
Oh! lost to Love and Truth, whose selfish joy
Tasted her vernal sweets, but tasted to destroy!'

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Fears In Solitude

A green and silent spot, amid the hills,
A small and silent dell ! O'er stiller place
No singing sky-lark ever poised himself.
The hills are heathy, save that swelling slope,
Which hath a gay and gorgeous covering on,
All golden with the never-bloomless furze,
Which now blooms most profusely : but the dell,
Bathed by the mist, is fresh and delicate
As vernal corn-field, or the unripe flax,
When, through its half-transparent stalks, at eve,
The level sunshine glimmers with green light.
Oh ! 'tis a quiet spirit-healing nook !
Which all, methinks, would love ; but chiefly he,
The humble man, who, in his youthful years,
Knew just so much of folly, as had made
His early manhood more securely wise !
Here he might lie on fern or withered heath,
While from the singing lark (that sings unseen
The minstrelsy that solitude loves best),
And from the sun, and from the breezy air,
Sweet influences trembled o'er his frame ;
And he, with many feelings, many thoughts,
Made up a meditative joy, and found
Religious meanings in the forms of Nature !
And so, his senses gradually wrapt
In a half sleep, he dreams of better worlds,
And dreaming hears thee still, O singing lark,
That singest like an angel in the clouds !

My God ! it is a melancholy thing
For such a man, who would full fain preserve
His soul in calmness, yet perforce must feel
For all his human brethren--O my God !
It weighs upon the heart, that he must think
What uproar and what strife may now be stirring
This way or that way o'er these silent hills--
Invasion, and the thunder and the shout,
And all the crash of onset ; fear and rage,
And undetermined conflict--even now,
Even now, perchance, and in his native isle :
Carnage and groans beneath this blessed sun !
We have offended, Oh ! my countrymen !
We have offended very grievously,
And been most tyrannous. From east to west
A groan of accusation pierces Heaven !
The wretched plead against us ; multitudes
Countless and vehement, the sons of God,
Our brethren ! Like a cloud that travels on,
Steamed up from Cairo's swamps of pestilence,
Even so, my countrymen ! have we gone forth
And borne to distant tribes slavery and pangs,
And, deadlier far, our vices, whose deep taint

With slow perdition murders the whole man,
 His body and his soul ! Meanwhile, at home,
 All individual dignity and power
 Engulfed in Courts, Committees, Institutions,
 Associations and Societies,
 A vain, speech-mouthing, speech-reporting Guild,
 One Benefit-Club for mutual flattery,
 We have drunk up, demure as at a grace,
 Pollutions from the brimming cup of wealth ;
 Contemptuous of all honourable rule,
 Yet bartering freedom and the poor man's life
 For gold, as at a market ! The sweet words
 Of Christian promise, words that even yet
 Might stem destruction, were they wisely preached,
 Are muttered o'er by men, whose tones proclaim
 How flat and wearisome they feel their trade :
 Rank scoffers some, but most too indolent
 To deem them falsehoods or to know their truth.
 Oh ! blasphemous ! the Book of Life is made
 A superstitious instrument, on which
 We gabble o'er the oaths we mean to break ;
 For all must swear--all and in every place,
 College and wharf, council and justice-court ;
 All, all must swear, the briber and the bribed,
 Merchant and lawyer, senator and priest,
 The rich, the poor, the old man and the young ;
 All, all make up one scheme of perjury,
 That faith doth reel ; the very name of God
 Sounds like a juggler's charm ; and, bold with joy,
 Forth from his dark and lonely hiding-place,
 (Portentious sight !) the owlet Atheism,
 Sailing on obscene wings athwart the noon,
 Drops his blue-fringed lids, and holds them close,
 And hooting at the glorious sun in Heaven,
 Cries out, 'Where is it ?'

[Image][Image][Image] Thankless too for peace,
 (Peace long preserved by fleets and perilous seas)
 Secure from actual warfare, we have loved
 To swell the war-whoop, passionate for war !
 Alas ! for ages ignorant of all
 Its ghastlier workings, (famine or blue plague,
 Battle, or siege, or flight through wintry snows,)

We, this whole people, have been clamorous
 For war and bloodshed ; animating sports,
 The which we pay for as a thing to talk of,
 Spectators and not combatants ! No guess
 Anticipative of a wrong unfelt,
 No speculation on contingency,
 However dim and vague, too vague and dim
 To yield a justifying cause ; and forth,
 (Stuffed out with big preamble, holy names,

And adjurations of the God in Heaven,)
We send our mandates for the certain death
Of thousands and ten thousands ! Boys and girls,
And women, that would groan to see a child
Pull off an insect's wing, all read of war,
The best amusement for our morning meal !
The poor wretch, who has learnt his only prayers
From curses, and who knows scarcely words enough
To ask a blessing from his Heavenly Father,
Becomes a fluent phraseman, absolute
And technical in victories and defeats,
And all our dainty terms for fratricide ;
Terms which we trundle smoothly o'er our tongues
Like mere abstractions, empty sounds to which
We join no feeling and attach no form !
As if the soldier died without a wound ;
As if the fibres of this godlike frame
Were gored without a pang ; as if the wretch,
Who fell in battle, doing bloody deeds,
Passed off to Heaven, translated and not killed ;
As though he had no wife to pine for him,
No God to judge him ! Therefore, evil days
Are coming on us, O my countrymen !
And what if all-avenging Providence,
Strong and retributive, should make us know
The meaning of our words, force us to feel
The desolation and the agony
Of our fierce doings ?

[Image][Image][Image] Spare us yet awhile,
Father and God ! O ! spare us yet awhile !
Oh ! let not English women drag their flight
Fainting beneath the burthen of their babes,
Of the sweet infants, that but yesterday
Laughed at the breast ! Sons, brothers, husbands, all
Who ever gazed with fondness on the forms
Which grew up with you round the same fire-side,
And all who ever heard the sabbath-bells
Without the infidel's scorn, make yourselves pure !
Stand forth ! be men ! repel an impious foe,
Impious and false, a light yet cruel race,
Who laugh away all virtue, mingling mirth
With deeds of murder ; and still promising
Freedom, themselves too sensual to be free,
Poison life's amities, and cheat the heart
Of faith and quiet hope, and all that soothes,
And all that lifts the spirit ! Stand we forth ;
Render them back upon the insulted ocean,
And let them toss as idly on its waves
As the vile sea-weed, which some mountain-blast
Swept from our shores ! And oh ! may we return
Not with a drunken triumph, but with fear,

Repenting of the wrongs with which we stung
So fierce a foe to frenzy !

[Image][Image][Image][Image] I have told,
O Britons ! O my brethren ! I have told
Most bitter truth, but without bitterness.
Nor deem my zeal or factious or mistimed ;
For never can true courage dwell with them,
Who, playing tricks with conscience, dare not look
At their own vices. We have been too long
Dupes of a deep delusion ! Some, belike,
Groaning with restless enmity, expect
All change from change of constituted power ;
As if a Government had been a robe,
On which our vice and wretchedness were tagged
Like fancy-points and fringes, with the robe
Pulled off at pleasure. Fondly these attach
A radical causation to a few
Poor drudges of chastising Providence,
Who borrow all their hues and qualities
From our own folly and rank wickedness,
Which gave them birth and nursed them. Others, meanwhile,
Dote with a mad idolatry ; and all
Who will not fall before their images,
And yield them worship, they are enemies
Even of their country !

[Image] [Image] [Image] Such have I been deemed--
But, O dear Britain ! O my Mother Isle !
Needs must thou prove a name most dear and holy
To me, a son, a brother, and a friend,
A husband, and a father ! who revere
All bonds of natural love, and find them all
Within the limits of thy rocky shores.
O native Britain ! O my Mother Isle !
How shouldst thou prove aught else but dear and holy
To me, who from thy lakes and mountain-hills,
Thy clouds, thy quiet dales, thy rocks and seas,
Have drunk in all my intellectual life,
All sweet sensations, all ennobling thoughts,
All adoration of God in nature,
All lovely and all honourable things,
Whatever makes this mortal spirit feel
The joy and greatness of its future being ?
There lives nor form nor feeling in my soul
Unborrowed from my country ! O divine
And beauteous island ! thou hast been my sole
And most magnificent temple, in the which
I walk with awe, and sing my stately songs,
Loving the God that made me !--

[Image][Image][Image][Image][Image] May my fears,

My filial fears, be vain ! and may the vaunts
And menace of the vengeful enemy
Pass like the gust, that roared and died away
In the distant tree : which heard, and only heard
In this low dell, bowed not the delicate grass.

But now the gentle dew-fall sends abroad
The fruit-like perfume of the golden furze :
The light has left the summit of the hill,
Though still a sunny gleam lies beautiful,
Aslant the ivied beacon. Now farewell,
Farewell, awhile, O soft and silent spot !
On the green sheep-track, up the heathy hill,
Homeward I wind my way ; and lo ! recalled
From bodings that have well-nigh wearied me,
I find myself upon the brow, and pause
Startled ! And after lonely sojourning
In such a quiet and surrounded nook,
This burst of prospect, here the shadowy main,
Dim tinted, there the mighty majesty
Of that huge amphitheatre of rich
And elmy fields, seems like society--
Conversing with the mind, and giving it
A livelier impulse and a dance of thought !
And now, beloved Stowey ! I behold
Thy church-tower, and, methinks, the four huge elms
Clustering, which mark the mansion of my friend ;
And close behind them, hidden from my view,
Is my own lowly cottage, where my babe
And my babe's mother dwell in peace ! With light
And quickened footsteps thitherward I tend,
Remembering thee, O green and silent dell !
And grateful, that by nature's quietness
And solitary musings, all my heart
Is softened, and made worthy to indulge
Love, and the thoughts that yearn for human kind.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Fragment

The body,
Eternal Shadow of the finite Soul,
The Soul's self-symbol, its image of itself.
Its own yet not itself--

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

France: An Ode

EXCERPT]

...
O Liberty ! with profitless endeavour
Have I pursued thee, many a weary hour ;
But thou nor swell'st the victor's strain, nor ever
Didst breathe thy soul in forms of human power.
Alike from all, howe'er they praise thee,
(Nor prayer, nor boastful name delays thee)
[Image]Alike from Priestcraft's harpy minions,
And factious Blasphemy's obscener slaves,
Thou speedest on thy subtle pinions,
The guide of homeless winds, and playmate of the waves !
And there I felt thee !--on that sea-cliff's verge,
Whose pines, scarce travelled by the breeze above,
Had made one murmur with the distant surge !
Yes, while I stood and gazed, my temples bare,
And shot my being through earth, sea, and air,
Possessing all things with intensest love,
O Liberty ! my spirit felt thee there.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

From 'Religious Musings'

I

THERE is one Mind, one omnipresent Mind,
Omnific. His most holy name is Love.
Truth of subliming import! with the which
Who feeds and saturates his constant soul,
He from his small particular orbit flies
With blest outstarting! From himself he flies,
Stands in the sun, and with no partial gaze
Views all creation; and he loves it all,
And blesses it, and calls it very good!
This is indeed to dwell with the Most High!
Cherubs and rapture-trembling Seraphim
Can press no nearer to the Almighty's throne.
But that we roam unconscious, or with hearts
Unfeeling of our universal Sire,
And that in His vast family no Cain
Injures uninjured (in her best-aimed blow
Victorious Murder a blind Suicide)
Haply for this some younger Angel now
Looks down on Human Nature: and, behold!
A sea of blood bestrewed with wrecks, where mad
Embattling Interests on each other rush
With unhelmed rage!
'Tis the sublime of man,
Our noontide Majesty, to know ourselves
Parts and proportions of one wondrous whole!
This fraternizes man, this constitutes
Our charities and bearings. But 'tis God
Diffused through all, that doth make all one whole;
This the worst superstition, him except
Aught to desire, Supreme Reality!
The plenitude and permanence of bliss!

II

Toy-bewitched,
Made blind by lusts, disherited of soul,
No common centre Man, no common sire
Knoweth! A sordid solitary thing,
Mid countless brethren with a lonely heart
Through courts and cities the smooth savage roams
Feeling himself, his own low self the whole;
When he by sacred sympathy might make
The whole one Self! Self, that no alien knows!
Self, far diffused as Fancy's wing can travel!
Self, spreading still! Oblivious of its own,
Yet all of all possessing! This is Faith!
This the Messiah's destined victory!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Frost At Midnight

The Frost performs its secret ministry,
Unhelped by any wind. The owl's cry
Came loud--and hark, again ! loud as before.
The inmates of my cottage, all at rest,
Have left me to that solitude, which suits
Abstruser musings : save that at my side
My cradled infant slumbers peacefully.
'Tis calm indeed ! so calm, that it disturbs
And vexes meditation with its strange
And extreme silentness. Sea, hill, and wood,
This populous village ! Sea, and hill, and wood,
With all the numberless goings-on of life,
Inaudible as dreams ! the thin blue flame
Lies on my low-burnt fire, and quivers not ;
Only that film, which fluttered on the grate,
Still flutters there, the sole unquiet thing.
Methinks, its motion in this hush of nature
Gives it dim sympathies with me who live,
Making it a companionable form,
Whose puny flaps and freaks the idling Spirit
By its own moods interprets, every where
Echo or mirror seeking of itself,
And makes a toy of Thought.

[Image] [Image] [Image] [Image] But O ! how oft,
How oft, at school, with most believing mind,
Presageful, have I gazed upon the bars,
To watch that fluttering stranger ! and as oft
With unclosed lids, already had I dreamt
Of my sweet birth-place, and the old church-tower,
Whose bells, the poor man's only music, rang
From morn to evening, all the hot Fair-day,
So sweetly, that they stirred and haunted me
With a wild pleasure, falling on mine ear
Most like articulate sounds of things to come !
So gazed I, till the soothing things, I dreamt,
Lulled me to sleep, and sleep prolonged my dreams !
And so I brooded all the following morn,
Awed by the stern preceptor's face, mine eye
Fixed with mock study on my swimming book :
Save if the door half opened, and I snatched
A hasty glance, and still my heart leaped up,
For still I hoped to see the stranger's face,
Townsmen, or aunt, or sister more beloved,
My play-mate when we both were clothed alike !

Dear Babe, that sleepest cradled by my side,
Whose gentle breathings, heard in this deep calm,
Fill up the intersperséd vacancies
And momentary pauses of the thought !
My babe so beautiful ! it thrills my heart
With tender gladness, thus to look at thee,

And think that thou shalt learn far other lore,
And in far other scenes ! For I was reared
In the great city, pent 'mid cloisters dim,
And saw nought lovely but the sky and stars.
But thou, my babe ! shalt wander like a breeze
By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags
Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds,
Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores
And mountain crags : so shalt thou see and hear
The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible
Of that eternal language, which thy God
Utters, who from eternity doth teach
Himself in all, and all things in himself.
Great universal Teacher ! he shall mould
Thy spirit, and by giving make it ask.

Therefore all seasons shall be sweet to thee,
Whether the summer clothe the general earth
With greenness, or the redbreast sit and sing
Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare branch
Of mossy apple-tree, while the nigh thatch
Smokes in the sun-thaw ; whether the eave-drops fall
Heard only in the trances of the blast,
Or if the secret ministry of frost
Shall hang them up in silent icicles,
Quietly shining to the quiet Moon.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Garden Of Boccaccio, The

[exerpt]

Of late, in one of those most weary hours,
When life seems emptied of all genial powers,
A dready mood, which he who ne'er has known
May bless his happy lot, I sate alone ;
And, from the numbing spell to win relief,
Call'd on the Past for thought of glee or grief.
In vain ! bereft alike of grief and glee,
I sate and cow'r'd o'er my own vacancy !
And as I watch'd the dull continuous ache,
Which, all else slumb'ring, seem'd alone to wake ;
O Friend ! long wont to notice yet conceal,
And soothe by silence what words cannot heal,
I but half saw that quiet hand of thine
Place on my desk this exquisite design.
Boccaccio's Garden and its faery,
The love, the joyaunce, and the gallantry !
An Idyll, with Boccaccio's spirit warm,
Framed in the silent poesy of form.

Like flocks adown a newly-bathéd steep
Emerging from a mist : or like a stream
Of music soft that not dispels the sleep,
But casts in happier moulds the slumberer's dream,
Gazed by an idle eye with silent might
The picture stole upon my inward sight.
A tremulous warmth crept gradual o'er my chest,
As though an infant's finger touch'd my breast.
And one by one (I know not whence) were brought
All spirits of power that most had stirr'd my thought
In selfless boyhood, on a new world tost
Of wonder, and in its own fancies lost ;
Or charm'd my youth, that, kindled from above,
Loved ere it loved, and sought a form for love ;
Or lent a lustre to the earnest scan
Of manhood, musing what and whence is man !

...
And many a verse which to myself I sang,
That woke the tear, yet stole away the pang,
Of hopes, which in lamenting I renew'd :

...

Thanks, gentle artist ! now I can descry
Thy fair creation with a mastering eye,
And all awake ! And now in fix'd gaze stand,
Now wander through the Eden of thy hand ;

...

I see no longer ! I myself am there,
Sit on the ground-sward, and the banquet share.
'Tis I, that sweep that lute's love-echoing strings,
And gaze upon the maid who gazing sings :
Or pause and listen to the tinkling bells

From the high tower, and think that there she dwells.
With old Boccaccio's soul I stand possest,
And breathe an air like life, that swells my chest.

...

Still in thy garden let me watch their pranks,
...
With that sly satyr peeping through the leaves !

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Glycine's Song

A sunny shaft did I behold,
From sky to earth it slanted:
And poised therein a bird so bold
Sweet bird, thou wert enchanted!

He sank, he rose, he twinkled, he troll'd
Within that shaft of sunny mist;
His eyes of fire, his beak of gold,
All else of amethyst!

And thus he sang: 'Adieu! adieu!
Love's dreams prove seldom true.
The blossoms, they make no delay:
The sparkling dew-drops will not stay.
Sweet month of May,
We must away;
Far, far away!
To-day! to-day!'

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Good, Great Man, The

"How seldom, friend! a good great man inherits
Honour or wealth with all his worth and pains!
It sounds like stories from the land of spirits
If any man obtain that which he merits
Or any merit that which he obtains."

Reply to the Above

For shame, dear friend, renounce this canting strain!
What would'st thou have a good great man obtain?
Place? titles? salary? a gilded chain?
Or throne of corses which his sword had slain?
Greatness and goodness are not means, but ends!
Hath he not always treasures, always friends,
The good great man? three treasures, LOVE, and LIGHT,
And CALM THOUGHTS, regular as infant's breath:
And three firm friends, more sure than day and night,
HIMSELF, his MAKER, and the ANGEL DEATH!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Hexameters

William, my teacher, my friend ! dear William and dear Dorothea !
Smooth out the folds of my letter, and place it on desk or on table ;
Place it on table or desk ; and your right hands loosely half-closing,
Gently sustain them in air, and extending the digit didactic,
Rest it a moment on each of the forks of the five-forkéd left hand,
Twice on the breadth of the thumb, and once on the tip of each finger ;
Read with a nod of the head in a humouring recitativo ;
And, as I live, you will see my hexameters hopping before you.
This is a galloping measure ; a hop, and a trot, and a gallop !

All my hexameters fly, like stags pursued by the staghounds,
Breathless and panting, and ready to drop, yet flying still onwards,
I would full fain pull in my hard-mouthed runaway hunter ;
But our English Spondeans are clumsy yet impotent curb-reins ;
And so to make him go slowly, no way left have I but to lame him.

William, my head and my heart ! dear Poet that feelest and thinkest !
Dorothy, eager of soul, my most affectionate sister !
Many a mile, O ! many a wearisome mile are ye distant,
Long, long, comfortless roads, with no one eye that doth know us.
O ! it is all too far to send to you mockeries idle :
Yea, and I feel it not right ! But O ! my friends, my beloved !
Feverish and wakeful I lie,--I am weary of feeling and thinking.
Every thought is worn down,--I am weary, yet cannot be vacant.
Five long hours have I tossed, rheumatic heats, dry and flushing,
Gnawing behind in my head, and wandering and throbbing about me,
Busy and tiresome, my friends, as the beat of the boding night-spider.

I forget the beginning of the line :

[Image][Image][Image][Image][Image] ... my eyes are a burthen,
Now unwillingly closed, now open and aching with darkness.
O ! what a life is the eye ! what a strange and inscrutable essence !
Him that is utterly blind, nor glimpses the fire that warms him ;
Him that never beheld the swelling breast of his mother ;
Him that smiled in his gladness as a babe that smiles in its slumber ;
Even for him it exists, it moves and stirs in its prison ;
Lives with a separate life, and `Is it a Spirit ?' he murmurs :
`Sure, it has thoughts of its own, and to see is only a language.'

There was a great deal more, which I have forgotten. ... The last line
which I wrote, I remember, and write it for the truth of the sentiment,
scarcely less true in company than in pain and solitude :--

William, my head and my heart ! dear William and dear Dorothea !
You have all in each other ; but I am lonely, and want you !

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Human Life

If dead, we cease to be ; if total gloom
Swallow up life's brief flash for aye, we fare
As summer-gusts, of sudden birth and doom,
Whose sound and motion not alone declare,
But are their whole of being ! If the breath
Be Life itself, and not its task and tent,
If even a soul like Milton's can know death ;
O Man ! thou vessel purposeless, unmeant,
Yet drone-hive strange of phantom purposes !
Surplus of Nature's dread activity,
Which, as she gazed on some high-finished vase,
Retreating slow, with meditative pause,
She formed with restless hands unconsciously.
Blank accident ! nothing's anomaly !
If rootless thus, thus substanceless thy state,
Go, weigh thy dreams, and be thy hopes, thy fears,
The counter-weights !--Thy laughter and thy tears
Mean but themselves, each fittest to create
And to repay the other ! Why rejoices
Thy heart with hollow joy for hollow good ?
Why cowl thy face beneath the mourner's hood ?
Why waste thy sighs, and thy lamenting voices,
Image of Image, Ghost of Ghostly Elf,
That such a thing as thou feel'st warm or cold ?
Yet what and whence thy gain, if thou withhold
These costless shadows of thy shadowy self ?
Be sad ! be glad ! be neither ! seek, or shun !
Thou hast no reason why ! Thou canst have none ;
Thy being's being is contradiction.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Hymn before Sun-rise, in the Vale of Chamouni

Hast thou a charm to stay the morning-star
In his steep course? So long he seems to pause
On thy bald awful head, O sovran BLANC,
The Arve and Arveiron at thy base
Rave ceaselessly; but thou, most awful Form!
Risest from forth thy silent sea of pines,
How silently! Around thee and above
Deep is the air and dark, substantial, black,
An ebon mass: methinks thou piercest it,
As with a wedge! But when I look again,
It is thine own calm home, thy crystal shrine,
Thy habitation from eternity!
O dread and silent Mount! I gazed upon thee,
Till thou, still present to the bodily sense,
Didst vanish from my thought: entranced in prayer
I worshipped the Invisible alone.

Yet, like some sweet beguiling melody,
So sweet, we know not we are listening to it,
Thou, the meanwhile, wast blending with my Thought,
Yea, with my Life and Life's own secret joy:
Till the dilating Soul, enrapt, transfused,
Into the mighty vision passing--there
As in her natural form, swelled vast to Heaven!

Awake, my soul! not only passive praise
Thou owest! not alone these swelling tears,
Mute thanks and secret ecstasy! Awake,
Voice of sweet song! Awake, my heart, awake!
Green vales and icy cliffs, all join my Hymn.

Thou first and chief, sole sovereign of the Vale!
O struggling with the darkness all the night,
And visited all night by troops of stars,
Or when they climb the sky or when they sink:
Companion of the morning-star at dawn,
Thyself Earth's rosy star, and of the dawn
Co-herald: wake, O wake, and utter praise!
Who sank thy sunless pillars deep in Earth?
Who filled thy countenance with rosy light?
Who made thee parent of perpetual streams?

And you, ye five wild torrents fiercely glad!
Who called you forth from night and utter death,
From dark and icy caverns called you forth,
Down those precipitous, black, jagged rocks,
For ever shattered and the same for ever?
Who gave you your invulnerable life,
Your strength, your speed, your fury, and your joy,
Unceasing thunder and eternal foam?
And who commanded (and the silence came),
Here let the billows stiffen, and have rest?

Ye Ice-falls! ye that from the mountain's brow
Adown enormous ravines slope amain--
Torrents, methinks, that heard a mighty voice,
And stopped at once amid their maddest plunge!
Motionless torrents! silent cataracts!
Who made your glorious as the Gates of Heaven
Beneath the keen full moon? Who bade the sun
Clothe you with rainbows? Who, with living flowers
Of loveliest blue, spread garlands at your feet?--
God! let the torrents, like a shout of nations,
Answer! and let the ice-plains echo, God!
God! sing ye meadow-streams with gladsome voice!
Ye pine-groves, with your soft and soul-like sounds!
And they too have a voice, yon piles of snow,
And in their perilous fall shall thunder, God!

Ye living flowers that skirt the eternal frost!
Ye wild goats sporting round the eagle's nest!
Yet eagles, play-mates of the mountain-storm!
Ye lightnings, the dread arrows of the clouds!
Ye signs and wonders of the element!
Utter forth God, and fill the hills with praise!

Thou too, hoar Mount! with thy sky-pointing peaks,
Oft from whose feet the avalanche, unheard,
Shoots downward, glittering through the pure serene
Into the depth of clouds, that veil thy breast--
Thou too again, stupendous Mountain! thou
That as I raise my head, awhile bowed low
In adoration, upward from thy base
Slow travelling with dim eyes suffused with tears,
Solemnly seemest, like a vapoury cloud,
To rise before me--Rise, O ever rise,
Rise like a cloud of incense from the Earth!
Thou kingly Spirit throned among the hills,
Thou dread ambassador from Earth to Heaven,
Great Hierarch! tell thou the silent sky,
And tell the stars, and tell yon rising sun
Earth, with her thousand voices, praises God.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

I know 'tis but a Dream, yet feel more anguish (fragment)

I know 'tis but a Dream, yet feel more anguish
Than if 'twere Truth. It has been often so:
Must I die under it? Is no one near?
Will no one hear these stifled groans and wake me?

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Improvisatore, The

Scene--A spacious drawing-room, with music-room adjoining.

Katharine. What are the words ?

Eliza. Ask our friend, the Improvisatore ; here he comes. Kate has a favour to ask of you, Sir ; it is that you will repeat the ballad [Believe me if all those endearing young charms.--EHC's ? note] that Mr. _____ sang so sweetly.

Friend. It is in Moore's Irish Melodies ; but I do not recollect the words distinctly. The moral of them, however, I take to be this :--

Love would remain the same if true,
When we were neither young nor new ;
Yea, and in all within the will that came,
By the same proofs would show itself the same.

Eliza. What are the lines you repeated from Beaumont and Fletcher, which my mother admired so much ? It begins with something about two vines so close that their tendrils intermingle.

Friend. You mean Charles' speech to Angelina, in The Elder Brother.

We'll live together, like two neighbour vines,
Circling our souls and loves in one another !
We'll spring together, and we'll bear one fruit ;
One joy shall make us smile, and one grief mourn ;
One age go with us, and one hour of death
Shall close our eyes, and one grave make us happy.

Katharine. A precious boon, that would go far to reconcile one to old age--this love--if true ! But is there any such true love ?

Friend. I hope so.

Katharine. But do you believe it ?

Eliza (eagerly). I am sure he does.

Friend. From a man turned of fifty, Katharine, I imagine, expects a less confident answer.

Katharine. A more sincere one, perhaps.

Friend. Even though he should have obtained the nick-name of Improvisatore, by perpetrating charades and extempore verses at Christmas times ?

Eliza. Nay, but be serious.

Friend. Serious ! Doubtless. A grave personage of my years giving a Love-lecture to two young ladies, cannot well be otherwise. The

difficulty, I suspect, would be for them to remain so. It will be asked whether I am not the 'elderly gentleman' who sate 'despairing beside a clear stream', with a willow for his wig-block.

Eliza. Say another word, and we will call it downright affectation.

Katharine. No ! we will be affronted, drop a courtesy, and ask pardon for our presumption in expecting that Mr. ____ would waste his sense on two insignificant girls.

Friend. Well, well, I will be serious. Hem ! Now then commences the discourse ; Mr. Moore's song being the text. Love, as distinguished from Friendship, on the one hand, and from the passion that too often usurps its name, on the other--

Lucius (Eliza's brother, who had just joined the trio, in a whisper to the Friend). But is not Love the union of both ?

Friend (aside to Lucius). He never loved who thinks so.

Eliza. Brother, we don't want you. There ! Mrs. H. cannot arrange the flower vase without you. Thank you, Mrs. Hartman.

Lucius. I'll have my revenge ! I know what I will say !

Eliza. Off ! Off ! Now, dear Sir,--Love, you were saying--

Friend. Hush ! Preaching, you mean, Eliza.

Eliza (impatiently). Pshaw !

Friend. Well then, I was saying that Love, truly such, is itself not the most common thing in the world : and that mutual love still less so. But that enduring personal attachment, so beautifully delineated by Erin's sweet melodist, and still more touchingly, perhaps, in the well-known ballad, 'John Anderson, my Jo, John,' in addition to a depth and constancy of character of no every-day occurrence, supposes a peculiar sensibility and tenderness of nature ; a constitutional communicativeness and utterancy of heart and soul ; a delight in the detail of sympathy, in the outward and visible signs of the sacrament within--to count, as it were, the pulses of the life of love. But above all, it supposes a soul which, even in the pride and summer-tide of life--even in the lustihood of health and strength, had felt oftenest and prized highest that which age cannot take away and which, in all our lovings, is the Love ;----

Eliza. There is something here (pointing to her heart) that seems to understand you, but wants the word that would make it understand itself.

Katharine. I, too, seem to feel what you mean. Interpret the feeling for us.

Friend. ---- I mean that willing sense of the insufficingness of the self for itself, which predisposes a generous nature to see, in the total being of another, the supplement and completion of its own ;--that quiet perpetual seeking which the presence of the beloved object modulates, not suspends, where the heart momentarily finds, and, finding, again seeks on ;--lastly, when `life's changeful orb has pass'd the full', a confirmed faith in the nobleness of humanity, thus brought home and pressed, as it were, to the very bosom of hourly experience ; it supposes, I say, a heartfelt reverence for worth, not the less deep because divested of its solemnity by habit, by familiarity, by mutual infirmities, and even by a feeling of modesty which will arise in delicate minds, when they are conscious of possessing the same or the correspondent excellence in their own characters. In short, there must be a mind, which, while it feels the beautiful and the excellent in the beloved as its own, and by right of love appropriates it, can call Goodness its Playfellow ; and dares make sport of time and infirmity, while, in the person of a thousand-foldly endeared partner, we feel for aged Virtue the caressing fondness that belongs to the Innocence of childhood, and repeat the same attentions and tender courtesies which had been dictated by the same affection to the same object when attired in feminine loveliness or in manly beauty.

Eliza. What a soothing--what an elevating idea !

Katharine. If it be not only an idea.

Friend. At all events, these qualities which I have enumerated, are rarely found united in a single individual. How much more rare must it be, that two such individuals should meet together in this wide world under circumstances that admit of their union as Husband and Wife. A person may be highly estimable on the whole, nay, amiable as a neighbour, friend, housemate--in short, in all the concentric circles of attachment save only the last and inmost ; and yet from how many causes be estranged from the highest perfection in this ! Pride, coldness, or fastidiousness of nature, worldly cares, an anxious or ambitious disposition, a passion for display, a sullen temper,--one or the other--too often proves `the dead fly in the compost of spices', and any one is enough to unfit it for the precious balm of unction. For some mighty good sort of people, too, there is not seldom a sort of solemn saturnine, or, if you will, ursine vanity, that keeps itself alive by sucking the paws of its own self-importance. And as this high sense, or rather sensation of their own value is, for the most part, grounded on negative qualities, so they have no better means of preserving the same but by negatives--that is, but not doing or saying any thing, that might be put down for fond, silly, or nonsensical ;--or, (to use their own phrase) by never forgetting themselves, which some of their acquaintance are uncharitable enough to think the most worthless object they could be employed in remembering.

Eliza (in answer to a whisper from Katharine). To a hair ! He must have sate for it himself. Save me from such folks ! But they are out of the

question.

Friend. True ! but the same effect is produced in thousands by the too general insensibility to a very important truth ; this, namely, that the MISERY of human life is made up of large masses, each separated from the other by certain intervals. One year, the death of a child ; years after, a failure in trade ; after another longer or shorter interval, a daughter may have married unhappily ;--in all but the singularly unfortunate, the integral parts that compose the sum total of the unhappiness of a man's life, are easily counted, and distinctly remembered. The HAPPINESS of life, on the contrary, is made up of minute fractions--the little, soon-forgotten charities of a kiss, a smile, a kind look, a heartfelt compliment in the disguise of a playful raillery, and the countless other infinitesimals of pleasurable thought and genial feeling.

Katharine. Well, Sir ; you have said quite enough to make me despair of finding a ` John Anderson, my Jo, John', with whom to totter down the hill of life.

Friend. Not so ! Good men are not, I trust, so much scarcer than good women, but that what another would find in you, you may hope to find in another. But well, however, may that boon be rare, the possession of which would be more than an adequate reward for the rarest virtue.

Eliza. Surely, he, who has described it so well, must have possessed it ?

Friend. If he were worthy to have possessed it, and had believingly anticipated and not found it, how bitter the disappointment !

(Then, after a pause of a few minutes),

ANSWER, ex improvise

Yes, yes ! that boon, life's richest treat
He had, or fancied that he had ;
Say, 'twas but in his own conceit--
 The fancy made him glad !
Crown of his cup, and garnish of his dish !
The boon, prefigured in his earliest wish,
The fair fulfilment of his poesy,
When his young heart first yearn'd for sympathy !
But e'en the meteor offspring of the brain
 Unnourished wane ;
Faith asks her daily bread,
And Fancy must be fed !
Now so it chanced--from wet or dry,
It boots not how--I know not why--
She missed her wonted food ; and quickly
Poor Fancy stagger'd and grew sickly.
Then came a restless state, 'twixt yea and nay,

His faith was fix'd, his heart all ebb and flow ;
Or like a bark, in some half-shelter'd bay,
Above its anchor driving to and fro.

That boon, which but to have possess'd
In a belief, gave life a zest--
Uncertain both what it had been,
And if by error lost, or luck ;
And what is was ;--an evergreen
Which some insidious blight had struck,
Or annual flower, which, past its blow,
No vernal spell shall e'er revive ;
Uncertain, and afraid to know,
Doubts toss'd him to and fro :
Hope keeping Love, Love Hope alive,
Like babes bewildered in a snow,
That cling and huddle from the cold
In hollow tree or ruin'd fold.

Those sparkling colours, once his boast
Fading, one by one away,
Thin and hueless as a ghost,
Poor Fancy on her sick bed lay ;
Ill at distance, worse when near,
Telling her dreams to jealous Fear !
Where was it then, the sociable sprite,
That crown'd the Poet's cup and deck'd his dish !
Poor shadow cast from an unsteady wish,
Itself a substance by no other right
But that it intercepted Reason's light ;
It dimm'd his eye, it darken'd on his brow,
A peevish mood, a tedious time, I trow !
Thank Heaven ! 'tis not so now.

O bliss of blissful hours !
The boon of Heaven's decreeing,
While yet in Eden's bowers
Dwelt the first husband and his sinless mate !
The one sweet plant, which, piteous Heaven agreeing,
They bore with them thro' Eden's closing gate !
Of life's gay summer tide the sovran Rose !
Late autumn's Amaranth, that more fragrant blows
When Passion's flowers all fall or fade ;
If this were ever his, in outward being,
Or but his own true love's projected shade,
Now that at length by certain proof he knows,
That whether real or a magic show,
Whate'er it was, it is no longer so ;
Though heart be lonesome, Hope laid low,
Yet, Lady ! deem him not unblest :
The certainty that struck Hope dead,
Hath left Contentment in her stead :

And that is next to Best !

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Inscription For A Fountain On A Heath

This Sycamore, oft musical with bees,--
Such tents the Patriarchs loved ! O long unharmed
May all its agéd boughs o'er-canopy
The small round basin, which this jutting stone
Keeps pure from falling leaves ! Long may the Spring,
Quietly as a sleeping infant's breath,
Send up cold waters to the traveller
With soft and even pulse ! Nor ever cease
Yon tiny cone of sand its soundless dance,
Which at the bottom, like a Fairy's Page,
As merry and no taller, dances still,
Nor wrinkles the smooth surface of the Fount.
Here Twilight is and Coolness : here is moss,
A soft seat, and a deep and ample shade.
Thou may'st toil far and find no second tree.
Drink, Pilgrim, here ; Here rest ! and if thy heart
Be innocent, here too shalt thou refresh
Thy spirit, listening to some gentle sound,
Or passing gale or hum of murmuring bees !

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Knight's Tomb, The

Where is the grave of Sir Arthur O'Kellyn?
Where may the grave of that good man be?--
By the side of a spring, on the breast of Helvellyn,
Under the twigs of a young birch tree!
The oak that in summer was sweet to hear,
And rustled its leaves in the fall of the year,
And whistled and roared in the winter alone,
Is gone,--and the birch in its stead is grown.--
The Knight's bones are dust,
And his good sword rust;--
His soul is with the saints, I trust.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Kubla Khan

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree :
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.

So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round :
And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills,
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree ;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

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

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

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

Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Life

As late I journey'd o'er the extensive plain
Where native Otter sports his scanty stream,
Musing in torpid woe a Sister's pain,
The glorious prospect woke me from the dream.

At every step it widen'd to my sight -
Wood, Meadow, verdant Hill, and dreary Steep,
Following in quick succession of delight, -
Till all - at once - did my eye ravish'd sweep!

May this (I cried) my course through Life portray!
New scenes of Wisdom may each step display,
And Knowledge open as my days advance!
Till what time Death shall pour the undarken'd ray,
My eye shall dart thro' infinite expanse,
And thought suspended lie in Rapture's blissful trance.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Limbo

The sole true Something--This ! In Limbo Den
It frightens Ghosts as Ghosts here frighten men--
For skimming in the wake it mock'd the care
Of the old Boat-God for his Farthing Fare ;
Tho' Irus' Ghost itself he ne'er frown'd blacker on,
The skin and skin-pent Druggist crost the Acheron,
Styx, and with Puriphlegethon Cocytus,--
(The very names, methinks, might thither fright us--)
Unchang'd it cross'd--& shall some fated Hour
Be pulveris'd by Demogorgon's power
And given as poison to annilate Souls--
Even now It shrinks them ! they shrink in as Moles
(Nature's mute Monks, live Mandrakes of the ground)
Creep back from Light--then listen for its Sound ;--
See but to dread, and dread they know not why--
The natural Alien of their negative Eye.

'Tis a strange place, this Limbo !--not a Place,
Yet name it so ;--where Time & weary Space
Fettered from flight, with night-mair sense of fleeing,
Strive for their last crepuscular half-being ;--
Lank Space, and scytheless Time with branny hands
Barren and soundless as the measuring sands,
Not mark'd by flit of Shades,--unmeaning they
As Moonlight on the dial of the day !
But that is lovely--looks like Human Time,--
An Old Man with a steady Look sublime,
That stops his earthly Task to watch the skies ;
But he is blind--a Statue hath such Eyes ;--
Yet having moon-ward turn'd his face by chance,
Gazes the orb with moon-like countenance,
With scant white hairs, with foretop bald & high,
He gazes still,--his eyeless Face all Eye ;--
As 'twere an organ full of silent Sight,
His whole Face seemeth to rejoice in Light !
Lip touching lip, all moveless, bust and limb,
He seems to gaze at that which seems to gaze on him !
No such sweet sights doth Limbo Den immure,
Wall'd round, and made a Spirit-jail secure,
By the mere Horror of blank Naught-at-all,
Whose circumambience doth these Ghosts enthrall.
A lurid thought is growthless, dull Privation,
Yet that is but a Purgatory curse ;
Hell knows a fear far worse,
A fear--a future fate.--'Tis positive Negation !

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Lines

Composed while climbing the left ascent of Brockley Coomb, Somersetshire, May 1795

With many a pause and oft reverted eye
I climb the Coomb's ascent: sweet songsters near
Warble in shade their wild-wood melody:
Far off the unvarying Cuckoo soothes my ear.
Up scour the startling stragglers of the flock
That on green plots o'er precipices browse:
From the deep fissures of the naked rock
The Yew-tree bursts! Beneath its dark green boughs
(Mid which the May-thorn blends its blossoms white)
Where broad smooth stones jut out in mossy seats,
I rest: - and now have gain'd the topmost site.
Ah! what a luxury of landscape meets
My gaze! Proud towers, and Cots more dear to me,
Elm-shadow'd Fields, and prospect-bounding Sea!
Deep sighs my lonely heart: I drop the tear:
Enchanting spot! O were my Sara here!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Love

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

But when I told the cruel scorn
That crazed that bold and lovely Knight,

And that he crossed the mountain-woods,
Nor rested day nor night ;

That sometimes from the savage den,
And sometimes from the darksome shade,
And sometimes starting up at once
In green and sunny glade,--

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Love's Apparition and Evanishment: An Allegoric Romance

Like a lone Arab, old and blind,
Some caravan had left behind,
Who sits beside a ruin'd well,
Where the shy sand-asps bask and swell;
And now he hangs his aggrieved head aslant,
And listens for a human sound--in vain!
And now the aid, which Heaven alone can grant,
Upturns his eyeless face from Heaven to gain;--
Even thus, in vacant mood, one sultry hour,
Resting my eye upon a drooping plant,
With brow low-bent, within my garden-bower,
I sate upon the couch of camomile;
And--whether 'twas a transient sleep, perchance,
Flitted across the idle brain, the while
I watch'd the sickly calm with aimless scope,
In my own heart; or that, indeed a trance,
Turn'd my eye inward--thee, O genial Hope,
Love's elder sister! thee did I behold
Drest as a bridesmaid, but all pale and cold,
With roseless cheek, all pale and cold and dim,
Lie lifeless at my feet!
And then came Love, a sylph in bridal trim,
And stood beside my seat;
She bent, and kiss'd her sister's lips,
As she was wont to do;--
Alas! 'twas but a chilling breath
Woke just enough of life in death
To make Hope die anew.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Metrical Feet

Trochee trips from long to short;
From long to long in solemn sort
Slow Spondee stalks, strong foot!, yet ill able
Ever to come up with Dactyl's trisyllable.
Iambics march from short to long.
With a leap and a bound the swift Anapests throng.
One syllable long, with one short at each side,
Amphibrachys hastes with a stately stride --
First and last being long, middle short, Amphimacer
Strikes his thundering hoofs like a proud high-bred Racer.

If Derwent be innocent, steady, and wise,
And delight in the things of earth, water, and skies;
Tender warmth at his heart, with these meters to show it,
With sound sense in his brains, may make Derwent a poet --
May crown him with fame, and must win him the love
Of his father on earth and his father above.
My dear, dear child!
Could you stand upon Skiddaw, you would not from its whole ridge
See a man who so loves you as your fond S.T. Coleridge.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

On A Ruined house In A Romantic Country

And this reft house is that the which he built,
Lamented Jack ! And here his malt he pil'd,
Cautious in vain ! These rats that squeak so wild,
Squeak, not unconscious of their father's guilt.
Did ye not see her gleaming thro' the glade ?
Belike, 'twas she, the maiden all forlorn.
What though she milk no cow with crumpled horn,
Yet aye she haunts the dale where erst she stray'd ;
And aye beside her stalks her amorous knight !
Still on his thighs their wonted brogues are worn,
And thro' those brogues, still tatter'd and betorn,
His hindward charms gleam an unearthly white ;
As when thro' broken clouds at night's high noon
Peeps in fair fragments forth the full-orb'd harvest-moon !

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

On Donne's Poetry

`` With Donne, whose muse on dromedary trots,
Wreathe iron pokers into true-love knots ;
Rhyme's sturdy cripple, fancy's maze and clue,
Wit's forge and fire-blast, meaning's press and screw."

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Pains Of Sleep, The

Ere on my bed my limbs I lay,
It hath not been my use to pray
With moving lips or bended knees ;
But silently, by slow degrees,
My spirit I to Love compose,
In humble trust mine eye-lids close,
With reverential resignation,
No wish conceived, no thought exprest,
Only a sense of supplication ;
A sense o'er all my soul imprest
That I am weak, yet not unblest,
Since in me, round me, every where
Eternal Strength and Wisdom are.

But yester-night I prayed aloud
In anguish and in agony,
Up-starting from the fiendish crowd
Of shapes and thoughts that tortured me :
A lurid light, a trampling throng,
Sense of intolerable wrong,
And whom I scorned, those only strong !
Thirst of revenge, the powerless will
Still baffled, and yet burning still !
Desire with loathing strangely mixed
On wild or hateful objects fixed.
Fantastic passions ! maddening brawl !
And shame and terror over all !
Deeds to be hid which were not hid,
Which all confused I could not know
Whether I suffered, or I did :
For all seemed guilt, remorse or woe,
My own or others still the same
Life-stifling fear, soul-stifling shame.

So two nights passed : the night's dismay
Saddened and stunned the coming day.
Sleep, the wide blessing, seemed to me
Distemper's worst calamity.
The third night, when my own loud scream
Had waked me from the fiendish dream,
O'ercome with sufferings strange and wild,
I wept as I had been a child ;
And having thus by tears subdued
My anguish to a milder mood,
Such punishments, I said, were due
To natures deepliest stained with sin,--
For aye entempesting anew
The unfathomable hell within,
The horror of their deeds to view,
To know and loathe, yet wish and do !
Such griefs with such men well agree,
But wherefore, wherefore fall on me ?

To be beloved is all I need,
And whom I love, I love indeed.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Phantom

All look and likeness caught from earth
All accident of kin and birth,
Had pass'd away. There was no trace
Of aught on that illumined face,
Uprais'd beneath the rifted stone
But of one spirit all her own ;--
She, she herself, and only she,
Shone through her body visibly.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Presence Of Love, The

And in Life's noisiest hour,
There whispers still the ceaseless Love of Thee,
The heart's Self-solace and soliloquy.

You mould my Hopes, you fashion me within ;
And to the leading Love-throb in the Heart
Thro' all my Being, thro' my pulses beat ;
You lie in all my many Thoughts, like Light,
Like the fair light of Dawn, or summer Eve
On rippling Stream, or cloud-reflecting Lake.
And looking to the Heaven, that bends above you,
How oft ! I bless the Lot, that made me love you.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Psyche

The butterfly the ancient Grecians made
The soul's fair emblem, and its only name--
But of the soul, escaped the slavish trade
Of mortal life!--For in this earthly frame
Ours is the reptile's lot, much toil, much blame,
Manifold motions making little speed,
And to deform and kill the things whereon we feed.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Reason

... Finally, what is Reason ? You have often asked me ; and this is my answer :--

Whene'er the mist, that stands 'twixt God and thee,
[Sublimates] to a pure transparency,
That intercepts no light and adds no stain--
There Reason is, and then begins her reign !

But alas !
-----` tu stesso, ti fai grosso
Col falso immaginar, sì che non vedi
Ciò che vedresti, se l'avessi scosso.'

(Dante, Paradiso, Canto 1, lines 88-90)

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Recollections Of Love

I

How warm this woodland wild Recess !
Love surely hath been breathing here ;
And this sweet bed of heath, my dear !
Swells up, then sinks with faint caress,
As if to have you yet more near.

II

Eight springs have flown, since last I lay
On sea-ward Quantock's heathy hills,
Where quiet sounds from hidden rills
Float hear and there, like things astray,
And high o'er head the sky-lark shrills.

III

No voice as yet had made the air
Be music with your name ; yet why
That asking look ? that yearning sigh ?
That sense of promise every where ?
Belovéd ! flew your spirit by ?

IV

As when a mother doth explore
The rose-mark on her long-lost child,
I met, I loved you, maiden mild !
As whom I long had loved before--
So deeply had I been beguiled.

V

You stood before me like a thought,
A dream remembered in a dream.
But when those meek eyes first did seem
To tell me, Love within you wrought--
O Greta, dear domestic stream !

VI

Has not, since then, Love's prompture deep,
Has not Love's whisper evermore
Been ceaseless, as thy gentle roar ?
Sole voice, when other voices sleep,
Dear under-song in clamor's hour.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Reflections On Having Left A Place Of Retirement

Low was our pretty Cot : our tallest Rose
Peep'd 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 blossom'd; and across the porch
Thick Jasmins twined : the little landscape round
Was green and woody, and refresh'd the eye.
It was a spot which you might aptly call
The Valley of Seclusion ! Once I saw
(Hallowing his Sabbath-day by quiteness)
A wealthy son of Commerce saunter by,
Bristow's citizen : methought, it calm'd
His thirst of idle gold, and made him muse
With wiser feelings : for he paus'd, and look'd
With a pleas'd sadness, and gaz'd all around,
Then eyed our Cottage, and gaz'd round again,
And sigh'd, and said, it was a Blesséd Place.
And we were bless'd. Oft with patient ear
Long-listening to the viewless sky-lark's note
(Viewless, or haply for a moment seen
Gleaming on sunny wings) in whisper'd tones
I said to my Belovéd, `Such, sweet Girl !
The inobtrusive song of Happiness,
Unearthly minstrelsy ! then only heard
When the Soul seeks to hear ; when all is hush'd,
And the Heart listens !'

[Image][Image][Image]But the time, when first
From that low Dell, steep up the stony Mount
I climb'd with perilous toil and reach'd the top,
Oh ! what a goodly scene ! Here the bleak mount,
The bare bleak mountain speckled thin with sheep ;
Grey clouds, that shadowing spot the sunny fields ;
And river, now with bushy rocks o'er-brow'd,
Now winding bright and full, with naked banks ;
And seats, and lawns, the Abbey and the wood,
And cots, and hamlets, and faint city-spire ;
The Channel there, the Islands and white sails,
Dim coasts, and cloud-like hills, and shoreless Ocean--
It seem'd like Omnipresence ! God, methought,
Had build him there a Temple : the whole World
Seem'd imag'd in its vast circumference :
No wish profan'd my overwhelméd heart.
Blest hour ! It was a luxury,--to be !

Ah ! quiet Dell ! dear Cot, and Mount sublime !
I was constrain'd to quit you. Was it right,
While my unnumber'd brethren toil'd and bled,
That I should dream away the entrusted hours
On rose-leaf beds, pampering the coward heart
With feelings all too delicate for use ?
Sweet is the tear that from some Howard's eye

Drops on the cheek of one he lifts from earth :
And he that works me good with unmov'd face,
Does it but half : he chills me while he aids,
My benefactor, not my brother man !
Yet even this, this cold beneficence
Praise, praise it, O my Soul ! oft as thou scann'st
The sluggard Pity's vision-weaving tribe !
Who sigh for Wretchedness, yet shun the Wretched,
Nursing in some delicious solitude
Their slothful loves and dainty sympathies !
I therefore go, and join head, heart, and hand,
Active and firm, to fight the bloodless fight
Of Science, Freedom, and the Truth in Christ.

Yet oft when after honourable toil
Rests the tir'd mind, and waking loves to dream,
My spirit shall revisit thee, dear Cot !
Thy Jasmin and thy window-peeping Rose,
And Myrtles fearless of the mild sea-air.
And I shall sigh fond wishes--sweet Abode !
Ah !--had none greater ! And that all had such !
It might be so--but the time is not yet.
Speed it, O Father ! Let thy Kingdom come !

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Rime Of The Ancient Mariner, The

IN SEVEN PARTS

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

Translation

ARGUMENT

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

PART I

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

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

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

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

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--
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child :
The Mariner hath his will.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The ship driven by a storm toward the south pole.

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

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

And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold :

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PART 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 an 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.
'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.

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

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

The ship hath been suddenly becalmed.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'Twas sad as sad could be ;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea !

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

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

Upon a painted ocean.

And the Albatross begins to be avenged.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PART III

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

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

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

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

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

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

A flash of joy ;

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

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

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

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

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.

And its ribs are seen as bars on the face of the setting Sun.

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 ?

The Spectre-Woman and her Death-mate, and no other on board the skeleton ship.

And 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 ?

[first version of this stanza through the end of Part III]

Like vessel, like crew !

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

Death and Life-in-Death have diced for the ship's crew, and she (the latter) winneth the ancient Mariner.

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

No twilight within the courts of the Sun.

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

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 steerman's face by his lamp gleamed white ;
From the sails the dew did drip--
Till clomb above the eastern bar
The hornéd 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 whizz of my cross-bow !

PART IV

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

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

(Coleridge's note on above stanza)

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

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

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

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.

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

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

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

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

The moving Moon went up the sky,
And no where did abide :
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside--

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

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

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

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

Their beauty and their happiness.

He blesseth them in his heart.

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

The spell begins to break.

The self-same moment I could pray ;
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 blessed ghost.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

And now 'twas like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute ;
And now it is an angel's song,
That makes the heavens be mute.

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

[Additional stanzas, dropped after the first edition.]

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 obedience to the angelic troop, but still requireth vengeance.

Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The spirit slid : and it was he
That made the ship to go.

The sails at noon left off their tune,
And the ship stood still also.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PART 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.'

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

FIRST VOICE

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

SECOND VOICE

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

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

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

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

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

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

The curse is finally expiated.

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

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

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

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

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

And the ancient Mariner beholdeth his native country.

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

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

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.

[Additional stanzas, dropped after the first edition.]

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.

[Additional stanza, dropped after the first edition.]

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

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

PART VII

The Hermit of the Wood,

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

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

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

Approacheth the ship with wonder.

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

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

'Dear Lord ! it hath a fiendish look--
(The Pilot made reply)
I am 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.

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

And ever and anon through out his future life an agony constraineth him to
travel from land to land ;

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

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

What loud uproar bursts from that door !
The wedding-guests are there :
But in the garden-bower the bride

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

O Wedding-Guest ! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide wide sea :
So lonely 'twas, that God himself
Scarce seeméd 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 his own example, love and reverence to all things that God
made and loveth.

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

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

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

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

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Sea-ward, white gleaming thro' the busy scud (fragment)

Sea-ward, white gleaming thro' the busy scud
With arching Wings, the sea-mew o'er my head
Posts on, as bent on speed, now passaging
Edges the stiffer Breeze, now, yielding, drifts,
Now floats upon the air, and sends from far
A wildly-wailing Note.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Something Childish, But Very Natural

If I had but two little wings
And were a little feathery bird,
To you I'd fly, my dear!
But thoughts like these are idle things,
And I stay here.

But in my sleep to you I fly:
I'm always with you in my sleep!
The world is all one's own.
But then one wakes, and where am I?
All, all alone.

Sleep stays not, though a monarch bids:
So I love to wake ere break of day:
For though my sleep be gone,
Yet while 'tis dark, one shuts one's lids,
And still dreams on.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Song

Tho' veiled in spires of myrtle-wreath,
Love is a sword that cuts its sheath,
And thro' the clefts, itself has made,
We spy the flashes of the Blade !

But thro' the clefts, itself has made,
We likewise see Love's flashing blade,
By rust consumed or snapt in twain :
And only Hilt and Stump remain.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Sonnet

<i>To the River Otter</i>

Dear native Brook! wild Streamlet of the West!
How many various-fated years have past,
What happy and what mournful hours, since last
I skimm'd the smooth thin stone along thy breast,
Numbering its light leaps! yet so deep imprest
Sink the sweet scenes of childhood, that mine eyes
I never shut amid the sunny ray,
But straight with all their tints thy waters rise,
Thy crossing plank, thy marge with willows grey,
And bedded sand that vein'd with various dyes
Gleam'd through thy bright transparence! On my way,
Visions of Childhood! oft have ye beguil'd
Lone manhood's cares, yet waking fondest sighs:
Ah! that once more I were a careless Child!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Sonnet: To The River Otter

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Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Suicide's Argument, The

Ere the birth of my life, if I wished it or no
No question was asked me--it could not be so !
If the life was the question, a thing sent to try
And to live on be YES; what can NO be ? to die.

NATURE'S ANSWER

Is't returned, as 'twas sent ? Is't no worse for the wear ?
Think first, what you ARE ! Call to mind what you WERE !
I gave you innocence, I gave you hope,
Gave health, and genius, and an ample scope,
Return you me guilt, lethargy, despair ?
Make out the invent'ry ; inspect, compare !
Then die--if die you dare !

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The Aeolian Harp

My pensive SARA ! thy soft cheek reclined
Thus on mine arm, most soothing sweet it is
To sit beside our Cot, our Cot o'ergrown
With white-flower'd Jasmin, and the broad-leav'd Myrtle,
(Meet emblems they of Innocence and Love !)
And watch the clouds, that late were rich with light,
Slow saddenning round, and mark the star of eve
Serenely brilliant (such should Wisdom be)
Shine opposite ! How exquisite the scents
Snatch'd from yon bean-field ! and the world so hush'd !
The stilly murmur of the distant Sea
Tells us of silence.

[Image] [Image] And that simplest Lute,
Plac'd length-ways in the clasping casement, hark !
How by the desultory breeze caress'd,
Like some coy maid half-yielding to her lover,
It pours such sweet upbraiding, as must needs
Tempt to repeat the wrong ! And now, its strings
Boldlier swept, the long sequacious notes
Over delicious surges sink and rise,
Such a soft floating witchery of sound
As twilight Elfin's make, when they at eve
Voyage on gentle gales from Faery-Land,
Where Melodies round honey-dropping flowers,
Footless and wild, like birds of Paradise,
Nor pause, nor perch, hovering on untam'd wing !
O ! the one Life within us and abroad,
Which meets all motion and becomes its soul,
A light in sound, a sound-like power in light,
Rhythm in all thought, and joyance every where--
Methinks, it should have been impossible
Not to love all things in a world so fill'd ;
Where the breeze warbles, and the mute still air
Is Music slumbering on her instrument.

And thus, my Love ! as on the midway slope
Of yonder hill I stretch my limbs at noon,
Whilst thro' my half-clos'd eye-lids I behold
The sunbeams dance, like diamonds, on the main,
And tranquil muse upon tranquillity ;
Full many a thought uncall'd and undetain'd,
And many idle flitting phantasies,
Traverse my indolent and passive brain,
As wild and various, as the random gales
That swell and flutter on this subject Lute !

And what if all of animated nature
Be but organic Harps diversely fram'd,
That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps
Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
At once the Soul of each, and God of all ?
But thy more serious eye a mild reproof

Darts, O belovéd Woman ! nor such thoughts
Dim and unhallow'd dost thou not reject,
And biddest me walk humbly with my God.
Meek Daughter in the Family of Christ !
Well hast thou said and holily disprais'd
These shapings of the unregenerate mind ;
Bubbles that glitter as they rise and break
On vain Philosophy's aye-babbling spring.
For never guiltless may I speak of him,
The Incomprehensible ! save when with awe
I praise him, and with Faith that inly feels ;
Who with his saving mercies healéd me,
A sinful and most miserable man,
Wilder'd and dark, and gave me to possess
Peace, and this Cot, and thee, heart-honour'd Maid !

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The Blossing Of The Solitary Date-Tree

Beneath the blaze of a tropical sun the mountain peaks are the Thrones of Frost, through the absence of objects to reflect the rays. 'What no one with us shares, seems scarce our own.' The presence of a ONE,

The best belov'd, who loveth me the best,

is for the heart, what the supporting air from within is for the hollow globe with its suspended car. Deprive it of this, and all without, that would have buoyed it aloft even to the seat of the gods, becomes a burthen and crushes it into flatness.

II

The finer the sense for the beautiful and the lovely, and the fairer and lovelier the object presented to the sense ; the more exquisite the individual's capacity of joy, and the more ample his means and opportunities of enjoyment, the more heavily will he feel the ache of solitariness, the more unsubstantial becomes the feast spread around him. What matters it, whether in fact the viands and the ministering graces are shadowy or real, to him who has not hand to grasp nor arms to embrace them ?

III

Hope, Imagination, honourable Aims,
Free Commune with the choir that cannot die,
Science and Song, delight in little things,
The buoyant child surviving in the man ;
Fields, forests, ancient mountains, ocean, sky,
With all their voices--O dare I accuse
My earthly lot as guilty of my spleen,
Or call my destiny niggard ! O no ! no !
It is her largeness, and her overflow,
Which being incomplete, disquieteth me so !

IV

For never touch of gladness stirs my heart,
But tim'rously beginning to rejoice
Like a blind Arab, that from sleep doth start
In lonesome tent, I listen for thy voice.
Belovéd ! 'tis not thine ; thou art not there !
Then melts the bubble into idle air,
And wishing without hope I restlessly despair.

V

The mother with anticipated glee
Smiles o'er the child, that, standing by her chair
And flatt'ning its round cheek upon her knee,
Looks up, and doth its rosy lips prepare
To mock the coming sounds. At that sweet sight

She hears her own voice with a new delight ;
And if the babe perchance should lisp the notes aright,

VI

Then is she tenfold gladder than before !
But should disease or chance the darling take,
What then avail those songs, which sweet of yore
Were only sweet for their sweet echo's sake ?
Dear maid ! no prattler at a mother's knee
Was e'er so dearly prized as I prize thee :
Why was I made for Love and Love denied to me ?

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The Dungeon

Song

(Act V, scene i)

And this place our forefathers made for man !
This is the process of our Love and Wisdom,
To each poor brother who offends against us--
Most innocent, perhaps--and what if guilty ?
Is this the only cure ? Merciful God !
Each pore and natural outlet shrivell'd up
By Ignorance and parching Poverty,
His energies roll back upon his heart,
And stagnate and corrupt ; till chang'd to poison,
They break out on him, like a loathsome plague-spot ;
Then we call in our pamper'd mountebanks--
And this is their best cure ! uncomforted
And friendless Solitude, Groaning and Tears,
And savage Faces, at the clanking hour,
Seen through the steams and vapour of his dungeon,
By the lamp's dismal twilight ! So he lies
Circl'd with evil, till his very soul
Unmoulds its essence, hopelessly deform'd
By sights of ever more deformity !

With other ministrations thou, O Nature !
Healest thy wandering and distemper'd child :
Thou pourest on him thy soft influences,
Thy sunny hues, fair forms, and breathing sweets,
Thy melodies of woods, and winds, and waters,
Till he relent, and can no more endure
To be a jarring and a dissonant thing,
Amid this general dance and minstrelsy ;
But, bursting into tears, wins back his way,
His angry spirit heal'd and harmoniz'd
By the benignant touch of Love and Beauty.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The Eolian Harp

(Composed at Clevedon, Somersetshire)

My pensive Sara! thy soft cheek reclined
Thus on mine arm, most soothing sweet it is
To sit beside our Cot, our Cot o'ergrown
With white-flower'd Jasmin, and the broad-leav'd Myrtle,
(Meet emblems they of Innocence and Love!)
And watch the clouds, that late were rich with light,
Slow saddening round, and mark the star of eve
Serenely brilliant (such should Wisdom be)
Shine opposite! How exquisite the scents
Snatch'd from yon bean-field! and the world so hushed!
The stilly murmur of the distant Sea
Tells us of silence.

And that simplest Lute,
Placed length-ways in the clasping casement, hark!
How by the desultory breeze caress'd,
Like some coy maid half yielding to her lover,
It pours such sweet upbraiding, as must needs
Tempt to repeat the wrong! And now, its strings
Boldlier swept, the long sequacious notes
Over delicious surges sink and rise,
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A light in sound, a sound-like power in light,
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Methinks, it should have been impossible
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And thus, my Love! as on the midway slope
Of yonder hill I stretch my limbs at noon,
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And tranquil muse upon tranquillity;
Full many a thought uncall'd and undetain'd,
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But thy more serious eye a mild reproof
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Who with his saving mercies heal'd me,
A sinful and most miserable man,
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Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The Exchange

We pledged our hearts, my love and I,
I in my arms the maiden clasping;
I could not tell the reason why,
But, O, I trembled like an aspen!

Her father's love she bade me gain;
I went, and shook like any reed!
I strove to act the man---in vain!
We had exchanged our hearts indeed.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The Faded Flower

Ungrateful he, who pluck'd thee from thy stalk,
Poor faded flow'ret! on his careless way;
Inhal'd awhile thy odours on his walk,
Then onward pass'd and left thee to decay.
Ah! melancholy emblem! had I seen
Thy modest beauties dew'd with Evening's gem,
I had not rudely cropp'd thy parent stem,
But left thee, blushing, 'mid the enliven'd green.
And now I bend me o'er thy wither'd bloom,
And drop the tear - as Fancy, at my side,
Deep-sighing, points the fair frail Abra's tomb -
'Like thine, sad Flower, was that poor wanderer's pride!
Oh! lost to Love and Truth, whose selfish joy
Tasted her vernal sweets, but tasted to destroy!'

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The Garden Of Boccaccio

[exerpt]

Of late, in one of those most weary hours,
When life seems emptied of all genial powers,
A dready mood, which he who ne'er has known
May bless his happy lot, I sate alone ;
And, from the numbing spell to win relief,
Call'd on the Past for thought of glee or grief.
In vain ! bereft alike of grief and glee,
I sate and cow'r'd o'er my own vacancy !
And as I watch'd the dull continuous ache,
Which, all else slumb'ring, seem'd alone to wake ;
O Friend ! long wont to notice yet conceal,
And soothe by silence what words cannot heal,
I but half saw that quiet hand of thine
Place on my desk this exquisite design.
Boccaccio's Garden and its faery,
The love, the joyaunce, and the gallantry !
An Idyll, with Boccaccio's spirit warm,
Framed in the silent poesy of form.

Like flocks adown a newly-bathéd steep
Emerging from a mist : or like a stream
Of music soft that not dispels the sleep,
But casts in happier moulds the slumberer's dream,
Gazed by an idle eye with silent might
The picture stole upon my inward sight.
A tremulous warmth crept gradual o'er my chest,
As though an infant's finger touch'd my breast.
And one by one (I know not whence) were brought
All spirits of power that most had stirr'd my thought
In selfless boyhood, on a new world tost
Of wonder, and in its own fancies lost ;
Or charm'd my youth, that, kindled from above,
Loved ere it loved, and sought a form for love ;
Or lent a lustre to the earnest scan
Of manhood, musing what and whence is man !

...
And many a verse which to myself I sang,
That woke the tear, yet stole away the pang,
Of hopes, which in lamenting I renew'd :

...

Thanks, gentle artist ! now I can descry
Thy fair creation with a mastering eye,
And all awake ! And now in fix'd gaze stand,
Now wander through the Eden of thy hand ;

...

I see no longer ! I myself am there,
Sit on the ground-sward, and the banquet share.
'Tis I, that sweep that lute's love-echoing strings,
And gaze upon the maid who gazing sings :
Or pause and listen to the tinkling bells

From the high tower, and think that there she dwells.
With old Boccaccio's soul I stand possest,
And breathe an air like life, that swells my chest.

...

Still in thy garden let me watch their pranks,
...
With that sly satyr peeping through the leaves !

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The Good, Great Man

"How seldom, friend! a good great man inherits
Honour or wealth with all his worth and pains!
It sounds like stories from the land of spirits
If any man obtain that which he merits
Or any merit that which he obtains."

Reply to the Above

For shame, dear friend, renounce this canting strain!
What would'st thou have a good great man obtain?
Place? titles? salary? a gilded chain?
Or throne of corpses which his sword had slain?
Greatness and goodness are not means, but ends!
Hath he not always treasures, always friends,
The good great man? three treasures, LOVE, and LIGHT,
And CALM THOUGHTS, regular as infant's breath:
And three firm friends, more sure than day and night,
HIMSELF, his MAKER, and the ANGEL DEATH!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The Improvisatore

Scene--A spacious drawing-room, with music-room adjoining.

Katharine. What are the words ?

Eliza. Ask our friend, the Improvisatore ; here he comes. Kate has a favour to ask of you, Sir ; it is that you will repeat the ballad [Believe me if all those endearing young charms.--EHC's ? note] that Mr. _____ sang so sweetly.

Friend. It is in Moore's Irish Melodies ; but I do not recollect the words distinctly. The moral of them, however, I take to be this :--

Love would remain the same if true,
When we were neither young nor new ;
Yea, and in all within the will that came,
By the same proofs would show itself the same.

Eliza. What are the lines you repeated from Beaumont and Fletcher, which my mother admired so much ? It begins with something about two vines so close that their tendrils intermingle.

Friend. You mean Charles' speech to Angelina, in The Elder Brother.

We'll live together, like two neighbour vines,
Circling our souls and loves in one another !
We'll spring together, and we'll bear one fruit ;
One joy shall make us smile, and one grief mourn ;
One age go with us, and one hour of death
Shall close our eyes, and one grave make us happy.

Katharine. A precious boon, that would go far to reconcile one to old age--this love--if true ! But is there any such true love ?

Friend. I hope so.

Katharine. But do you believe it ?

Eliza (eagerly). I am sure he does.

Friend. From a man turned of fifty, Katharine, I imagine, expects a less confident answer.

Katharine. A more sincere one, perhaps.

Friend. Even though he should have obtained the nick-name of Improvisatore, by perpetrating charades and extempore verses at Christmas times ?

Eliza. Nay, but be serious.

Friend. Serious ! Doubtless. A grave personage of my years giving a Love-lecture to two young ladies, cannot well be otherwise. The

difficulty, I suspect, would be for them to remain so. It will be asked whether I am not the 'elderly gentleman' who sate 'despairing beside a clear stream', with a willow for his wig-block.

Eliza. Say another word, and we will call it downright affectation.

Katharine. No ! we will be affronted, drop a courtesy, and ask pardon for our presumption in expecting that Mr. ____ would waste his sense on two insignificant girls.

Friend. Well, well, I will be serious. Hem ! Now then commences the discourse ; Mr. Moore's song being the text. Love, as distinguished from Friendship, on the one hand, and from the passion that too often usurps its name, on the other--

Lucius (Eliza's brother, who had just joined the trio, in a whisper to the Friend). But is not Love the union of both ?

Friend (aside to Lucius). He never loved who thinks so.

Eliza. Brother, we don't want you. There ! Mrs. H. cannot arrange the flower vase without you. Thank you, Mrs. Hartman.

Lucius. I'll have my revenge ! I know what I will say !

Eliza. Off ! Off ! Now, dear Sir,--Love, you were saying--

Friend. Hush ! Preaching, you mean, Eliza.

Eliza (impatiently). Pshaw !

Friend. Well then, I was saying that Love, truly such, is itself not the most common thing in the world : and that mutual love still less so. But that enduring personal attachment, so beautifully delineated by Erin's sweet melodist, and still more touchingly, perhaps, in the well-known ballad, 'John Anderson, my Jo, John,' in addition to a depth and constancy of character of no every-day occurrence, supposes a peculiar sensibility and tenderness of nature ; a constitutional communicativeness and utterancy of heart and soul ; a delight in the detail of sympathy, in the outward and visible signs of the sacrament within--to count, as it were, the pulses of the life of love. But above all, it supposes a soul which, even in the pride and summer-tide of life--even in the lustihood of health and strength, had felt oftenest and prized highest that which age cannot take away and which, in all our lovings, is the Love ;----

Eliza. There is something here (pointing to her heart) that seems to understand you, but wants the word that would make it understand itself.

Katharine. I, too, seem to feel what you mean. Interpret the feeling for us.

Friend. ---- I mean that willing sense of the insufficingness of the self for itself, which predisposes a generous nature to see, in the total being of another, the supplement and completion of its own ;--that quiet perpetual seeking which the presence of the beloved object modulates, not suspends, where the heart momentarily finds, and, finding, again seeks on ;--lastly, when `life's changeful orb has pass'd the full', a confirmed faith in the nobleness of humanity, thus brought home and pressed, as it were, to the very bosom of hourly experience ; it supposes, I say, a heartfelt reverence for worth, not the less deep because divested of its solemnity by habit, by familiarity, by mutual infirmities, and even by a feeling of modesty which will arise in delicate minds, when they are conscious of possessing the same or the correspondent excellence in their own characters. In short, there must be a mind, which, while it feels the beautiful and the excellent in the beloved as its own, and by right of love appropriates it, can call Goodness its Playfellow ; and dares make sport of time and infirmity, while, in the person of a thousand-foldly endeared partner, we feel for aged Virtue the caressing fondness that belongs to the Innocence of childhood, and repeat the same attentions and tender courtesies which had been dictated by the same affection to the same object when attired in feminine loveliness or in manly beauty.

Eliza. What a soothing--what an elevating idea !

Katharine. If it be not only an idea.

Friend. At all events, these qualities which I have enumerated, are rarely found united in a single individual. How much more rare must it be, that two such individuals should meet together in this wide world under circumstances that admit of their union as Husband and Wife. A person may be highly estimable on the whole, nay, amiable as a neighbour, friend, housemate--in short, in all the concentric circles of attachment save only the last and inmost ; and yet from how many causes be estranged from the highest perfection in this ! Pride, coldness, or fastidiousness of nature, worldly cares, an anxious or ambitious disposition, a passion for display, a sullen temper,--one or the other--too often proves `the dead fly in the compost of spices', and any one is enough to unfit it for the precious balm of unction. For some mighty good sort of people, too, there is not seldom a sort of solemn saturnine, or, if you will, ursine vanity, that keeps itself alive by sucking the paws of its own self-importance. And as this high sense, or rather sensation of their own value is, for the most part, grounded on negative qualities, so they have no better means of preserving the same but by negatives--that is, but not doing or saying any thing, that might be put down for fond, silly, or nonsensical ;--or, (to use their own phrase) by never forgetting themselves, which some of their acquaintance are uncharitable enough to think the most worthless object they could be employed in remembering.

Eliza (in answer to a whisper from Katharine). To a hair ! He must have sate for it himself. Save me from such folks ! But they are out of the

question.

Friend. True ! but the same effect is produced in thousands by the too general insensibility to a very important truth ; this, namely, that the MISERY of human life is made up of large masses, each separated from the other by certain intervals. One year, the death of a child ; years after, a failure in trade ; after another longer or shorter interval, a daughter may have married unhappily ;--in all but the singularly unfortunate, the integral parts that compose the sum total of the unhappiness of a man's life, are easily counted, and distinctly remembered. The HAPPINESS of life, on the contrary, is made up of minute fractions--the little, soon-forgotten charities of a kiss, a smile, a kind look, a heartfelt compliment in the disguise of a playful raillery, and the countless other infinitesimals of pleasurable thought and genial feeling.

Katharine. Well, Sir ; you have said quite enough to make me despair of finding a ` John Anderson, my Jo, John', with whom to totter down the hill of life.

Friend. Not so ! Good men are not, I trust, so much scarcer than good women, but that what another would find in you, you may hope to find in another. But well, however, may that boon be rare, the possession of which would be more than an adequate reward for the rarest virtue.

Eliza. Surely, he, who has described it so well, must have possessed it ?

Friend. If he were worthy to have possessed it, and had believingly anticipated and not found it, how bitter the disappointment !

(Then, after a pause of a few minutes),

ANSWER, ex improvise

Yes, yes ! that boon, life's richest treat
He had, or fancied that he had ;
Say, 'twas but in his own conceit--
 The fancy made him glad !
Crown of his cup, and garnish of his dish !
The boon, prefigured in his earliest wish,
The fair fulfilment of his poesy,
When his young heart first yearn'd for sympathy !
But e'en the meteor offspring of the brain
 Unnourished wane ;
Faith asks her daily bread,
And Fancy must be fed !
Now so it chanced--from wet or dry,
It boots not how--I know not why--
She missed her wonted food ; and quickly
Poor Fancy stagger'd and grew sickly.
Then came a restless state, 'twixt yea and nay,

His faith was fix'd, his heart all ebb and flow ;
Or like a bark, in some half-shelter'd bay,
Above its anchor driving to and fro.

That boon, which but to have possess'd
In a belief, gave life a zest--
Uncertain both what it had been,
And if by error lost, or luck ;
And what is was ;--an evergreen
Which some insidious blight had struck,
Or annual flower, which, past its blow,
No vernal spell shall e'er revive ;
Uncertain, and afraid to know,
Doubts toss'd him to and fro :
Hope keeping Love, Love Hope alive,
Like babes bewildered in a snow,
That cling and huddle from the cold
In hollow tree or ruin'd fold.

Those sparkling colours, once his boast
Fading, one by one away,
Thin and hueless as a ghost,
Poor Fancy on her sick bed lay ;
Ill at distance, worse when near,
Telling her dreams to jealous Fear !
Where was it then, the sociable sprite,
That crown'd the Poet's cup and deck'd his dish !
Poor shadow cast from an unsteady wish,
Itself a substance by no other right
But that it intercepted Reason's light ;
It dimm'd his eye, it darken'd on his brow,
A peevish mood, a tedious time, I trow !
Thank Heaven ! 'tis not so now.

O bliss of blissful hours !
The boon of Heaven's decreeing,
While yet in Eden's bowers
Dwelt the first husband and his sinless mate !
The one sweet plant, which, piteous Heaven agreeing,
They bore with them thro' Eden's closing gate !
Of life's gay summer tide the sovran Rose !
Late autumn's Amaranth, that more fragrant blows
When Passion's flowers all fall or fade ;
If this were ever his, in outward being,
Or but his own true love's projected shade,
Now that at length by certain proof he knows,
That whether real or a magic show,
Whate'er it was, it is no longer so ;
Though heart be lonesome, Hope laid low,
Yet, Lady ! deem him not unblest :
The certainty that struck Hope dead,
Hath left Contentment in her stead :

And that is next to Best !

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The Knight's Tomb

Where is the grave of Sir Arthur O'Kellyn?
Where may the grave of that good man be?--
By the side of a spring, on the breast of Helvellyn,
Under the twigs of a young birch tree!
The oak that in summer was sweet to hear,
And rustled its leaves in the fall of the year,
And whistled and roared in the winter alone,
Is gone,--and the birch in its stead is grown.--
The Knight's bones are dust,
And his good sword rust;--
His soul is with the saints, I trust.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The Lime-tree Bower my Prison [Addressed to Charles Lamb, o

Well, they are gone, and here must I remain,
This lime-tree bower my prison! I have lost
Beauties and feelings, such as would have been
Most sweet to my remembrance even when age
Had dimm'd mine eyes to blindness! They, meanwhile,
Friends, whom I never more may meet again,
On springy heath, along the hill-top edge,
Wander in gladness, and wind down, perchance,
To that still roaring dell, of which I told;
The roaring dell, o'erwooded, narrow, deep,
And only speckled by the mid-day sun;
Where its slim trunk the ash from rock to rock
Flings arching like a bridge;--that branchless ash,
Unsun'd and damp, whose few poor yellow leaves
Ne'er tremble in the gale, yet tremble still,
Fann'd by the water-fall! and there my friends
Behold the dark green file of long lank weeds,
That all at once (a most fantastic sight!)
Still nod and drip beneath the dripping edge
Of the blue clay-stone.

Now, my friends emerge
Beneath the wide wide Heaven--and view again
The many-steepled tract magnificent
Of hilly fields and meadows, and the sea,
With some fair bark, perhaps, whose sails light up
The slip of smooth clear blue betwixt two Isles
Of purple shadow! Yes! they wander on
In gladness all; but thou, methinks, most glad,
My gentle-hearted Charles! for thou hast pined
And hunger'd after Nature, many a year,
In the great City pent, winning thy way
With sad yet patient soul, through evil and pain
And strange calamity! Ah! slowly sink
Behind the western ridge, thou glorious Sun!
Shine in the slant beams of the sinking orb,
Ye purple heath-flowers! richlier burn, ye clouds!
Live in the yellow light, ye distant groves!
And kindle, thou blue Ocean! So my friend
Struck with deep joy may stand, as I have stood,
Silent with swimming sense; yea, gazing round
On the wide landscape, gaze till all doth seem
Less gross than bodily; and of such hues
As veil the Almighty Spirit, when yet he makes
Spirits perceive his presence.

A delight
Comes sudden on my heart, and I am glad
As I myself were there! Nor in this bower,
This little lime-tree bower, have I not mark'd
Much that has sooth'd me. Pale beneath the blaze
Hung the transparent foliage; and I watch'd

Some broad and sunny leaf, and lov'd to see
The shadow of the leaf and stem above
Dappling its sunshine! And that walnut-tree
Was richly ting'd, and a deep radiance lay
Full on the ancient ivy, which usurps
Those fronting elms, and now, with blackest mass
Makes their dark branches gleam a lighter hue
Through the late twilight: and though now the bat
Wheels silent by, and not a swallow twitters,
Yet still the solitary humble-bee
Sings in the bean-flower! Henceforth I shall know
That Nature ne'er deserts the wise and pure;
No plot so narrow, be but Nature there,
No waste so vacant, but may well employ
Each faculty of sense, and keep the heart
Awake to Love and Beauty! and sometimes
'Tis well to be bereft of promis'd good,
That we may lift the soul, and contemplate
With lively joy the joys we cannot share.
My gentle-hearted Charles! when the last rook
Beat its straight path along the dusky air
Homewards, I blest it! deeming its black wing
(Now a dim speck, now vanishing in light)
Had cross'd the mighty Orb's dilated glory,
While thou stood'st gazing; or, when all was still,
Flew creaking o'er thy head, and had a charm
For thee, my gentle-hearted Charles, to whom
No sound is dissonant which tells of Life.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The Moon, how definite its orb! (fragment)

The Moon, how definite its orb!
Yet gaze again, and with a steady gaze--
'Tis there indeed,--but where is it not?--
It is suffused o'er all the sapphire Heaven,
Trees, herbage, snake-like stream, unwrinkled Lake,
Whose very murmur does of it partake
And low and close the broad smooth mountain
Is more a thing of Heaven than when
Distinct by one dim shade and yet undivided from the universal cloud
In which it towers, finite in height.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The Netherlands (fragment)

Water and windmills, greenness, Islets green;--
Willows whose Trunks beside the shadows stood
Of their own higher half, and willowy swamp:--
Farmhouses that at anchor seem'd--in the inland sky
The fog-transfixing Spires--
Water, wide water, greenness and green banks,
And water seen--

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The Nightingale

A Conversation Poem, April, 1798

No cloud, no relique of the sunken day
Distinguishes the West, no long thin slip
Of sullen light, no obscure trembling hues.
Come, we will rest on this old mossy bridge!
You see the glimmer of the stream beneath,
But hear no murmuring: it flows silently.
O'er its soft bed of verdure. All is still.
A balmy night! and though the stars be dim,
Yet let us think upon the vernal showers
That gladden the green earth, and we shall find
A pleasure in the dimness of the stars.
And hark! the Nightingale begins its song,
'Most musical, most melancholy' bird!
A melancholy bird? Oh! idle thought!
In Nature there is nothing melancholy.
But some night-wandering man whose heart was pierced
With the remembrance of a grievous wrong,
Or slow distemper, or neglected love,
(And so, poor wretch! filled all things with himself,
And made all gentle sounds tell back the tale
Of his own sorrow) he, and such as he,
First named these notes a melancholy strain.
And many a poet echoes the conceit;
Poet who hath been building up the rhyme
When he had better far have stretched his limbs
Beside a brook in mossy forest-dell,
By sun or moon-light, to the influxes
Of shapes and sounds and shifting elements
Surrendering his whole spirit, of his song
And of his fame forgetful! so his fame
Should share in Nature's immortality,
A venerable thing! and so his song
Should make all Nature lovelier, and itself
Be loved like Nature! But 'twill not be so;
And youths and maidens most poetical,
Who lose the deepening twilights of the spring
In ball-rooms and hot theatres, they still
Full of meek sympathy must heave their sighs
O'er Philomela's pity-pleading strains.

My Friend, and thou, our Sister! we have learnt
A different lore: we may not thus profane
Nature's sweet voices, always full of love
And joyance! 'Tis the merry Nightingale
That crowds and hurries, and precipitates
With fast thick warble his delicious notes,
As he were fearful that an April night
Would be too short for him to utter forth
His love-chant, and disburthen his full soul
Of all its music!

And I know a grove
Of large extent, hard by a castle huge,
Which the great lord inhabits not; and so
This grove is wild with tangling underwood,
And the trim walks are broken up, and grass,
Thin grass and king-cups grow within the paths.
But never elsewhere in one place I knew
So many nightingales; and far and near,
In wood and thicket, over the wide grove,
They answer and provoke each other's song,
With skirmish and capricious passagings,
And murmurs musical and swift jug jug,
And one low piping sound more sweet than all
Stirring the air with such a harmony,
That should you close your eyes, you might almost
Forget it was not day! On moonlight bushes,
Whose dewy leaflets are but half-disclosed,
You may perchance behold them on the twigs,
Their bright, bright eyes, their eyes both bright and full,
Glistening, while many a glow-worm in the shade
Lights up her love-torch.

A most gentle Maid,
Who dwelleth in her hospitable home
Hard by the castle, and at latest eve
(Even like a Lady vowed and dedicate
To something more than Nature in the grove)
Glides through the pathways; she knows all their notes,
That gentle Maid! and oft, a moment's space,
What time the moon was lost behind a cloud,
Hath heard a pause of silence; till the moon
Emerging, hath awakened earth and sky
With one sensation, and those wakeful birds
Have all burst forth in choral minstrelsy,
As if some sudden gale had swept at once
A hundred airy harps! And she hath watched
Many a nightingale perch giddily
On blossomy twig still swinging from the breeze,
And to that motion tune his wanton song
Like tipsy Joy that reels with tossing head.

Farewell! O Warbler! till tomorrow eve,
And you, my friends! farewell, a short farewell!
We have been loitering long and pleasantly,
And now for our dear homes. That strain again!
Full fain it would delay me! My dear babe,
Who, capable of no articulate sound,
Mars all things with his imitative lisp,
How he would place his hand beside his ear,
His little hand, the small forefinger up,
And bid us listen! And I deem it wise
To make him Nature's play-mate. He knows well
The evening-star; and once, when he awoke

In most distressful mood (some inward pain
Had made up that strange thing, an infant's dream)
I hurried with him to our orchard-plot,
And he beheld the moon, and, hushed at once,
Suspends his sobs, and laughs most silently,
While his fair eyes, that swam with undropped tears,
Did glitter in the yellow moon-beam! Well!
It is a father's tale: But if that Heaven
Should give me life, his childhood shall grow up
Familiar with these songs, that with the night
He may associate joy. Once more, farewell,
Sweet Nightingale! once more, my friends! farewell.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The Pains Of Sleep

Ere on my bed my limbs I lay,
It hath not been my use to pray
With moving lips or bended knees ;
But silently, by slow degrees,
My spirit I to Love compose,
In humble trust mine eye-lids close,
With reverential resignation,
No wish conceived, no thought exprest,
Only a sense of supplication ;
A sense o'er all my soul imprest
That I am weak, yet not unblest,
Since in me, round me, every where
Eternal Strength and Wisdom are.

But yester-night I prayed aloud
In anguish and in agony,
Up-starting from the fiendish crowd
Of shapes and thoughts that tortured me :
A lurid light, a trampling throng,
Sense of intolerable wrong,
And whom I scorned, those only strong !
Thirst of revenge, the powerless will
Still baffled, and yet burning still !
Desire with loathing strangely mixed
On wild or hateful objects fixed.
Fantastic passions ! maddening brawl !
And shame and terror over all !
Deeds to be hid which were not hid,
Which all confused I could not know
Whether I suffered, or I did :
For all seemed guilt, remorse or woe,
My own or others still the same
Life-stifling fear, soul-stifling shame.

So two nights passed : the night's dismay
Saddened and stunned the coming day.
Sleep, the wide blessing, seemed to me
Distemper's worst calamity.
The third night, when my own loud scream
Had waked me from the fiendish dream,
O'ercome with sufferings strange and wild,
I wept as I had been a child ;
And having thus by tears subdued
My anguish to a milder mood,
Such punishments, I said, were due
To natures deepliest stained with sin,--
For aye entempesting anew
The unfathomable hell within,
The horror of their deeds to view,
To know and loathe, yet wish and do !
Such griefs with such men well agree,
But wherefore, wherefore fall on me ?

To be beloved is all I need,
And whom I love, I love indeed.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The Presence Of Love

And in Life's noisiest hour,
There whispers still the ceaseless Love of Thee,
The heart's Self-solace and soliloquy.

You mould my Hopes, you fashion me within ;
And to the leading Love-throb in the Heart
Thro' all my Being, thro' my pulses beat ;
You lie in all my many Thoughts, like Light,
Like the fair light of Dawn, or summer Eve
On rippling Stream, or cloud-reflecting Lake.
And looking to the Heaven, that bends above you,
How oft ! I bless the Lot, that made me love you.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The Rime Of The Ancient Mariner

IN SEVEN PARTS

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

Translation

ARGUMENT

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

PART I

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

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

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

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

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--
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child :
The Mariner hath his will.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The ship driven by a storm toward the south pole.

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

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

And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold :

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PART 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 an 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.
'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.

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

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

The ship hath been suddenly becalmed.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'Twas sad as sad could be ;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea !

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

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

Upon a painted ocean.

And the Albatross begins to be avenged.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PART III

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

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

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

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

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

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

A flash of joy ;

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

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

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

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

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.

And its ribs are seen as bars on the face of the setting Sun.

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 ?

The Spectre-Woman and her Death-mate, and no other on board the skeleton ship.

And 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 ?

[first version of this stanza through the end of Part III]

Like vessel, like crew !

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

Death and Life-in-Death have diced for the ship's crew, and she (the latter) winneth the ancient Mariner.

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

No twilight within the courts of the Sun.

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

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 steerman's face by his lamp gleamed white ;
From the sails the dew did drip--
Till clomb above the eastern bar
The hornéd 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 whizz of my cross-bow !

PART IV

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

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

(Coleridge's note on above stanza)

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

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

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

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.

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

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

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

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

The moving Moon went up the sky,
And no where did abide :
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside--

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

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

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

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

Their beauty and their happiness.

He blesseth them in his heart.

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

The spell begins to break.

The self-same moment I could pray ;
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 blessed ghost.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

And now 'twas like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute ;
And now it is an angel's song,
That makes the heavens be mute.

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

[Additional stanzas, dropped after the first edition.]

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 obedience to the angelic troop, but still requireth vengeance.

Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The spirit slid : and it was he
That made the ship to go.

The sails at noon left off their tune,
And the ship stood still also.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PART 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.'

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

FIRST VOICE

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

SECOND VOICE

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

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

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

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

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

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

The curse is finally expiated.

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

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

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

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

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

And the ancient Mariner beholdeth his native country.

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

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

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.

[Additional stanzas, dropped after the first edition.]

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.

[Additional stanza, dropped after the first edition.]

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

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

PART VII

The Hermit of the Wood,

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

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

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

Approacheth the ship with wonder.

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

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

' Dear Lord ! it hath a fiendish look--
(The Pilot made reply)
I am 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.

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

And ever and anon through out his future life an agony constraineth him to
travel from land to land ;

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

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

What loud uproar bursts from that door !
The wedding-guests are there :
But in the garden-bower the bride

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

O Wedding-Guest ! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide wide sea :
So lonely 'twas, that God himself
Scarce seeméd 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 his own example, love and reverence to all things that God
made and loveth.

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

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

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

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

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The Suicide's Argument

Ere the birth of my life, if I wished it or no
No question was asked me--it could not be so !
If the life was the question, a thing sent to try
And to live on be YES; what can NO be ? to die.

NATURE'S ANSWER

Is't returned, as 'twas sent ? Is't no worse for the wear ?
Think first, what you ARE ! Call to mind what you WERE !
I gave you innocence, I gave you hope,
Gave health, and genius, and an ample scope,
Return you me guilt, lethargy, despair ?
Make out the invent'ry ; inspect, compare !
Then die--if die you dare !

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The Three Sorts of Friends (fragment)

Though friendships differ endless in degree ,
The sorts , methinks, may be reduced to three.
Ac quaintance many, and Con quaintance few;
But for In quaintance I know only two--
The friend I've mourned with, and the maid I woo!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Thicker than rain-drops on November thorn (fragment)

Thicker than rain-drops on November thorn.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison

Well, they are gone, and here must I remain,
This lime-tree bower my prison ! I have lost
Beauties and feelings, such as would have been
Most sweet to my remembrance even when age
Had dimm'd mine eyes to blindness ! They, meanwhile,
Friends, whom I never more may meet again,
On springy heath, along the hill-top edge,
Wander in gladness, and wind down, perchance,
To that still roaring dell, of which I told ;
The roaring dell, o'erwooded, narrow, deep,
And only speckled by the mid-day sun ;
Where its slim trunk the ash from rock to rock
Flings arching like a bridge ;--that branchless ash,
Unsun'd and damp, whose few poor yellow leaves
Ne'er tremble in the gale, yet tremble still,
Fann'd by the water-fall ! and there my friends
Behold the dark green file of long lank weeds,
That all at once (a most fantastic sight !)
Still nod and drip beneath the dripping edge
Of the blue clay-stone.

[Image][Image][Image]Now, my friends emerge
Beneath the wide wide Heaven--and view again
The many-steepled tract magnificent
Of hilly fields and meadows, and the sea,
With some fair bark, perhaps, whose sails light up
The slip of smooth clear blue betwixt two Isles
Of purple shadow ! Yes ! they wander on
In gladness all ; but thou, methinks, most glad,
My gentle-hearted Charles ! for thou hast pined
And hunger'd after Nature, many a year,
In the great City pent, winning thy way
With sad yet patient soul, through evil and pain
And strange calamity ! Ah ! slowly sink
Behind the western ridge, thou glorious Sun !
Shine in the slant beams of the sinking orb,
Ye purple heath-flowers ! richlier burn, ye clouds !
Live in the yellow light, ye distant groves !
And kindle, thou blue Ocean ! So my friend
Struck with deep joy may stand, as I have stood,
Silent with swimming sense ; yea, gazing round
On the wide landscape, gaze till all doth seem
Less gross than bodily ; and of such hues
As veil the Almighty Spirit, when yet he makes
Spirits perceive his presence.

[Image][Image][Image][Image]A delight
Comes sudden on my heart, and I am glad
As I myself were there ! Nor in this bower,
This little lime-tree bower, have I not mark'd
Much that has sooth'd me. Pale beneath the blaze
Hung the transparent foliage ; and I watch'd

Some broad and sunny leaf, and lov'd to see
The shadow of the leaf and stem above
Dappling its sunshine ! And that walnut-tree
Was richly ting'd, and a deep radiance lay
Full on the ancient ivy, which usurps
Those fronting elms, and now, with blackest mass
Makes their dark branches gleam a lighter hue
Through the late twilight : and though now the bat
Wheels silent by, and not a swallow twitters,
Yet still the solitary humble-bee
Sings in the bean-flower ! Henceforth I shall know
That Nature ne'er deserts the wise and pure ;
No plot so narrow, be but Nature there,
No waste so vacant, but may well employ
Each faculty of sense, and keep the heart
Awake to Love and Beauty ! and sometimes
'Tis well to be bereft of promis'd good,
That we may lift the soul, and contemplate
With lively joy the joys we cannot share.
My gentle-hearted Charles ! when the last rook
Beat its straight path across the dusky air
Homewards, I blest it ! deeming its black wing
(Now a dim speck, now vanishing in light)
Had cross'd the mighty Orb's dilated glory,
While thou stood'st gazing ; or, when all was still,
Flew creaking o'er thy head, and had a charm
For thee, my gentle-hearted Charles, to whom
No sound is dissonant which tells of Life.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

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Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Time, Real And Imaginary

On the wide level of a mountain's head,
(I knew not where, but 'twas some faery place)
Their pinions, ostrich-like, for sails out-spread,
Two lovely children run an endless race,
 A sister and a brother !
 This far outstripp'd the other ;
 Yet ever runs she with reverted face,
 And looks and listens for the boy behind :
 [Image] For he, alas ! is blind !
O'er rough and smooth with even step he passed,
And knows not whether he be first or last.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Time, Real and Imaginary, an allegory

ON the wide level of a mountain's head
(I knew not where, but 'twas some faery place),
Their pinions, ostrich-like, for sails outspread,
Two lovely children run an endless race,
 A sister and a brother!
 This far outstripp'd the other;
 Yet ever runs she with reverted face,
 And looks and listens for the boy behind:
 For he, alas! is blind!
O'er rough and smooth with even step he pass'd,
And knows not whether he be first or last.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

To A Primrose

The first seen in the season

Nitens et roboris expers
Turget et insolida est: et spe delectat.
- Ovid, Metam. [xv.203].

Thy smiles I note, sweet early Flower,
That peeping from thy rustic bower
The festive news to earth dost bring,
A fragrant messenger of Spring.

But, tender blossom, why so pale?
Dost hear stern Winter in the gale?
And didst thou tempt the ungentle sky
To catch one vernal glance and die?

Such the wan lustre Sickness wears
When Health's first feeble beam appears;
So languid are the smiles that seek
To settle on the care-worn cheek,

When timorous Hope the head uprears,
Still drooping and still moist with tears,
If, through dispersing grief, be seen
Of Bliss the heavenly spark serene.

And sweeter far the early blow,
Fast following after storms of Woe,
Than (Comfort's riper season come)
Are full-blown joys and Pleasure's gaudy bloom.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

To A Young Ass

Its mother being tethered near it

Poor little Foal of an oppressèd race!
I love the languid patience of thy face:
And oft with gentle hand I give thee bread,
And clap thy ragged coat, and pat thy head.
But what thy dulled spirits hath dismay'd,
That never thou dost sport along the glade?
And (most unlike the nature of things young)
That earthward still thy moveless head is hung?
Do thy prophetic fears anticipate,
Meek Child of Misery! thy future fate?
The starving meal, and all the thousand aches
'Which patient Merit of the Unworthy takes'?
Or is thy sad heart thrill'd with filial pain
To see thy wretched mother's shorten'd chain?
And truly, very piteous is her lot -
Chain'd to a log within a narrow spot,
Where the close-eaten grass is scarcely seen,
While sweet around her waves the tempting green!

Poor Ass! they master should have learnt to show
Pity - best taught by fellowship of Woe!
For much I fear me that He lives like thee,
Half famished in a land of Luxury!
How askingly its footsteps hither bend?
It seems to say, 'And have I then one friend?'
Innocent foal! thou poor despis'd forlorn!
I hail thee Brother - spite of the fool's scorn!
And fain would take thee with me, in the Dell
Of Peace and mild Equality to dwell,
Where Toil shall call the charmer Health his bride,
And Laughter tickle Plenty's ribless side!
How thou wouldst toss thy heels in gamesome play,
And frisk about, as lamb or kitten gay!
Yea! and more musically sweet to me
Thy dissonant harsh bray of joy would be,
Than warbled melodies that soothe to rest
The aching of pale Fashion's vacant breast!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

To Asra

Are there two things, of all which men possess,
That are so like each other and so near,
As mutual Love seems like to Happiness?
Dear Asra, woman beyond utterance dear!
This Love which ever welling at my heart,
Now in its living fount doth heave and fall,
Now overflowing pours thro' every part
Of all my frame, and fills and changes all,
Like vernal waters springing up through snow,
This Love that seeming great beyond the power
Of growth, yet seemeth ever more to grow,
Could I transmute the whole to one rich Dower
Of Happy Life, and give it all to Thee,
Thy lot, methinks, were Heaven, thy age, Eternity!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

To Nature

It may indeed be fantasy when I
Essay to draw from all created things
Deep, heartfelt, inward joy that closely clings;
And trace in leaves and flowers that round me lie
Lessons of love and earnest piety.
So let it be; and if the wide world rings
In mock of this belief, it brings
Nor fear, nor grief, nor vain perplexity.
So will I build my altar in the fields,
And the blue sky my fretted dome shall be,
And the sweet fragrance that the wild flower yields
Shall be the incense I will yield to Thee,
Thee only God! and thou shalt not despise
Even me, the priest of this poor sacrifice.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

To the Nightingale

Sister of love-lorn Poets, Philomel!
How many Bards in city garret pent,
While at their window they with downward eye
Mark the faint lamp-beam on the kennell'd mud,
And listen to the drowsy cry of Watchmen
(Those hoarse unfeather'd Nightingales of Time!),
How many wretched Bards address thy name,
And hers, the full-orb'd Queen that shines above.
But I do hear thee, and the high bough mark,
Within whose mild moon-mellow'd foliage hid
Thou warblest sad thy pity-pleading strains.
O! I have listen'd, till my working soul,
Waked by those strains to thousand phantasies,
Absorb'd hath ceas'd to listen! Therefore oft,
I hymn thy name: and with a proud delight
Oft will I tell thee, Minstrel of the Moon!
'Most musical, most melancholy' Bird!
That all thy soft diversities of tone,
Tho' sweeter far than the delicious airs
That vibrate from a white-arm'd Lady's harp,
What time the languishment of lonely love
Melts in her eye, and heaves her breast of snow,
Are not so sweet as is the voice of her,
My Sara - best beloved of human kind!
When breathing the pure soul of tenderness,
She thrills me with the Husband's promis'd name!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

To The Rev. George Coleridge

Notus in fratres animi paterni.
Hor. Carm. lib.II.2.

A bless'd lot hath he, who having passed
His youth and early manhood in the stir
And turmoil of the world, retreats at length,
With cares that move, not agitate the heart,
To the same dwelling where his father dwelt;
And haply views his tottering little ones
Embrace those ag'd knees and climb that lap,
On which first kneeling his own infancy
Lisp'd its brief prayer. Such, O my earliest Friend!
Thy lot, and such thy brothers too enjoy.
At distance did ye climb Life's upland road,
Yet cheered and cheering: now fraternal love
Hath drawn you to one centre. Be your days
Holy, and blest and blessing may ye live!

To me the Eternal Wisdom hath dispens'd
A different fortune and more different mind—
Me from the spot where first I sprang to light
Too soon transplanted, ere my soul had fix'd
Its first domestic loves; and hence through life
Chasing chance-started friendships. A brief while
Some have preserved me from life's pelting ills;
But, like a tree with leaves of feeble stem,
If the clouds lasted, and a sudden breeze
Ruffled the boughs, they on my head at once
Dropped the collected shower; and some most false,
False and fair-foliag'd as the Manchineel,
Have tempted me to slumber in their shade
E'en mid the storm; then breathing subtlest damps,
Mix'd their own venom with the rain from Heaven,
That I woke poison'd! But, all praise to Him
Who gives us all things, more have yielded me
Permanent shelter; and beside one Friend,
Beneath the impervious covert of one oak,
I've rais'd a lowly shed, and know the names
Of Husband and of Father; not unhearing
Of that divine and nightly-whispering Voice,
Which from my childhood to maturer years
Spake to me of predestinated wreaths,
Bright with no fading colours!

Yet at times
My soul is sad, that I have roam'd through life
Still most a stranger, most with naked heart
At mine own home and birth-place: chiefly then,
When I remember thee, my earliest Friend!
Thee, who didst watch my boyhood and my youth;
Didst trace my wanderings with a father's eye;
And boding evil yet still hoping good,
Rebuk'd each fault, and over all my woes

Nor dost not thou sometimes recall those hours,
When with the joy of hope thou gavest thine ear
To my wild firstling-lays. Since then my song
Hath sounded deeper notes, such as beseem
Or that sad wisdom folly leaves behind,
Or such as, tuned to these tumultuous times,
Cope with the tempest's swell!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

To The River Otter

Dear native brook! wild streamlet of the West!
How many various-fated years have passed,
What happy and what mournful hours, since last
I skimmed the smooth thin stone along thy breast,
Numbering its light leaps! Yet so deep impressed
Sink the sweet scenes of childhood, that mine eyes
I never shut amid the sunny ray,
But straight with all their tints thy waters rise,
Thy crossing plank, thy marge with willows grey,
And bedded sand that, veined with various dyes,
Gleamed through thy bright transparence! On my way,
Visions of childhood! oft have ye beguiled
Lone manhood's cares, yet waking fondest sighs:
Ah! that once more I were a careless child!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

To William Wordsworth

Friend of the Wise ! and Teacher of the Good !
Into my heart have I received that Lay
More than historic, that prophetic Lay
Wherein (high theme by thee first sung aright)
Of the foundations and the building up
Of a Human Spirit thou hast dared to tell
What may be told, to the understanding mind
Revealable ; and what within the mind
By vital breathings secret as the soul
Of vernal growth, oft quickens in the heart
Thoughts all too deep for words !--

Theme hard as high !
Of smiles spontaneous, and mysterious fears
(The first-born they of Reason and twin-birth),
Of tides obedient to external force,
And currents self-determined, as might seem,
Or by some inner Power ; of moments awful,
Now in thy inner life, and now abroad,
When power streamed from thee, and thy soul received
The light reflected, as a light bestowed--
Of fancies fair, and milder hours of youth,
Hyblean murmurs of poetic thought
Industrious in its joy, in vales and glens
Native or outland, lakes and famous hills !
Or on the lonely high-road, when the stars
Were rising ; or by secret mountain-streams,
The guides and the companions of thy way !

Of more than Fancy, of the Social Sense
Distending wide, and man beloved as man,
Where France in all her towns lay vibrating
Like some becalméd bark beneath the burst
Of Heaven's immediate thunder, when no cloud
Is visible, or shadow on the main.
For thou wert there, thine own brows garlanded,
Amid the tremor of a realm aglow,
Amid the mighty nation jubilant,
When from the general heart of human kind
Hope sprang forth like a full-born Diety !
--Of that dear Hope afflicted and struck down,
So summoned homeward, thenceforth calm and sure
From the dread watch-tower of man's absolute self,
With light unwaning on her eyes, to look
Far on--herself a glory to behold,
The Angel of the vision ! Then (last strain)
Of Duty, chosen Laws controlling choice,
Action and Joy !--An Orphic song indeed,
A song divine of high and passionate thoughts
To their own music chaunted !

O great Bard !

Ere yet that last strain dying awed the air,
With stedfast eye I viewed thee in the choir
Of ever-enduring men. The truly great
Have all one age, and from one visible space
Shed influence ! They, both in power and act,
Are permanent, and Time is not with them,
Save as it worketh for them, they in it.
Nor less a sacred Roll, than those of old,
And to be placed, as they, with gradual fame
Among the archives of mankind, thy work
Makes audible a linked lay of Truth,
Of Truth profound a sweet continuous lay,
Not learnt, but native, her own natural notes !
Ah ! as I listened with a heart forlorn,
The pulses of my being beat anew :
And even as Life returns upon the drowned,
Life's joy rekindling roused a throng of pains--
Keen pangs of Love, awakening as a babe
Turbulent, with an outcry in the heart ;
And Fears self-willed, that shunned the eye of Hope ;
And Hope that scarce would know itself from Fear ;
Sense of past Youth, and Manhood come in vain,
And Genius given, and Knowledge won in vain ;
And all which I had culled in wood-walks wild,
And all which patient toil had reared, and all,
Commune with thee had opened out--but flowers
Strewed on my corse, and borne upon my bier,
In the same coffin, for the self-same grave !

That way no more ! and ill beseems it me,
Who came a welcomer in herald's guise,
Singing of Glory, and Futurity,
To wander back on such unhealthful road,
Plucking the poisons of self-harm ! And ill
Such intertwine beseems triumphal wreaths
Strew'd before thy advancing !

Nor do thou,
Sage Bard ! impair the memory of that hour
Of thy communion with my nobler mind
By pity or grief, already felt too long !
Nor let my words import more blame than needs.
The tumult rose and ceased : for Peace is nigh
Where Wisdom's voice has found a listening heart.
Amid the howl of more than wintry storms,
The Halcyon hears the voice of vernal hours
Already on the wing.

Eve following eve,
Dear tranquil time, when the sweet sense of Home
Is sweetest ! moments for their own sake hailed
And more desired, more precious, for thy song,

In silence listening, like a devout child,
My soul lay passive, by thy various strain
Driven as in surges now beneath the stars,
With momentary stars of my own birth,
Fair constellated foam, still darting off
Into the darkness ; now a tranquil sea,
Outspread and bright, yet swelling to the moon.

And when--O Friend ! my comforter and guide !
Strong in thyself, and powerful to give strength !--
Thy long sustained Song finally closed,
And thy deep voice had ceased--yet thou thyself
Wert still before my eyes, and round us both
That happy vision of beloved faces--
Scarce conscious, and yet conscious of its close
I sate, my being blended in one thought
(Thought was it ? or aspiration ? or resolve ?)
Absorbed, yet hanging still upon the sound--
And when I rose, I found myself in prayer.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

What Is Life?

Resembles Life what once was held of Light,
Too ample in itself for human sight ?
An absolute Self--an element ungrounded--
All, that we see, all colours of all shade
[Image]By encroach of darkness made ?--
Is very life by consciousness unbounded ?
And all the thoughts, pains, joys of mortal breath,
A war-embrace of wrestling Life and Death ?

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

When Hope but made Tranquillity be felt (fragment)

When Hope but made Tranquillity be felt--
A Flight of Hopes for ever on the wing
But made Tranquillity a conscious Thing--
And wheeling round and round in sportive coil
Fann'd the calm air upon the brow of Toil--

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Whom should I choose for my Judge? (fragment)

Whom should I choose for my Judge? the earnest, impersonal reader,
Who, in the work, forgets me and the world and himself!

Ye who have eyes to detect, and Gall to Chastise the imperfect,
Have you the heart, too, that loves, feels and rewards the Compleat?

What is the meed of thy Song? 'Tis the ceaseless, the thousandfold Echo
Which from the welcoming Hearts of the Pure repeats and prolongs it,
Each with a different Tone, compleat or in musical fragments.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Work Without Hope

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

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

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Youth And Age

Verse, a Breeze 'mid blossoms straying,
Where HOPE clung feeding, like a bee--
Both were mine ! Life went a-maying
 With NATURE, HOPE, and POESY,
 [Image][Image]When I was young !

When I was young ?--Ah, woful WHEN !
Ah ! for the Change 'twixt Now and Then !
This breathing House not built with hands,
This body that does me grievous wrong,
O'er æry Cliffs and glittering Sands,
How lightly then it flashed along :--
Like those trim skiffs, unknown of yore,
On winding lakes and rivers wide,
That ask no aid of Sail or Oar,
That fear no spite of Wind or Tide !
Nought cared this Body for wind or weather
When YOUTH and I lived in't together.

FLOWERS are lovely ; LOVE is flower-like ;
FRIENDSHIP is a sheltering tree ;
O ! the Joys, that came down shower-like,
Of FRIENDSHIP, LOVE, and LIBERTY,
 [Image] [Image] [Image] [Image] Ere I was old !

Ere I was old ? Ah woful ERE,
Which tells me, YOUTH'S no longer here !
O YOUTH ! for years so many and sweet,
'Tis known, that Thou and I were one,
I'll think it but a fond conceit--
It cannot be that Thou art gone !
Thy Vesper-bell hath not yet toll'd :--
And thou wert aye a Masker bold !
What strange Disguise hast now put on,
To make believe, that thou art gone ?
I see these Locks in silvery slips,
This drooping Gait, this altered Size :
But SPRINGTIDE blossoms on thy Lips,
And Tears take sunshine from thine eyes !
Life is but Thought : so think I will
That YOUTH and I are House-mates still.

Dew-drops are the gems of morning,
But the tears of mournful eve !
Where no hope is, life's a warning
That only serves to make us grieve,
 [Image][Image]When we are old :

That only serves to make us grieve
With oft and tedious taking-leave,
Like some poor nigh-related guest,
That may not rudely be dismiss ;

Yet hath outstay'd his welcome while,
And tells the jest without the smile.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Zapolya

Song

(Act II, Scene I, lines 65-80)

A sunny shaft did I behold,
From sky to earth it slanted :
And poised therein a bird so bold--
Sweet bird, thou wert enchanted !

He sank, he rose, he twinkled, he trolled
Within that shaft of sunny mist ;
His eyes of fire, his beak of gold,
All else of amethyst !

And thus he sang : `Adieu ! adieu !
Love's dreams prove seldom true.
The blossoms they make no delay :
The sparkling dew-drops will not stay.
Sweet month of May,
[Image] We must away ;
[Image][Image] Far, far away !
[Image][Image][Image] To-day ! to-day !'

Hunting Song

(Act IV, Scene II, lines 56-71)

Up, up ! ye dames, ye lasses gay !
To the meadows trip away.
'Tis you must tend the flocks this morn,
And scare the small birds from the corn.
Not a soul at home may stay :
[Image] For the shepherds must go
[Image] With lance and bow
To hunt the wolf in the woods to-day.

Leave the hearth and leave the house
To the cricket and the mouse :
Find grannam out a sunny seat,
With babe and lambkin at her feet.
Not a soul at home must stay :
[Image] For the shepherds must go
[Image] With lance and bow
To hunt the wolf in the woods to-day.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge