

Classic Poetry Series

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.

(fragment 2) I Know 'Tis But A Dream, Yet Feel More Anguish

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

A Broken Friendship

Alas! they had been friends in youth;
But whispering tongues can poison truth;
And constancy lives in realms above;
And life is thorny; and youth is vain;
And to be wroth with one we love,
Doth work like madness in the brain.
And thus is chanced, as I divine,
With Roland and Sir Leoline.
Each spake words of high disdain
And insult to his heart's best brother:
They parted - ne'er to meet again!
But never either found another
To free the hollow heart from painting -
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;
A dreary see now flows between; -
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

A Child's Evening Prayer

Ere on my bed my limbs I lay,
God grant me grace my prayers to say:
O God! preserve my mother dear
In strength and health for many a year;
And, O! preserve my father too,
And may I pay him reverence due;
And may I my best thoughts employ
To be my parents' hope and joy;
And, O! preserve my brothers both
From evil doings and from sloth,
And may we always love each other,
Our friends, our father, and our mother,
And still, O Lord, to me impart
An innocent and grateful heart,
That after my last steep I may
Awake to thy eternal day! Amen.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

A Christmas Carol

I.

The shepherds went their hasty way,
And found the lowly stable-shed
Where the Virgin-Mother lay:
And now they checked their eager tread,
For to the Babe, that at her bosom clung,
A Mother's song the Virgin-Mother sung.

II.

They told her how a glorious light,
Streaming from a heavenly throng.
Around them shone, suspending night!
While sweeter than a mother's song,
Blest Angels heralded the Savior's birth,
Glory to God on high! and Peace on Earth.

III.

She listened to the tale divine,
And closer still the Babe she pressed:
And while she cried, the Babe is mine!
The milk rushed faster to her breast:
Joy rose within her, like a summer's morn;
Peace, Peace on Earth! the Prince of Peace is born.

IV.

Thou Mother of the Prince of Peace,
Poor, simple, and of low estate!
That strife should vanish, battle cease,
O why should this thy soul elate?
Sweet Music's loudest note, the Poet's story,
Didst thou ne'er love to hear of fame and glory?

V.

And is not War a youthful king,
A stately Hero clad in mail?
Beneath his footsteps laurels spring;
Him Earth's majestic monarchs hail
Their friends, their playmate! and his bold bright eye
Compels the maiden's love-confessing sigh.

VI.

Tell this in some more courtly scene,
To maids and youths in robes of state!
I am a woman poor and mean,
And wherefore is my soul elate.
War is a ruffian, all with guilt defiled,
That from the aged father's tears his child!

VII.

A murderous fiend, by fiends adored,
He kills the sire and starves the son;
The husband kills, and from her board
Steals all his widow's toil had won;
Plunders God's world of beauty; rends away
All safety from the night, all comfort from the day.

VIII.

Then wisely is my soul elate,
That strife should vanish, battle cease:
I'm poor and of low estate,
The Mother of the Prince of Peace.
Joy rises in me, like a summer's morn:
Peace, Peace on Earth! The Prince of Peace is born!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

A Couplet, Written In A Volume Of Poems Presented By Mr. Coleridge To Dr. A.

To meet, to know, to love--and then to part,
Is the sad tale of many a human heart.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

A Day Dream

My eyes make pictures when they're shut:--
I see a fountain large and fair,
A Willow and a ruined Hut,
And thee, and me, and Mary there.
O Mary! make thy gentle lap our pillow!
Bend o'er us, like a bower, my beautiful green Willow!

A wild-rose roofs the ruined shed,
And that and summer well agree
And lo! where Mary leans her head,
Two dear names carved upon the tree!
And Mary's tears, they are not tears of sorrow:
Our sister and our friend will both be here to-morrow.

'Twas Day! But now few, large, and bright
The stars are round the crescent moon!
And now it is a dark warm Night,
The balmiest of the month of June!
A glow-worm fallen, and on the marge remounting
Shines, and its shadow shines, fit stars for our sweet fountain.

O ever -- ever be thou blest!
For dearly, Asra! love I thee!
This brooding warmth across my breast,
This depth of tranquil bliss -- ah me!
Fount, Tree, and Shed are gone, I know not whither,
But in one quiet room we three are still together.

The shadows dance upon the wall,
By the still dancing fire-flames made;
And now they slumber, moveless all!
And now they melt to one deep shade!
But not from me shall this mild darkness steal thee:
I dream thee with mine eyes, and at my heart I feel thee!

Thine eyelash on my cheek doth play--
'Tis Mary's hand upon my brow!
But let me check this tender lay,
Which none may hear but she and thou!

Like the still hive at quiet midnight humming,
Murmur it to yourselves, ye two beloved women!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

A Mathematical Problem

This is now--this was erst,
Proposition the first--and Problem the first.

I.

On a given finite Line
Which must no way incline;
To describe an equi--
--lateral Tri--
--A, N, G, L, E.
Now let A. B.
Be the given line
Which must no way incline;
The great Mathematician
Makes this Requisition,
That we describe an Equi--
--lateral Tri--
--angle on it:
Aid us, Reason--aid us, Wit!

II.

From the centre A. at the distance A. B.
Describe the circle B. C. D.
At the distance B. A. from B. the centre
The round A. C. E. to describe boldly venture.
(Third Postulate see.)
And from the point C.
In which the circles make a pother
Cutting and slashing one another,
Bid the straight lines a journeying go,
C. A., C. B. those lines will show.
To the points, which by A. B. are reckon'd,
And postulate the second
For Authority ye know.
A. B. C.
Triumphant shall be
An Equilateral Triangle,
Not Peter Pindar carp, not Zoilus can wrangle.

III.

Because the point A. is the centre
Of the circular B. C. D.
And because the point B. is the centre
Of the circular A. C. E.
A. C. to A. B. and B. C. to B. A.
Harmoniously equal for ever must stay;
Then C. A. and B. C.
Both extend the kind hand
To the basis, A. B.
Unambitiously join'd in Equality's Band.
But to the same powers, when two powers are equal,
My mind forbodes the sequel;
My mind does some celestial impulse teach,
And equalises each to each.
Thus C. A. with B. C. strikes the same sure alliance,
That C. A. and B. C. had with A. B. before;
And in mutual affiance,
None attempting to soar
Above another,
The unanimous three
C. A. and B. C. and A. B.
All are equal, each to his brother,
Preserving the balance of power so true:
Ah! the like would the proud Autocratorix do!
At taxes impending not Britain would tremble,
Nor Prussia struggle her fear to dissemble;
Nor the Mah'met-sprung Wight,
The great Mussulman
Would stain his Divan
With Urine the soft-flowing daughter of Fright.

IV.

But rein your stallion in, too daring Nine!
Should Empires bloat the scientific line?
Or with dishevell'd hair all madly do ye run
For transport that your task is done?
For done it is--the cause is tried!
And Proposition, gentle Maid,
Who soothly ask'd stern Demonstration's aid,
Has prov'd her right, and A. B. C.
Of Angles three
Is shown to be of equal side;

And now our weary steed to rest in fine,
'Tis rais'd upon A. B. the straight, the given line.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

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 Bothereation, & 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

Absence: A Farewell Ode On Quitting School For Jesus College

Where graced with many a classic spoil
Cam rolls his reverend stream along,
I haste to urge the learned toil
That sternly chides my love-lorn song:
Ah me! too mindful of the days
Illumed by Passion's orient rays,
When peace, and Cheerfulness, and Health
Enriched me with the best of wealth.

Ah fair Delights! that o'er my soul
On Memory's wing, like shadows fly!
Ah Flowers! which Joy from Eden stole
While Innocence stood smiling by!
But cease, fond Heart! this bootless moan:
Those Hours on rapid Pinions flown
Shall yet return, by Absence crowned,
And scatter livelier roses round.

The Sun who ne'er remits his fires
On heedless eyes may pour the day:
The Moon, that oft from Heaven retires,
Endears her renovated ray.
What though she leave the sky unblest
To mourn awhile in murky vest?
When she relumes her lovely Light,
We bless the Wanderer of the Night.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Addressed To A Young Man Of Fortune Who Abandoned Himself To An Indolent And Causeless Melancholy

Hence that fantastic wantonness of woe,
O Youth to partial Fortune vainly dear!
To plunder'd Want's half-shelter'd hovel go,
Go, and some hunger-bitten infant hear
Moan haply in a dying mother's ear:
Or when the cold and dismal fog-damps brood
O'er the rank church-yard with sear elm-leaves strew'd,
Pace round some widow's grave, whose dearer part
Was slaughter'd, where o'er his uncoffin'd limbs
The flocking flesh-birds scream'd! Then, while thy heart
Groans, and thine eye a fiercer sorrow dims,
Know (and the truth shall kindle thy young mind)
What Nature makes thee mourn, she bids thee heal!
O abject! if, to sickly dreams resign'd,
All effortless thou leave Life's common-weal
A prey to Tyrants, Murderers of Mankind.

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 tranquility ;
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

Answer To A Child's Question

Do you ask what the birds say? The sparrow, the dove,
The linnnet, and thrush say, 'I love and I love!'
In the winter they're silent, the wind is so strong;
What it says I don't know, but it sings a loud song.
But green leaves and blossoms, and sunny warm weather,
And singing, and loving, all come back together.
Then the lark is so brimful of gladness and love,
The green fields below him, the blue sky above,
That he sings, and he sings, and forever sings he--
'I love my Love, and my Love loves me!'

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

'Tis the middle of night by the castle clock
And the owls have awakened the crowing cock;
Tu-whit!- Tu-whoo!
And hark, again! the crowing cock,
How drowsily it crew.
Sir Leoline, the Baron rich,
Hath a toothless mastiff, which
From her kennel beneath the rock
Maketh answer to the clock,
Four for the quarters, and twelve for the hour;
Ever and aye, by shine and shower,
Sixteen short howls, not over loud;
Some say, she sees my lady's shroud.

Is the night chilly and dark?
The night is chilly, but not dark.
The thin gray cloud is spread on high,
It covers but not hides the sky.
The moon is behind, and at the full;
And yet she looks both small and dull.
The night is chill, the cloud is gray:
'T is a month before the month of May,
And the Spring comes slowly up this way.
The lovely lady, Christabel,
Whom her father loves so well,
What makes her in the wood so late,
A furlong from the castle gate?
She had dreams all yesternight
Of her own betrothed knight;
And she in the midnight wood will pray
For the weal of her lover that's far away.

She stole along, she nothing spoke,
The sighs she heaved were soft and low,
And naught was green upon the oak,
But moss and rarest mistletoe:
She kneels beneath the huge oak tree,

And in silence prayeth she.

The lady sprang up suddenly,
The lovely lady, Christabel!
It moaned as near, as near can be,
But what it is she cannot tell.-
On the other side it seems to be,
Of the huge, broad-breasted, old oak tree.
The night is chill; the forest bare;
Is it the wind that moaneth bleak?
There is not wind enough in the air
To move away the ringlet curl
From the lovely lady's cheek-
There is not wind enough to twirl
The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
That dances as often as dance it can,
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky.

Hush, beating heart of Christabel!
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!
She folded her arms beneath her cloak,
And stole to the other side of the oak.
What sees she there?

There she sees a damsel bright,
Dressed in a silken robe of white,
That shadowy in the moonlight shone:
The neck that made that white robe wan,
Her stately neck, and arms were bare;
Her blue-veined feet unsandaled were;
And wildly glittered here and there
The gems entangled in her hair.
I guess, 't was frightful there to see
A lady so richly clad as she-
Beautiful exceedingly!

'Mary mother, save me now!'
Said Christabel, 'and who art thou?'

The lady strange made answer meet,
And her voice was faint and sweet:-

'Have pity on my sore distress,
I scarce can speak for weariness:
Stretch forth thy hand, and have no fear!'
Said Christabel, 'How camest thou here?'
And the lady, whose voice was faint and sweet,
Did thus pursue her answer meet:-
'My sire is of a noble line,
And my name is Geraldine:
Five warriors seized me yestermorn,
Me, even me, a maid forlorn:
They choked my cries with force and fright,
And tied me on a palfrey white.
The palfrey was as fleet as wind,
And they rode furiously behind.
They spurred amain, their steeds were white:
And once we crossed the shade of night.
As sure as Heaven shall rescue me,
I have no thought what men they be;
Nor do I know how long it is
(For I have lain entranced, I wis)
Since one, the tallest of the five,
Took me from the palfrey's back,
A weary woman, scarce alive.
Some muttered words his comrades spoke:
He placed me underneath this oak;
He swore they would return with haste;
Whither they went I cannot tell-
I thought I heard, some minutes past,
Sounds as of a castle bell.
Stretch forth thy hand,' thus ended she,
'And help a wretched maid to flee.'

Then Christabel stretched forth her hand,
And comforted fair Geraldine:
'O well, bright dame, may you command
The service of Sir Leoline;
And gladly our stout chivalry
Will he send forth, and friends withal,
To guide and guard you safe and free
Home to your noble father's hall.'

She rose: and forth with steps they passed

That strove to be, and were not, fast.
Her gracious stars the lady blest,
And thus spake on sweet Christabel:
'All our household are at rest,
The hall is silent as the cell;
Sir Leoline is weak in health,
And may not well awakened be,
But we will move as if in stealth;
And I beseech your courtesy,
This night, to share your couch with me.'

They crossed the moat, and Christabel
Took the key that fitted well;
A little door she opened straight,
All in the middle of the gate;
The gate that was ironed within and without,
Where an army in battle array had marched out.
The lady sank, belike through pain,
And Christabel with might and main
Lifted her up, a weary weight,
Over the threshold of the gate:
Then the lady rose again,
And moved, as she were not in pain.

So, free from danger, free from fear,
They crossed the court: right glad they were.
And Christabel devoutly cried
To the Lady by her side;
'Praise we the Virgin all divine,
Who hath rescued thee from thy distress!'
'Alas, alas!' said Geraldine,
'I cannot speak for weariness.'
So, free from danger, free from fear,
They crossed the court: right glad they were.

Outside her kennel the mastiff old
Lay fast asleep, in moonshine cold.
The mastiff old did not awake,
Yet she an angry moan did make.
And what can ail the mastiff bitch?
Never till now she uttered yell
Beneath the eye of Christabel.

Perhaps it is the owlet's scritch:
For what can aid the mastiff bitch?

They passed the hall, that echoes still,
Pass as lightly as you will.
The brands were flat, the brands were dying,
Amid their own white ashes lying;
But when the lady passed, there came
A tongue of light, a fit of flame;
And Christabel saw the lady's eye,
And nothing else saw she thereby,
Save the boss of the shield of Sir Leoline tall,
Which hung in a murky old niche in the wall.
'O softly tread,' said Christabel,
'My father seldom sleepeth well.'
Sweet Christabel her feet doth bare,
And, jealous of the listening air,
They steal their way from stair to stair,
Now in glimmer, and now in gloom,
And now they pass the Baron's room,
As still as death, with stifled breath!
And now have reached her chamber door;
And now doth Geraldine press down
The rushes of the chamber floor.

The moon shines dim in the open air,
And not a moonbeam enters here.
But they without its light can see
The chamber carved so curiously,
Carved with figures strange and sweet,
All made out of the carver's brain,
For a lady's chamber meet:
The lamp with twofold silver chain
Is fastened to an angel's feet.
The silver lamp burns dead and dim;
But Christabel the lamp will trim.
She trimmed the lamp, and made it bright,
And left it swinging to and fro,
While Geraldine, in wretched plight,
Sank down upon the floor below.
'O weary lady, Geraldine,
I pray you, drink this cordial wine!

It is a wine of virtuous powers;
My mother made it of wild flowers.'

'And will your mother pity me,
Who am a maiden most forlorn?'
Christabel answered- 'Woe is me!
She died the hour that I was born.
I have heard the gray-haired friar tell,
How on her death-bed she did say,
That she should hear the castle-bell
Strike twelve upon my wedding-day.
O mother dear! that thou wert here!'
'I would,' said Geraldine, 'she were!'

But soon, with altered voice, said she-
'Off, wandering mother! Peak and pine!
I have power to bid thee flee.'
Alas! what ails poor Geraldine?
Why stares she with unsettled eye?
Can she the bodiless dead espy?
And why with hollow voice cries she,
'Off, woman, off! this hour is mine-
Though thou her guardian spirit be,
Off, woman. off! 't is given to me.'

Then Christabel knelt by the lady's side,
And raised to heaven her eyes so blue-
'Alas!' said she, 'this ghastly ride-
Dear lady! it hath wildered you!
The lady wiped her moist cold brow,
And faintly said, "T is over now!"
Again the wild-flower wine she drank:
Her fair large eyes 'gan glitter bright,
And from the floor, whereon she sank,
The lofty lady stood upright:
She was most beautiful to see,
Like a lady of a far countree.

And thus the lofty lady spake-
'All they, who live in the upper sky,
Do love you, holy Christabel!
And you love them, and for their sake,

And for the good which me befell,
Even I in my degree will try,
Fair maiden, to requite you well.
But now unrobe yourself; for I
Must pray, ere yet in bed I lie.'

Quoth Christabel, 'So let it be!'
And as the lady bade, did she.
Her gentle limbs did she undress
And lay down in her loveliness.

But through her brain, of weal and woe,
So many thoughts moved to and fro,
That vain it were her lids to close;
So half-way from the bed she rose,
And on her elbow did recline.
To look at the lady Geraldine.
Beneath the lamp the lady bowed,
And slowly rolled her eyes around;
Then drawing in her breath aloud,
Like one that shuddered, she unbound
The cincture from beneath her breast:
Her silken robe, and inner vest,
Dropped to her feet, and full in view,
Behold! her bosom and half her side-
A sight to dream of, not to tell!
O shield her! shield sweet Christabel!

Yet Geraldine nor speaks nor stirs:
Ah! what a stricken look was hers!
Deep from within she seems half-way
To lift some weight with sick assay,
And eyes the maid and seeks delay;
Then suddenly, as one defied,
Collects herself in scorn and pride,
And lay down by the maiden's side!-
And in her arms the maid she took,
Ah, well-a-day!
And with low voice and doleful look
These words did say:

'In the touch of this bosom there worketh a spell,

Which is lord of thy utterance, Christabel!
Thou knowest to-night, and wilt know to-morrow,
This mark of my shame, this seal of my sorrow;
But vainly thou warrest,
For this is alone in
Thy power to declare,
That in the dim forest
Thou heard'st a low moaning,
And found'st a bright lady, surpassingly fair:
And didst bring her home with thee, in love and in charity,
To shield her and shelter her from the damp air.'

It was a lovely sight to see
The lady Christabel, when she
Was praying at the old oak tree.
Amid the jagged shadows
Of mossy leafless boughs,
Kneeling in the moonlight,
To make her gentle vows;
Her slender palms together prest,
Heaving sometimes on her breast;
Her face resigned to bliss or bale-
Her face, oh, call it fair not pale,
And both blue eyes more bright than clear.
Each about to have a tear.
With open eyes (ah, woe is me!)
Asleep, and dreaming fearfully,
Fearfully dreaming, yet, I wis,
Dreaming that alone, which is-
O sorrow and shame! Can this be she,
The lady, who knelt at the old oak tree?
And lo! the worker of these harms,
That holds the maiden in her arms,
Seems to slumber still and mild,
As a mother with her child.

A star hath set, a star hath risen,
O Geraldine! since arms of thine
Have been the lovely lady's prison.
O Geraldine! one hour was thine-
Thou'st had thy will! By tarn and rill,
The night-birds all that hour were still.

But now they are jubilant anew,
From cliff and tower, tu-whooh! tu-whooh!
Tu-whooh! tu-whooh! from wood and fell!

And see! the lady Christabel
Gathers herself from out her trance;
Her limbs relax, her countenance
Grows sad and soft; the smooth thin lids
Close o'er her eyes; and tears she sheds-
Large tears that leave the lashes bright!
And oft the while she seems to smile
As infants at a sudden light!
Yea, she doth smile, and she doth weep,
Like a youthful hermitess,
Beauteous in a wilderness,
Who, praying always, prays in sleep.
And, if she move unquietly,
Perchance, 't is but the blood so free
Comes back and tingles in her feet.
No doubt, she hath a vision sweet.
What if her guardian spirit 't were,
What if she knew her mother near?
But this she knows, in joys and woes,
That saints will aid if men will call:
For the blue sky bends over all.

PART II

Each matin bell, the Baron saith,
Knells us back to a world of death.
These words Sir Leoline first said,
When he rose and found his lady dead:
These words Sir Leoline will say
Many a morn to his dying day!

And hence the custom and law began
That still at dawn the sacristan,
Who duly pulls the heavy bell,
Five and forty beads must tell
Between each stroke- a warning knell,
Which not a soul can choose but hear
From Bratha Head to Wyndermere.

Saith Bracy the bard, 'So let it knell!
And let the drowsy sacristan
Still count as slowly as he can!
There is no lack of such, I ween,
As well fill up the space between.
In Langdale Pike and Witch's Lair,
And Dungeon-ghyll so foully rent,
With ropes of rock and bells of air
Three sinful sextons' ghosts are pent,
Who all give back, one after t' other,
The death-note to their living brother;
And oft too, by the knell offended,
Just as their one! two! three! is ended,
The devil mocks the doleful tale
With a merry peal from Borrowdale.

The air is still! through mist and cloud
That merry peal comes ringing loud;
And Geraldine shakes off her dread,
And rises lightly from the bed;
Puts on her silken vestments white,
And tricks her hair in lovely plight,
And nothing doubting of her spell
Awakens the lady Christabel.
'Sleep you, sweet lady Christabel?
I trust that you have rested well.'

And Christabel awoke and spied
The same who lay down by her side-
O rather say, the same whom she
Raised up beneath the old oak tree!
Nay, fairer yet! and yet more fair!
For she belike hath drunken deep
Of all the blessedness of sleep!
And while she spake, her looks, her air,
Such gentle thankfulness declare,
That (so it seemed) her girded vests
Grew tight beneath her heaving breasts.
'Sure I have sinned!' said Christabel,
'Now heaven be praised if all be well!'
And in low faltering tones, yet sweet,
Did she the lofty lady greet

With such perplexity of mind
As dreams too lively leave behind.

So quickly she rose, and quickly arrayed
Her maiden limbs, and having prayed
That He, who on the cross did groan,
Might wash away her sins unknown,
She forthwith led fair Geraldine
To meet her sire, Sir Leoline.
The lovely maid and the lady tall
Are pacing both into the hall,
And pacing on through page and groom,
Enter the Baron's presence-room.

The Baron rose, and while he prest
His gentle daughter to his breast,
With cheerful wonder in his eyes
The lady Geraldine espies,
And gave such welcome to the same,
As might beseem so bright a dame!

But when he heard the lady's tale,
And when she told her father's name,
Why waxed Sir Leoline so pale,
Murmuring o'er the name again,
Lord Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine?
Alas! they had been friends in youth;
But whispering tongues can poison truth;
And constancy lives in realms above;
And life is thorny; and youth is vain;
And to be wroth with one we love
Doth work like madness in the brain.
And thus it chanced, as I divine,
With Roland and Sir Leoline.
Each spake words of high disdain
And insult to his heart's best brother:
They parted- ne'er to meet again!
But never either found another
To free the hollow heart from paining-
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;
A dreary sea now flows between.

But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been.
Sir Leoline, a moment's space,
Stood gazing on the damsel's face:
And the youthful Lord of Tryermaine
Came back upon his heart again.

O then the Baron forgot his age,
His noble heart swelled high with rage;
He swore by the wounds in Jesu's side
He would proclaim it far and wide,
With trump and solemn heraldry,
That they, who thus had wronged the dame
Were base as spotted infamy!
'And if they dare deny the same,
My herald shall appoint a week,
And let the recreant traitors seek
My tourney court- that there and then
I may dislodge their reptile souls
From the bodies and forms of men!'
He spake: his eye in lightning rolls!
For the lady was ruthlessly seized; and he kenned
In the beautiful lady the child of his friend!

And now the tears were on his face,
And fondly in his arms he took
Fair Geraldine who met the embrace,
Prolonging it with joyous look.
Which when she viewed, a vision fell
Upon the soul of Christabel,
The vision of fear, the touch and pain!
She shrunk and shuddered, and saw again-
(Ah, woe is me! Was it for thee,
Thou gentle maid! such sights to see?)
Again she saw that bosom old,
Again she felt that bosom cold,
And drew in her breath with a hissing sound:
Whereat the Knight turned wildly round,
And nothing saw, but his own sweet maid
With eyes upraised, as one that prayed.

The touch, the sight, had passed away,
And in its stead that vision blest,
Which comforted her after-rest,
While in the lady's arms she lay,
Had put a rapture in her breast,
And on her lips and o'er her eyes
Spread smiles like light!
With new surprise,
'What ails then my beloved child?'
The Baron said- His daughter mild
Made answer, 'All will yet be well!'
I ween, she had no power to tell
Aught else: so mighty was the spell.

Yet he who saw this Geraldine,
Had deemed her sure a thing divine.
Such sorrow with such grace she blended,
As if she feared she had offended
Sweet Christabel, that gentle maid!
And with such lowly tones she prayed
She might be sent without delay
Home to her father's mansion.
'Nay!
Nay, by my soul!' said Leoline.
'Ho! Bracy the bard, the charge be thine!
Go thou, with music sweet and loud,
And take two steeds with trappings proud,
And take the youth whom thou lov'st best
To bear thy harp, and learn thy song,
And clothe you both in solemn vest,
And over the mountains haste along,
Lest wandering folk, that are abroad,
Detain you on the valley road.

'And when he has crossed the Irthing flood,
My merry bard! he hastes, he hastes
Up Knorren Moor, through Halegarth Wood,
And reaches soon that castle good
Which stands and threatens Scotland's wastes.

'Bard Bracy! bard Bracy! your horses are fleet,
Ye must ride up the hall, your music so sweet,

More loud than your horses' echoing feet!
And loud and loud to Lord Roland call,
Thy daughter is safe in Langdale hall!
Thy beautiful daughter is safe and free-
Sir Leoline greets thee thus through me.
He bids thee come without delay
With all thy numerous array;
And take thy lovely daughter home:
And he will meet thee on the way
With all his numerous array
White with their panting palfreys' foam:
And, by mine honor! I will say,
That I repent me of the day
When I spake words of fierce disdain
To Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine!-
- For since that evil hour hath flown,
Many a summer's sun hath shone;
Yet ne'er found I a friend again
Like Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine.'

The lady fell, and clasped his knees,
Her face upraised, her eyes o'erflowing;
And Bracy replied, with faltering voice,
His gracious hail on all bestowing;
'Thy words, thou sire of Christabel,
Are sweeter than my harp can tell;
Yet might I gain a boon of thee,
This day my journey should not be,
So strange a dream hath come to me;
That I had vowed with music loud
To clear yon wood from thing unblest,
Warned by a vision in my rest!
For in my sleep I saw that dove,
That gentle bird, whom thou dost love,
And call'st by thy own daughter's name-
Sir Leoline! I saw the same,
Fluttering, and uttering fearful moan,
Among the green herbs in the forest alone.
Which when I saw and when I heard,
I wondered what might ail the bird;
For nothing near it could I see,
Save the grass and herbs underneath the old tree.

And in my dream methought I went
To search out what might there be found;
And what the sweet bird's trouble meant,
That thus lay fluttering on the ground.
I went and peered, and could descry
No cause for her distressful cry;
But yet for her dear lady's sake
I stooped, methought, the dove to take,
When lo! I saw a bright green snake
Coiled around its wings and neck.
Green as the herbs on which it couched,
Close by the dove's its head it crouched;
And with the dove it heaves and stirs,
Swelling its neck as she swelled hers!
I woke; it was the midnight hour,
The clock was echoing in the tower;
But though my slumber was gone by,
This dream it would not pass away-
It seems to live upon my eye!
And thence I vowed this self-same day
With music strong and saintly song
To wander through the forest bare,
Lest aught unholy loiter there.'

Thus Bracy said: the Baron, the while,
Half-listening heard him with a smile;
Then turned to Lady Geraldine,
His eyes made up of wonder and love;
And said in courtly accents fine,
'Sweet maid, Lord Roland's beauteous dove,
With arms more strong than harp or song,
Thy sire and I will crush the snake!'
He kissed her forehead as he spake,
And Geraldine in maiden wise
Casting down her large bright eyes,
With blushing cheek and courtesy fine
She turned her from Sir Leoline;
Softly gathering up her train,
That o'er her right arm fell again;
And folded her arms across her chest,
And couched her head upon her breast,
And looked askance at Christabel-

Jesu, Maria, shield her well!

A snake's small eye blinks dull and shy,
And the lady's eyes they shrunk in her head,
Each shrunk up to a serpent's eye,
And with somewhat of malice, and more of dread,
At Christabel she looked askance!-
One moment- and the sight was fled!
But Christabel in dizzy trance
Stumbling on the unsteady ground
Shuddered aloud, with a hissing sound;
And Geraldine again turned round,
And like a thing that sought relief,
Full of wonder and full of grief,
She rolled her large bright eyes divine
Wildly on Sir Leoline.

The maid, alas! her thoughts are gone,
She nothing sees- no sight but one!
The maid, devoid of guile and sin,
I know not how, in fearful wise,
So deeply had she drunken in
That look, those shrunken serpent eyes,
That all her features were resigned
To this sole image in her mind:
And passively did imitate
That look of dull and treacherous hate!
And thus she stood, in dizzy trance,
Still picturing that look askance
With forced unconscious sympathy
Full before her father's view-
As far as such a look could be
In eyes so innocent and blue!

And when the trance was o'er, the maid
Paused awhile, and inly prayed:
Then falling at the Baron's feet,
'By my mother's soul do I entreat
That thou this woman send away!'
She said: and more she could not say;
For what she knew she could not tell,
O'er-mastered by the mighty spell.

Why is thy cheek so wan and wild,
Sir Leoline? Thy only child
Lies at thy feet, thy joy, thy pride.
So fair, so innocent, so mild;
The same, for whom thy lady died!
O by the pangs of her dear mother
Think thou no evil of thy child!
For her, and thee, and for no other,
She prayed the moment ere she died:
Prayed that the babe for whom she died,
Might prove her dear lord's joy and pride!
That prayer her deadly pangs beguiled,
Sir Leoline!
And wouldst thou wrong thy only child,
Her child and thine?

Within the Baron's heart and brain
If thoughts, like these, had any share,
They only swelled his rage and pain,
And did but work confusion there.
His heart was cleft with pain and rage,
His cheeks they quivered, his eyes were wild,
Dishonored thus in his old age;
Dishonored by his only child,
And all his hospitality
To the insulted daughter of his friend
By more than woman's jealousy
Brought thus to a disgraceful end-
He rolled his eye with stern regard
Upon the gentle minstrel bard,
And said in tones abrupt, austere-
'Why, Bracy! dost thou loiter here?
I bade thee hence!' The bard obeyed;
And turning from his own sweet maid,
The aged knight, Sir Leoline,
Led forth the lady Geraldine!

THE CONCLUSION TO PART II

A little child, a limber elf,
Singing, dancing to itself,
A fairy thing with red round cheeks,

That always finds, and never seeks,
Makes such a vision to the sight
As fills a father's eyes with light;
And pleasures flow in so thick and fast
Upon his heart, that he at last
Must needs express his love's excess
With words of unmeant bitterness.
Perhaps 'tis pretty to force together
Thoughts so all unlike each other;
To mutter and mock a broken charm,
To dally with wrong that does no harm.
Perhaps 'tis tender too and pretty
At each wild word to feel within
A sweet recoil of love and pity.
And what, if in a world of sin
(O sorrow and shame should this be true!)
Such giddiness of heart and brain
Comes seldom save from rage and pain,
So talks as it's most used to do.

THE END

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 stenches,
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

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-flowered jasmine and the broad-leaved myrtle
(Meet emblems they of innocence and love),
And watch the clouds that late were rich with light
Slow-sad'ning round, and mark the star of eve
Serenely brilliant (such should wisdom be)
Shine opposite! How exquisite the scents
Snatched 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 lengthways in the clasping casement-hark
How by desultory breeze caressed!
Like some coy maid half-yielding to her lover,
It pours such sweet upbraidings 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 fairyland,
Where melodies round honey-dropping flowers
Footless and wild, like birds of paradise,
Nor pause nor perch, hov'ring on untamed wing.
And thus, my love, as on the midway slope
Of yonder hill I stretch my limbs at noon,
Whilst through my half-closed eyelids I behold
The sunbeams dance, like diamonds, on the main,
And tranquil muse upon tranquility,
Full many a thought uncalled and undetained,
And many idle flitting fantasies
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 framed,
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, oh beloved woman!-nor such thoughts
Dim and unhallowed 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 dispraised
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,
Th'Incomprehensible! save when with awe
I praise him, and with faith that inly feels-
I praise him, and with faith that inly feels-
Who with his saving mercies healed me,
A sinful and most miserable man
Wildered and dark, and gave me to possess
Peace, and this cot, and the, heart-honoured maid!

Aug. 20th, 1795

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 or 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

Domestic Peace

Tell me, on what holy ground
May domestic peace be found?
Halcyon daughter of the skies,
Far on fearful wing she flies,
From the pomp of scepter'd state,
From the rebel's noisy hate.
In a cottaged vale she dwells
List'ning to the Sabbath bells!
Still around her steps are seen,
Spotless honor's meeker mien,
Love, the sire of pleasing fears,
Sorrow smiling through her tears,
And conscious of the past employ,
Memory, bosom-spring of joy.

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

Elegy, Imitated From One Of Akenside's Blank-Verse Inscriptions

Near the lone pile with ivy overspread,
Fast by the rivulet's sleep-persuading sound,
Where 'sleeps the moonlight' on yon verdant bed--
O humbly press that consecrated ground!

For there does Edmund rest, the learned swain!
And there his spirit most delights to rove:
Young Edmund! famed for each harmonious strain,
And the sore wounds of ill-requited love.

Like some tall tree that spreads its branches wide,
And loads the west wind with its soft perfume,
His manhood blossomed: till the faithless pride
Of fair Matilda sank him to the tomb.

But soon did righteous Heaven her guilt pursue!
Where'er with wildered step she wandered pale,
Still Edmund's image rose to blast her view,
Still Edmund's voice accused her in each gale.

With keen regret, and conscious guilt's alarms,
Amid the pomp of affluence she pined;
Nor all that lured her faith from Edmund's arms
Could lull the wakeful horror of her mind.

Go, Traveller! tell the tale with sorrow fraught:
Some tearful maid perchance, or blooming youth,
May hold it in remembrance; and be taught
That riches cannot pay for Love or Truth.

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

Epitaph On An Infant

Ere sin could blight, or sorrow fade,
Death came with friendly care;
The opening bud to heaven conveyed,
And bade it blossom there.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Fancy In Nubibus, Or The Poet In The Clouds

O! it is pleasant with a heart at ease,
Just after sunset, or by moonlight skies,
To make the shifting clouds be what you please,
Or let the easily persuaded eyes
Own each quaint likeness issuing from the mould
Of a friend's fancy; or with head bent low
And cheek aslant see rivers flow of gold
'Twixt crimson banks; and then, a traveller, go
From mount to mount through Cloudland, gorgeous land!
Or list'ning to the tide, with closed sight,
Be that blind bard, who on the Chian strand
By those deep sounds possessed with inward light
Beheld the Iliad and Odyssey
Rise to the swelling of the voiceful sea.

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 beautiful 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

Fire, Famine, And Slaughter : A War Eclogue

The Scene a desolate Tract in la Vendee. Famine is discovered lying on the ground; to her enter Fire and Slaughter.

Fam. Sister! sisters! who sent you here?

Slau. [to Fire.] I will whisper it in her ear.

Fire. No! no! no!

Spirits hear what spirits tell:

'Twill make a holiday in Hell.

No! no! no!

Myself, I named him once below,
And all the souls, that damned be,

Leaped up at once in anarchy,

Clapped their hands and danced for glee.

They no longer heeded me,

But laughed to hear Hell's burning rafters

Unwillingly re-echo laughters!

No! no! no!

Spirits hear what spirits tell:

'Twill make a holiday in Hell!

Fam. Whisper it, sister! so and so!

In a dark hint, soft and slow.

Slau. Letters four do form his name --

And who sent you?

Both. The same! the same!

Slau. He came by stealth, and unlocked my den,

And I have drunk the blood since then

Of thrice three hundred thousand men.

Both. Who bade you do it?

Slau. The same! the same!

Letters four do form his name.

He let me loose, and cried Halloo!

To him alone the praise is due.

Fam. Thanks, sister, thanks! the men have bled,

Their wives and their children faint for bread.

I stood in a swampy field of battle;

With bones and skulls I made a rattle,

To frighten the wolf and carrion-crow

And the homeless dog -- but they would not go.

So off I flew: for how could I bear

To see them gorge their dainty fare?
 I heard a groan and a peevish squall,
 And through the chink of a cottage-wall --
 Can you guess what I saw there?
 Both. Whisper it, sister! in our ear.
 Fam. A baby beat its dying mother;
 I had starved the one and was starving the other!
 Both. Who bade you do't?
 Fam. The same! the same!
 Letters four do form his name.
 He let me loose, and cried Halloo!
 To him alone the praise is due.
 Fire. Sisters! I from Ireland came!
 Hedge and corn-fields all on flame,
 I triumphed o'er the setting sun!
 And all the while the work was done,
 On as I strode with my huge strides,
 I flung back my head and I held my sides,
 It was so rare a piece of fun
 To see the sweltered cattle run
 With uncouth gallop through the night,
 Scared by the red and noisy light!
 By the light of his own blazing cot
 Was many a naked rebel shot:
 The house-stream met the flame and hissed,
 While crash! fell in the roof, I wist,
 On some of those old bed-rid nurses,
 That deal in discontent and curses.
 Both. Who bade you do't?
 Fire. The same! the same!
 Letters four do form his name.
 He let me loose, and cried Halloo!
 To him alone the praise is due.
 All. He let us loose, and cried Halloo!
 How shall we yield him honor due?
 Fam. Wisdom comes with lack of food.
 I'll gnaw, I'll gnaw the multitude,
 Till the cup of rage o'erbrim:
 They shall seize him and his brood--
 Slau. They shall tear him limb from limb!
 Fire. O thankless beldames and untrue!
 And is this all that you can do

For him, who did so much for you?
Ninety months he, by my troth!
Hath richly catered for you both:
And in an hour would you repay
An eight years' work? -- Away! away!
I alone am faithful! I
Cling to him everlastingly.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Forbearance

(Beareth all things.---1 Cor. xiii. 7.)

Gently I took that which ungently came,
And without scorn forgave:--Do thou the same.
A wrong done to thee think a cat's-eye spark
Thou wouldst not see, were not thine own heart dark.
Thine own keen sense of wrong that thirsts for sin,
Fear that--the spark self-kindled from within,
Which blown upon will blind thee with its glare,
Or smother'd stifle thee with noisome air.
Clap on the extinguisher, pull up the blinds,
And soon the ventilated spirit finds
Its natural daylight. If a foe have kenn'd,
Or worse than foe, an alienated friend,
A rib of dry rot in thy ship's stout side,
Think it God's message, and in humble pride
With heart of oak replace it;--thine the gains--
Give him the rotten timber for his pains!

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 night 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

Genevieve

Maid of my love! sweet Genevieve!
In beauty's light you glide along;
Your eye is like the star of eve,
And sweet your voice, as seraph's song.
Yet not your heavenly beauty gives
This heart with passion soft to glow:
Within your soul a voice there lives!
It bids you hear the tale of woe.
When sinking low the suff'rer wan
Beholds no hand outstretched to save,
Fair, as the bosom of the swan
That rises graceful o'er the wave,
I've seen your breast with pity heave
And therefore love I you, sweet Genevieve!

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 sparking dew-drops will not stay.
Sweet month of May,
We must away;
Far, far away!
To-day! to-day!'

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 belovéd !
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

Home-Sick. Written In Germany

'Tis sweet to him, who all the week
Through city-crowds must push his way,
To stroll alone through fields and woods,
And hallow thus the Sabbath-day.

And sweet it is, in summer bower,
Sincere, affectionate and gay,
One's own dear children feasting round,
To celebrate one's marriage-day.

But what is all, to his delight,
Who having long been dommed to roam,
Throws off the bundle from his back,
Before the door of his own home?

Home-sickness is a wasting pang;
This feel I hourly more and more:
There's healing only in thy wings,
Thou Breeze that play'st on Albion's shore!

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 nigh-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 worshipp'd 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 you 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

Imitated From Ossian

The stream with languid murmur creeps,
In Lumin's flowery vale:
Beneath the dew the Lily weeps
Slow-waving to the gale.

'Cease, restless gale! 'it seems to say,
'Nor wake me with thy sighing!
The honours of my vernal day
On rapid wing are flying.

Tomorrow shall the Traveller come
Who late beheld me blooming:
His searching eye shall vainly roam
The dreary vale of Lumin.'

With eager gaze and wetted cheek
My wonted haunts along,
Thus, faithful Maiden! thou shalt seek
The Youth of simplest song.

But I along the breeze shall roll
The voice of feeble power;
And dwell, the Moon-beam of thy soul,
In Slumber's nightly hour.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Imitated From The Welsh

If, while my passion I impart,
You deem my words untrue,
O place your hand upon my heart,
Feel how it throbs for you!

Ah no! reject the thoughtless claim
In pity to your lover!
That thrilling touch would aid the flame
It wishes to discover.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Improvvisatore, The

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

Katharine. What are the words ?

Eliza. Ask our friend, the Improvvisatore ; 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 improviso

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

In The Manner Of Spenser

O peace, that on a lilled bank dost love
To rest thine head beneath an olive tree,
I would that from the pinions of thy dove
One quill withouten pain yplucked might be!
For oh! I wish my Sara's frowns to flee,
And faint to her some soothing song would write,
Lest she resent my rude discourtesy,
Who vowed to meet her ere the morning light,
But broke my plighted word -- ah! false and recreant wight.

Last night as I my weary head did pillow
With thoughts of my dissevered fair engrossed,
Chill fancy drooped, wreathing herself with willow,
As tho' my breast entombed a pining ghost.
'From some blest couch, young rapture's bridal boast,
Rejected slumber! hither wing thy way;
But leave me with the matin hour, at most!
As night-closed floweret to the orient ray,
My sad heart will expand, when I the maid survey.

But Love, who 'heard the silence of my thought,'
Contrived a too successful wile, I ween:
And whispered to himself, with malice fraught--
'Too long our slave the damsel's smiles hath seen:
To-morrow shall he ken her altered mien!'
He spake, and ambushed lay, till on my bed
The morning shot her dewy glances keen,
When as I 'gan uplift my drowsy head--
'Now, bard! I'll work thee woe!' the laughing elfin said.

Sleep, softly-breathing god! his downy wing
Was fluttering now, as quickly to depart;
When twanged an arrow from Love's mystic string,
With pathless wound it pierced him to the heart.
Was there some magic in the elfin's dart?
Or did he strike my couch with wizard lance?
For straight so fair a form did upwards start
(No fairer deck'd the bowers of old romance)
That sleep enamoured grew, nor moved from his sweet trance!

My Sara came, with gentlest look divine;
Bright shone her eye, yet tender was its beam
I felt the pressure of her lip to mine!
Whisp'ring we went, and love was all our theme--
Love pure and spotless, as at first, I deem,
He sprang from heaven! Such joys with sleep did 'bide
That I the living image of my dream
Fondly forgot. Too late I woke, and sighed --
'O! how shall I behold my love at even-tide!'

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

Kisses

Cupid, if storying legends tell aright,
Once framed a rich elixer of delight.
A chalice o'er love-kindled flames he fixed,
And in it nectar and ambrosia mixed:
With these the magic dews which evening brings,
Brushed from the Idalian star by fairy wings:
Each tender pledge of sacred faith he joined,
Each gentler pleasure of th' unspotted mind--
Day-dreams, whose tints with sportive brightness glow,
And hope, the blameless parasite of woe.
The eyeless chemist heard the process rise,
The steamy chalice bubbled up in sighs;
Sweet sounds transpired as when the enamoured dove
Pours the soft murmuring of responsive love.
The finished work might envy vainly blame,
And 'kisses' was the precious compound's name.
With half, the god his Cyprian mother blest,
And breathed on Sara's lovelier lips the rest.

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 momently 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

Lewti, Or The Circassian Love-Chaunt

At midnight by the stream I roved,
To forget the form I loved.
Image of Lewti! from my mind
Depart; for Lewti is not kind.

The Moon was high, the moonlight gleam
And the shadow of a star
Heaved upon Tamaha's stream;
But the rock shone brighter far,
The rock half sheltered from my view
By pendent boughs of tressy yew.--
So shines my Lewti's forehead fair,
Gleaming through her sable hair,
Image of Lewti! from my mind
Depart; for Lewti is not kind.

I saw a cloud of palest hue,
Onward to the moon it passed;
Still brighter and more bright it grew,
With floating colours not a few,
Till it reach'd the moon at last:
Then the cloud was wholly bright,
With a rich and amber light!
And so with many a hope I seek
And with such joy I find my Lewti;
And even so my pale wan cheek
Drinks in as deep a flush of beauty!
Nay, treacherous image! leave my mind,
If Lewti never will be kind.

The little cloud-it floats away,
Away it goes; away so soon?
Alas! it has no power to stay:
Its hues are dim, its hues are grey--
Away it passes from the moon!
How mournfully it seems to fly,
Ever fading more and more,
To joyless regions of the sky--
And now 'tis whiter than before!

As white as my poor cheek will be,
When, Lewti! on my couch I lie,
A dying man for love of thee.
Nay, treacherous image! leave my mind--
And yet, thou didst not look unkind.

I saw a vapour in the sky,
Thin, and white, and very high;
I ne'er beheld so thin a cloud:
Perhaps the breezes that can fly
Now below and now above,
Have snatched aloft the lawny shroud
Of Lady fair--that died for love.
For maids, as well as youths, have perished
From fruitless love too fondly cherished.
Nay, treacherous image! leave my mind--
For Lewti never will be kind.

Hush! my heedless feet from under
Slip the crumbling banks for ever:
Like echoes to a distant thunder,
They plunge into the gentle river.
The river-swans have heard my tread,
And startle from their reedy bed.
O beauteous birds! methinks ye measure
Your movements to some heavenly tune!
O beauteous birds! 'tis such a pleasure
To see you move beneath the moon,
I would it were your true delight
To sleep by day and wake all night.

I know the place where Lewti lies
When silent night has closed her eyes:
It is a breezy jasmine-bower,
The nightingale sings o'er her head:
Voice of the Night! had I the power
That leafy labyrinth to thread,
And creep, like thee, with soundless tread,
I then might view her bosom white
Heaving lovely to my sight,
As these two swans together heave
On the gently-swelling wave.

Oh! that she saw me in a dream,
And dreamt that I had died for care;
All pale and wasted I would seem
Yet fair withal, as spirits are!
I'd die indeed, if I might see
Her bosom heave, and heave for me!
Soothe, gentle image! soothe my mind!
To-morrow Lewti may be kind.

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

Lines Composed In A Concert-Room

Nor cold nor stern my soul! Yet I detest
These scented rooms, where to a gaudy throug,
Heaves the proud harlot her distended breast
In intricacies of laborious song.

These feel not musics genuine power nor deign
To melt at Natures passion-warbled plaint;
But when the long-breathed singers up-trilled strain
Bursts in a squall, they gape for wonderment.

Hark! the deep buzz of vanity and hate!
Scornful, yet envious, with self-torturing sneer
My lady eyes some maid of humbler state,
While the pert captain, or the primmer priest,
Prattles accordant scandal in her ear.

O give me, from this heartless scene released,
To hear our old musician, blind and gray,
(Whom, stretching from my nurses arms I kissed,)
His Scottish tunes and warlike marches play,
By moonshine, on the balmy summer-night,
The while I dance amid the tedded hay
With merry maids, whose ringlets toss in light.

Or lies the purple evening on the bay
Of the calm glossy lake, O let me hid
Unheard, unseen, behind the alder-trees,
For round their roots the fisher's boat is tied,
On whose trim seat doth Edmund stretch at ease,
And while the lazy boat sways to and fro,
Breathes in his flute sad airs, so wild and slow,
That his own cheek is wet with quiet tears.

But O, dear Anne! when midnight wind careers,
And the gust pelting on the out-house shed
Makes the cock shrilly on the rain-storm crow,
To hear thee sing some ballad full of woe,
Ballad of ship-wrecked sailor floating dead,
Whom his own true-love buried in the sands!

Thee, gentle woman, for thy voice re-measures
Whatever tones and melancholy pleasures
The things of Nature utter; birds or trees
Or moan of ocean-gale in weedy caves,
Or where the stiff grass mid the heath-plant waves,
Murmur and music thin of sudden breeze.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Lines On A Friend, Who Died Of A Frenzy Fever, Induced By Calumnious Reports

Edmund! thy grave with aching eye I scan,
And inly groan for heaven's poor outcast, man!
'Tis tempest all or gloom: in early youth,
If gifted with the Ithuriel lance of truth,
We force to start amid her feigned caress
Vice, siren-hag! in native ugliness,
A brother's fate will haply rouse the tear:
Onward we move in heaviness and fear!
But if our fond hearts call to pleasure's bower
Some pigmy folly in a careless hour,
The faithless guest shall stamp th' enchanted ground
And mingled forms of mis'ry rise around:
Heart-fretting fear, with pallid look aghast,
That courts the future woe to hide the past;
Remorse, the poisoned arrow in his side;
And loud lewd mirth, to anguish close allied:
Till frenzy, fierce-eyed child of moping pain,
Darts her hot lightning flash athwart the brain.

Rest, injured shade! Shall slander squatting near
Spit her cold venom in a dead man's ear?
'Twas thine to feel the sympathetic glow
In merit's joy, and poverty's meek woe;
Thine all, that cheer the moment as it flies,
The zoneless cares, and smiling courtesies.
Nursed in thy heart the firmer virtues grew,
And in thy heart they withered! Such chill dew
Wan indolence on each young blossom shed;
And vanity her filmy net-work spread,
With eye that rolled around in asking gaze,
And tongue that trafficked in the trade of praise.
Thy follies such! the hard world mark'd them well--
Were they more wise, the proud who never fell?

Rest, injured shade! the poor man's grateful prayer
On heaven-ward wing thy wounded soul shall bear.
As oft at twilight gloom thy grave I pass,

And oft sit down upon its recent grass,
With introverted eye I contemplate
Similitude of soul, perhaps of -- fate!

To me hath Heaven with bounteous hand assign'd
Energetic reason and a shaping mind,
The daring ken of truth, the patriot's part,
And pity's sigh, that breathes the gentle heart--
Sloth-jaundiced all! and from my graspless hand
Drop friendship's precious pearls, like hour-glass sand.
I weep, yet stoop not! the faint anguish flows,
A dreamy pang in the morning's fev'rish doze.

Is this piled earth our being's passless mound?
Tell me, cold grave! is death with poppies crown'd?
Tired sentinel! mid fitful starts I nod,
And fain would sleep, though pillowed on a clod!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Lines On Observing A Blossom On The First Of February, 1796

Sweet flower! that peeping from thy russet stem
Unfoldest timidly, (for in strange sort
This dark, frieze-coated, hoarse, teeth-chattering month
Hath borrowed Zephyr's voice, and gazed upon thee
With blue voluptuous eye) alas poor flower!
These are but flatteries of the faithless year.
Perchance, escaped its unknown polar cave,
E'en now the keen north-east is on its way.
Flower that must perish! shall I liken thee
To some sweet girl of too, too rapid growth,
Nipped by consumption mid untimely charms?
Or to Bristowa's bard, the wond'rous boy!
As amaranth, which earth scarce seemed to own,
Till disappointment come, and pelting wrong
Beat it to earth? or with indignant grief
Shall I compare thee to poor Poland's hope,
Bright flower of hope killed in the opening bud?
Farewell, sweet blossom! better fate be thine
And mock my boding! Dim similitudes
Weaving in moral strains, I've stolen one hour
From anxious self, life's cruel taskmaster!
And the warm wooings of this sunny day
Tremble along my frame, and harmonize
The attempered organ, that even saddest thoughts
Mix with some sweet sensations, like harsh tunes
Played deftly on a soft-toned instrument.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Lines Suggested By The Last Words Of Berengarius. Ob. Anno Dom. 1088

No more 'twixt conscience staggering and the Pope
Soon shall I now before my God appear,
By him to be acquitted, as I hope;
By him to be condemned, as I fear.--

REFLECTION ON THE ABOVE

Lynx amid moles! had I stood by thy bed,
Be of good cheer, meek soul! I would have said:
I see a hope spring from that humble fear.
All are not strong alike through storms to steer
Right onward. What though dread of threatened death
And dungeon torture made thy hand and breath
Inconstant to the truth within thy heart?
That truth, from which, through fear, thou twice didst start,
Fear haply told thee, was a learned strife,
Or not so vital as to claim thy life:
And myriads had reached Heaven, who never knew
Where lay the difference 'twixt the false and true!

Ye, who secure 'mid trophies not your own,
Judge him who won them when he stood alone,
And proudly talk of recreant Berengare--
O first the age, and then the man compare!
That age how dark! congenial minds how rare!
No host of friends with kindred zeal did burn!
No throbbing hearts awaited his return!
Prostrate alike when prince and peasant fell,
He only disenchanted from the spell,
Like the weak worm that gems the starless night,
Moved in the scanty circlet of his light:
And was it strange if he withdrew the ray
That did but guide the night-birds to their prey?

The ascending day-star with a bolder eye
Hath lit each dew-drop on our trimmer lawn!

Yet not for this, if wise, will we decry
The spots and struggles of the timid Dawn;
Lest so we tempt the approaching Noon to scorn
The mists and painted vapours of our Morn.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Lines To A Beautiful Spring In A Village

Once more, sweet stream! with slow foot wand'ring near,
I bless thy milky waters cold and clear.
Escaped the flashing of the noontide hours,
With one fresh garland of Pierian flowers
(Ere from thy zephyr-haunted brink I turn)
My languid hand shall wreath thy mossy urn.
For not thro' pathless grove with murmur rude
Then soothest the sad wood-nymph, solitude:
Nor thine unseen in cavern depths to well,
The hermit-fountain of some dripping cell!
Pride of the vale! thy useful streams supply
The scattered cots and peaceful hamlet nigh.
The elfin tribe around thy friendly banks
With infant uproar and soul-soothing pranks,
Released from school, their little hearts at rest,
Launch paper navies on thy waveless breast.
The rustic here at eve with pensive look
Whistling lorn ditties leans upon his crook,
Or starting pauses with hope-mingled dread
To list the much-loved maid's accustom'd tread:
She, vainly mindful of her dame's command,
Loiters, the long-filled pitcher in her hand.
Unboastful stream! thy fount with pebbled falls
The faded form of past delight recalls,
What time the morning sun of hope arose,
And all was joy; save when another's woes
A transient gloom upon my soul imprest,
Like passing clouds impictured on thy breast.
Life's current then ran sparkling to the noon,
Or silvery stole beneath the pensive moon:
Ah! now it works rude brakes and thorns among,
Or o'er the rough rock bursts and foams along!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Lines To W. L. While He Sang A Song To Purcell's Music

While my young cheek retains its healthful hues,
And I have many friends who hold me dear;
L----! methinks, I would not often hear
Such melodies as thine, lest I should lose
All memory of the wrongs and sore distress,
For which my miserable brethren weep!
But should uncomforted misfortunes steep
My daily bread in tears and bitterness;
And if at death's dread moment I should lie,
With no beloved face at my bed-side,
To fix the last glance of my closing-eye,
Methinks, such strains, breathed by my angel-guide,
Would make me pass the cup of anguish by,
Mix with the blest, nor know that I had died!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Lines Written After A Walk Before Supper

Tho' much averse, dear Jack, to flicker,
To find a likeness for friend V----ker,
I've made, thro' earth, and air, and sea,
A voyage of discovery!
And let me add (to ward off strife)
For V----kers, and for V----kers' wife--
She, large and round, beyond belief,
A superfluity of beef!
Her mind and body of a piece,
And both composed of kitchen-grease.
In short, dame Truth might safely dub her
Vulgarity enshrined in blubber!
He, meagre bit of littleness,
All snuff, and musk, and politesse;
So thin, that strip him of his clothing,
He'd totter on the edge of nothing!
In case of foe, he well might hide
Snug in the collops of her side.
Ah then, what simile will suit?
Spindle leg in great jack-boot?
Pismire crawling in a rut,
Or a spigot in a butt?
Thus I humm'd and ha'd awhile,
When Madam Memory, with a smile,
Thus touched my ear--'Why sure, I ween,
In London streets thou oft hast seen
The very image of this pair:
A little ape, with huge she bear
Linked by hapless chain together:
An unlicked mass the one -- the other
An antic huge with nimble crupper'--
But stop, my Muse! for here comes supper.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Lines Written At The King's-Arms, Ross, Formerly The House Of The 'Man Of Ross'

Richer than misers o'er their countless hoards,
Nobler than kings, or king-polluted lords,
Here dwelt the man of Ross! O trav'ller, hear,
Departed merit claims a reverent tear.
If 'neath this roof thy wine-cheered moments pass,
Fill to the good man's name one grateful glass:
To higher zest shall mem'ry wake thy soul,
And virtue mingle in th' ennobled bowl.
But if, like mine thro' life's distressful scene
Lonely and sad thy pilgrimage hath been;
And if, thy breast with heart-sick anguish fraught,
Thou journeyest onward tempest-tost in thought;
Here cheat thy cares! in generous visions melt,
And dream of goodness thou hast never felt!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Lines Written In The Album At Elbingerode, In The Hartz Forest

I stood on Brocken's sovran height, and saw
Woods crowding upon woods, hills over hills
A surging scene, and only limited
By the blue distance. Heavily my way
Downward I dragged through fir groves evermore,
Where bright green moss heaves in sepulchral forms
Speckled with sunshine; and, but seldom heard,
The sweet bird's song became a hollow sound;
And the breeze, murmuring indivisibly,
Preserved its solemn murmur most distinct
From many a note of many a waterfall,
And the brook's chatter; 'mid whose islet stones
The dingy kidling with its tinkling bell
Leaped frolicsome, or old romantic goat
Sat, his white beard slow waving. I moved on
In low and languid mood: for I had found
That outward forms, the loftiest, still receive
Their finer influence from the Life within;
Fair cyphers else: fair, but of import vague
Or unconcerning, where the heart not finds
History or prophecy of friend, or child,
Or gentle maid, our first and early love,
Or father, or the venerable name
Of our adored country! O thou Queen,
Thou delegated Deity of Earth,
O dear, dear England! how my longing eye
Turned westward, shaping in the steady clouds
Thy sands and high white cliffs!

My native Land!
Filled with the thought of thee this heart was proud,
Yea, mine eye swam with tears: that all the view
From sovran Brocken, woods and woody hills,
Floated away, like a departing dream,
Feeble and dim! Stranger, these impulses
Blame thou not lightly; nor will I profane,
With hasty judgment or injurious doubt,

That man's sublimer spirit, who can feel
That God is everywhere! the God who framed
Mankind to be one mighty family,
Himself our Father, and the World our Home.

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

Melancholy. A Fragment.

Stretched on a mouldered Abbey's broadest wall,
Where ruining ivies propped the ruins steep--
Her folded arms wrapping her tattered pall,
Had Melancholy mused herself to sleep.

The fern was pressed beneath her hair,
The dark green adder's tongue was there;
And still as past the flagging sea-gale weak,
The long lank leaf bowed fluttering o'er her cheek.

That pallid cheek was flushed: her eager look
Beamed eloquent in slumber! Inly wrought,
Imperfect sounds her moving lips forsook,
And her bent forehead worked with troubled thought.
Strange was the dream-----

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

Monody On The Death Of Chatterton

When faint and sad o'er sorrow's desert wild
Slow journeys onward poor misfortune's child;
When fades each lovely form by fancy drest,
And inly pines the self-consuming breast;
(No scourge of scorpions in thy right arm dread.
No helmed terrors nodding o'er thy head);
Assume, O death! the cherub wings of peace,
And bid the heart-sick wanderer's anguish cease!

Thee, Chatterton! yon unblest stones protect
From want, and the bleak freezings of neglect!
Escaped the sore wounds of affliction's rod,
Meek at the throne of mercy, and of God,
Perchance, thou raisest high th' enraptured hymn
Amid the blaze of seraphin!

Yet oft ('tis nature's call)
I weep, that heaven-born genius so should fall;
And oft, in fancy's saddest hour, my soul
Averted shudders at the poisoned bowl.
Now groans my sickening heart, as still I view
Thy corse of livid hue;
And now a flash of indignation high
Darts thro' the tear, that glistens in mine eye!

Is this the land of song-ennobled line?
Is this the land, where genius ne'er in vain
Pour'd forth his lofty strain?
Ah me! yet Spenser, gentlest bard divine,
Beneath chill disappointment's shade,
His weary limbs in lonely anguish laid,
And o'er her darling dead
Pity hopeless hung her head,
While 'mid the pelting of that merciless storm,
Sunk to the cold earth Otway's famished form?

Sublime of thought, and confident of fame
From vales where Avon winds the minstrel came
Lighted-hearted youth! he hastes along

And meditates the future song.
How dauntless AElla fray'd the Dacian foes:
See, as floating high in air
Glitter teh sunny visions fair,
His eyes dance rapture, and his bosom glows?

Ah! where are fled the charms of vernal grace,
And joy's wild gleams, light-flashing o'er thy face?
Youth of tumultuous soul, and haggard eye!
Thy wasted form, thy hurried steps I view,
On thy cold forehead starts the anguished dew:
And dreadful was that bosom-rending sigh!

Such were the struggles of that gloomy hour,
When care, of withered brow,
Prepared the poison's power:
Already to thy lips was raised the bowl.
When near thee stood affection meek
(Her bosom bare, and wildly pale her cheek)
Thy sullen gaze she bade thee roll
On scenes that well might melt thy soul;
Thy native cot she flashed upon thy view,
Thy native cot, where still, at close of day,
Peace smiling sate, and listened to thy lay;
Thy sister's shrieks she bade thee hear,
And mark thy mother's tear;
See, see her breast's convulsive throe,
Her silent agony of woe!
Ah! dash the poisoned chalice from thy hand!

And thou hadst dashed it, at her soft command,
But that despair and indignation rose,
And told again the story of thy woes;
Told the keen insult of th' unfeeling heart;
The dread dependence on the low-born mind;
Told ev'ry pang, with which thy soul must smart,
Neglect, and grinning scorn, and want combined!
Recoiling quick, thou bad'st the friend of pain
Roll the black tide of death thro' every freezing vein!

Ye woods! that wave o'er Avon's rocky steep,
To fancy's ear sweet is your murm'ring deep!

For here she loves the cypress wreath to weave;
Watching, with wistful eye, the sadd'ning tints of eve.
Here, far from men, amid this pathless grove,
In solemn thought the minstrel wont to rove,
Like star-beam on the slow sequestered tide
Lone-glittering, thro' the high tree branching wide.
And here, in inspiration's eager hour,
When most the big soul feels the madd'ning power,
These wilds, these caverns roaming o'er,
Round which the screaming sea-gulls soar,
With wild unequal steps he passed along,
Oft pouring on the winds a broken song:
Anon, upon some rough rock's fearful brow
Would pause abrupt -- and gaze upon the waves below.

Poor Chatterton! he sorrows for thy fate
Who would have praised and loved thee, ere too late.
Poor Chatterton! farewell! of darkest hues
This chaplet cast I on thy shapeless tomb;
But dare no longer on the sad theme muse,
Lest kindred woes persuade a kindred doom!
Hence, gloomy thoughts! no more my soul shall dwell
On joys that were! No more endure to weigh
The shame and anguish of the evil day,
Wisely forgetful! O'er the ocean swell
Sublime of hope I seek the cottaged dell
Where virtue calm with careless step may stray;
And, dancing to the moonlight roundelay,
The wizard passions weave an holy spell!

O Chatterton! that thou wert yet alive!
Sure thou would'st spread the canvas to the gale,
And love, with us, the tinkling team to drive
O'er peaceful freedom's undivided dale;
And we, at sober eve, would round thee throng,
Hanging, enraptured, on thy stately song!
And greet with smiles the young-eyed poesy
All deftly mask'd, as hoar antiquity.

Alas, vain phantasies! the fleeting brood
Of woe self-solaced in her dreamy mood!
Yet will I love to follow the sweet dream,

Where Susquehannah pours his untamed stream;
And on some hill, whose forest-frowning side
Waves o'er the murmurs of his calmer tide,
Will raise a solemn cenotaph to thee,
Sweet harper of time-shrouded minstrelsy!
And there, soothed sadly by the dirgeful wind,
Muse on the sore ills I had left behind.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Ode To Georgiana, Duchess Of Devonshire, On The Twenty-Fourth Stanza In Her 'Passage Over Mount Gothard.'

'And hail the chapel! hail the platform wild
Where Tell directed the avenging dart,
With well-strung arm, that first preserved his child,
Then aimed the arrow at the tyrant's heart.'

Splendor's fondly fostered child!
And did you hail the platform wild,
Where once the Austrian fell
Beneath the shaft of Tell!
O Lady, nursed in pomp and pleasure!
Whence learn'd you that heroic measure?

Light as a dream your days their circlets ran.
From all that teaches brotherhood to Man
Far, far removed! from want, from hope, from fear!
Enchanting music lulled your infant ear,
Obeisance, praises soothed your infant heart:
Emblazonments and old ancestral crests,
With many a bright obtrusive form of art,
Detained your eye from nature: stately vests,
That veiling strove to deck your charms divine,
Rich viands and the pleasurable wine,
Were yours unearned by toil; nor could you see
The unenjoying toiler's misery.
And yet, free Nature's uncorrupted child,
You hailed the chapel and the platform wild,
Where once the Austrian fell
Beneath the shaft of Tell!
O Lady, nursed in pomp and pleasure!
Whence learn'd you that heroic measure?

There crowd your finely-fibred frame,
All living faculties of bliss;
And Genius to your cradle came,
His forehead wreathed with lambent flame,

And bending low, with godlike kiss
Breathed in a more celestial life;
But boasts not many a fair compeer,
A heart as sensitive to joy and fear
And some, perchance, might wage an equal strife.
Some few, to nobler being wrought,
Corrivals in the nobler gift of thought.
Yet these delight to celebrate
Laurelled war and plummy state;
Or in verse and music dress
Tales of rustic happiness --
Pernicious tales! insidious strains!
That steel the rich man's breast,
And mock the lot unblest,
The sordid vices and the abject pains,
Which evermore must be
The doom of ignorance and penury!
But you, free Nature's uncorrupted child,
You hailed the chapel and the platform wild,
Where once the Austrian fell
Beneath the shaft of Tell!
O Lady, nursed in pomp and pleasure!
Whence learn'd you that heroic measure?

You were a mother! That most holy name,
Which Heaven and Nature bless,
I may not vilely prostitute to those
Whose infants owe them less
Than the poor caterpillar owes
Its gaudy parent fly.
You were a mother! at your bosom fed
The babes that loved you. You, with laughing eye,
Each twilight-thought, each nascent feeling read,
Which you yourself created. Oh! delight!
A second time to be a mother,
Without the mother's bitter groans:
Another thought, and yet another,
By touch, or taste, by looks or tones
O'er the growing sense to roll,
The mother of your infant's soul!
The Angel of the Earth, who, while he guides
His chariot-planet round the goal of day,

All trembling gazes on the eye of God,
A moment turned his awful face away;
And as he viewed you, from his aspect sweet
New influences in your being rose,
Blest intuitions and communions fleet
With living Nature, in her joys and woes
Thenceforth your soul rejoiced to see
The shrine of social Liberty!
O beautiful! O Nature's child!
'Twas thence you hailed the platform wild
Where once the Austrian fell
Beneath the shaft of Tell!
O Lady, nursed in pomp and pleasure!
Thence learn'd you that heroic measure.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Ode To Sara, In Answer To A Letter From Bristol

Nor travels my meand'ring eye
The starry wilderness on high;
Nor now with curious sight
I mark the glow-worm as I pass,
Move with 'green radiance' thro' the grass,
An emerald of light.

O ever-present to my view!
My wafted spirit is with you,
And soothes your boding fears;
I see you all opprest with gloom
Sit lonely in that cheerless room--
Ah me! you are in tears!

Belovèd woman! did you fly
Chilled friendship's dark disliking eye
Or mirth's untimely din?
With cruel weight these trifles press
A temper sore with tenderness,
When aches the void within.

But why with sable wand unblest
Should fancy rouse within my breast
Dim-visaged shapes of dread?
Untenanting its beauteous clay,
My Sara's soul has winged its way,
And hovers round my head!

I felt it prompt the tender dream,
When, slowly sunk the day's last gleam,
You roused each gentler sense;
As sighing o'er the blossom's bloom
Meek evening wakes its soft perfume
With viewless influence.

And hark, my love! The sea-breeze moans
Thro' yon reft house! O'er rolling stones,
With broad impetuous sweep,
The fast encroaching tides supply

The silence of the cloudless sky
With mimic thunders deep.

Dark-redd'ning from the channel'd isle
(Where stands one solitary pile
Unslated by the blast)
The watchfire, like a sullen star,
Twinkles to many a dozing star,
Rude-cradled on the mast.

Ev'n there -- beneath that light-house tower--
In the tumultuous evil hour
Ere peace with Sara came,
Time was, I should have thought it sweet
To count the echoings of my feet,
And watch the troubled flame.

And there in black soul-jaundiced fit
A sad gloom-pampered man to sit,
And listen to the roar,
When mountain surges, bellowing deep,
With an uncouth monster leap
Plunged foaming on the shore.

Then by the lightning's blaze to mark,
Some toiling tempest-shattered bark,
Her vain distress-guns hear:
And when a second-sheet of light
Flashed o'er the blackness of the night --
To see no vessel there!

But fancy now more gayly sings;
Or if awhile she droop her wings,
As skylark's 'mid the corn,
On summer fields she grounds her breast:
Th' oblivious poppy o'er her nest,
Nods, till returning morn.

O mark those smiling tears, that swell
The opened rose! From heaven they fell,
And with the sunbeam blend;
Blessed visitations from above:

Such are the tender woes of love
Fost'ring the heart they bend!

When stormy midnight howling round
Beats on our roof with clatt'ring sound,
To me your arms you'll stretch:
Great God! you'll say -- To us so kind,
O shelter from this loud bleak wind
The houseless, friendless wretch!

The tears that tremble down your cheek,
Shall bathe my kisses chaste and meek
In pity's dew divine;
And from your heart the sighs that steal
Shall make your rising bosom feel
The answ'ring swell of mine!

How oft, my love! with shapings sweet
I paint the monument we shall meet!
With eager speed I dart--
I seize you in the vacant air,
And fancy, with a husband's care,
I press you to my heart!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Ode To The Departing Year

I.

Spirit who sweepst the wild harp of Time!
It is most hard, with an untroubled ear
Thy dark inwoven harmonies to hear!
Yet, mine eye fixed on Heaven's unchanging clime,
Long had I listened, free from mortal fear,
With inward stillness, and a bowed mind;
When lo! its folds far waving on the wind,
I saw the train of the departing Year!
Starting from my silent sadness,
Then with no unholy madness
Ere yet the entered cloud foreclosed my sight,
I raised the impetuous song, and solemnised his flight.

II.

Hither, from the recent tomb,
From the prison's direr gloom,
From distemper's midnight anguish;
And thence, where poverty doth waste and languish!
Or where, his two bright torches blending,
Love illuminates manhood's maze;
Or where o'er cradled infants bending
Hope has fixed her wishful gaze;
Hither, in perplexed dance,
Ye Woes! ye young-eyed Joys! advance!

By Time's wild harp, and by the hand
Whose indefatigable sweep
Raises its fateful strings from sleep,
I bid you haste, a mixed tumultuous band!
From every private bower,
And each domestic hearth,
Haste for one solemn hour;
And with a loud and yet a louder voice,
O'er Nature struggling in portentous birth
Weep and rejoice!
Still echoes the dread name that o'er the earth
Let slip the storm, and woke the brood of Hell:
And now advance in saintly jubilee

Justice and Truth! They too have heard thy spell,
They too obey thy name, divinest Liberty!

III.

I marked Ambition in his war-array!
I heard the mailed Monarch's troublous cry--
' Ah! wherefore does the Northern Conqueress stay!
Groans not her chariot on its onward way?'
Fly, mailed monarch, fly!
Stunned by Death's twice mortal mace,
No more on murder's lurid face
The insatiate hag shall gloat with drunken eye!
Manes of the unnumbered slain!
Ye that gasped on Warsaw's plain!
Ye that erst at Ismail's tower,
When human ruin choked the streams,
Fell in conquest's gluttoned hour,
Mid women's shrieks and infant's screams!
Spirits of the uncoffined slain,
Sudden blasts of triumph swelling,
Oft, at night, in misty train,
Rush around her narrow dwelling!
The exterminating fiend is fled!--
(Foul her life and dark her doom)
Mighty armies of the dead
Dance, like death-fires, round her tomb!
Then with prophetic song relate,
Each some tyrant-murderer's fate!

IV.

Departing Year! 'twas on no earthly shore
My soul beheld thy vision! Where alone,
Voiceless and stern, before the cloudy throne,
Aye Memory sits: thy robe inscribed with gore,
With many an unimaginable groan
Thou storied'st thy sad hours! Silence ensued,
Deep silence o'er the ethereal multitude,
Whose locks with wreaths, whose wreaths with glories shone.
Then his eye wild ardors glancing,
From the choired gods advancing,
The Spirit of the Earth made reverence meet,
And stood up, beautiful, before the cloudy seat.

V.

Throughout the blissful throng,
Hushed were harp and song:
Till wheeling round the throne the Lampads seven
(The mystic Words of Heaven)
Permissive signal make:
The fervent Spirit bowed, then spread its wings ad spake!
'Thou in stormy blackness throning
Love and uncreated Light,
By the Earth's unsolaced groaning,
Seize thy terrors, Arm of might!
By peace with proffered insult scared,
Masked hate and envying scorn!
By years of havoc yet unborn!
And hunger's bosom to the frost-winds bared!
But chief by Afric's wrongs,
Strange, horrible, and foul!
By what deep guilt belongs
To the deaf Synod, 'full of gifts and lies!'
By wealth's insensate laugh! by torture's howl!
Avenger, rise!
Forever shall the thankless Island scowl,
Her quiver full, and with unbroken bow?
Speak! from thy storm-black Heaven, O speak aloud!
And on the darkling foe
Open thine eye of fire from some uncertain cloud!
O dart the flash! O rise and deal the blow!
The Past to thee, to thee the Future cries!
Hark, how wide Nature joins her groans below!
Rise, God of Nature! rise.'

VI.

The voice had ceased, the vision fled;
Yet still I gasped and reeled with dread.
And ever, when the dream of night
Renews the phantom to my sight,
Cold sweat-drops gather on my limbs;
My ears throb hot; my eye-balls start;
My brain with horrid tumult swims,
Wild is the tempest of my heart;
And my thick and struggling breath

Imitates the toil of death!
No stranger agony confounds
The soldier on the war-field spread,
When all foredone with toil and wounds,
Death-like he dozes among heaps of dead!
(The strife is o'er, the daylight fled,
And the night-wind clamors hoarse!
See! the starting wretch's head
Lies pillowed on a brother's corse!)

VII.

Not yet enslaved, not wholly vile,
O Albion! O my mother Isle!
Thy valleys, fair as Eden's bowers,
Glitter green with sunny showers;
Thy grassy uplands' gentle swells
Echo to the bleat of flocks
(Those grassy hills, those glittering dells
Proudly ramparted with rocks);
And Ocean mid his uproar wild
Speaks safety to his island child.
Hence for many a fearless age
Has social Quiet loved thy shore;
Nor ever proud invaders rage
Or sacked thy towers, or stained thy fields with gore.

VIII.

Abandoned of Heaven! mad avarice thy guide,
At cowardly distance, yet kindling with pride--
Mid thy herds and thy corn-fields secure thou hast stood,
And joined the wild yelling of famine and blood!
The nations curse thee. They with eager wondering
Shall hear Destruction, like a vulture, scream!
Strange-eyed Destruction! who with many a dream
Of central fires through neither seas upthundering
Soothes her fierce solitude; yet as she lies
By livid fount, or red volcanic stream,
If ever to her lidless dragon-eyes,
O Albion! thy predestined ruins rise,
The fiend-hag on her perilous couch doth leap,
Muttering distempered triumph in her charmed sleep.

IX.

Away, my soul, away!

In vain, in vain the birds of warning sing--

And hark! I hear the famished bird of prey,

Flap their lank pennons on the groaning wind!

Away, my soul, away!

I, unpartaking of the evil thing,

With daily prayer and daily toil

Soliciting for food my scanty soil,

Have wailed my country with a loud Lament.

Now I recentre my immortal mind

In the deep sabbath of meek self-content;

Cleansed from the vaporous passions that bedim

God's Image, sister of the Seraphim.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Ode To Tranquillity

Tranquillity! thou better name
Than all the family of Fame!
Thou ne'er wilt leave my riper age
To low intrigue, or factious rage;
For oh! dear child of thoughtful Truth,
To thee I gave my early youth,
And left the bark, and blest the steadfast shore,
Ere yet the tempest rose and scared me with its roar.

Who late and lingering seeks thy shrine,
On him but seldom, Power divine,
Thy spirit rests! Satiety
And Sloth, poor counterfeits of thee,
Mock the tired worldling. Idle hope
And dire remembrance interlope,
To vex the feverish slumbers of the mind:
The bubble floats before, the spectre stalks behind.

But me thy gentle hand will lead
At morning through the accustomed mead;
And in the sultry summer's heat
Will build me up a mossy seat;
And when the gust of Autumn crowds,
And breaks the busy moonlight clouds,
Thou best the thought canst raise, the heart attune,
Light as the busy clouds, calm as the gliding moon.

The feeling heart, the searching soul,
To thee I dedicate the whole!
And while within myself I trace
The greatness of some future race,
Aloof with hermit-eye I scan
The present works of present man--
A wild and dream-like trade of blood and guile,
Too foolish for a tear, too wicked for a smile!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

On A Connubial Rupture In High Life

I sigh, fair injured stranger! for thy fate;
But what shall sighs avail thee? Thy poor heart,
'Mid all the 'pomp and circumstance' of state,
Shivers in nakedness. Unbidden, start

Sad recollections of Hope's garish dream,
That shaped a seraph form, and named it Love,
Its hues gay-varying, as the orient beam
Varies the neck of Cytherea's dove.

To one soft accent of domestic joy,
Poor are the shouts that shake the high-arched dome:
Those plaudits, that thy public path annoy,
Alas! they tell thee--Thou'rt a wretch at home!

O then retire and weep! Their very woes
Solace the guiltless. Drop the pearly flood
On thy sweet infant, as the full-blown rose,
Surcharged with dew, bends o'er its neighb'ring bud.

And oh that Truth some holy spell might lend
To lure thy wanderer from the syren's power,
Then bid your souls inseparably blend
Like two bright dewdrops meeting in a flower.

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 An Infant Which Died Before Baptism

'Be, rather than be call'd, a child of God,'
Death whisper'd!--with assenting nod,
Its head upon its mother's breast,
The Baby bow'd, without demur--
Of the kingdom of the Blest
Possessor, not inheritor.

April 8th, 1799.

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

On Revisiting The Sea-Shore, After Long Absence, Under Strong Medical Recommendation Not To Bathe

God be with thee, gladsome Ocean!
How gladly greet I thee once more!
Ships and waves, and ceaseless motion,
And men rejoicing on thy shore.

Dissuading spake the mild physician,
'Those briny waves for thee are death!'
But my soul fulfilled her mission,
And lo! I breathe untroubled breath!

Fashion's pining sons and daughters,
That seek the crowd they seem to fly,
Trembling they approach thy waters;
And what cares Nature, if they die?

Me a thousand hopes and pleasures,
A thousand recollections bland,
Thoughts sublime, and stately measures,
Revisit on thy echoing stand:

Dreams (the soul herself forsaking),
Tearful raptures, boyish mirth;
Silent adorations, making
A blessed shadow of this Earth!

O ye hopes, that stir within me,
Health comes with you from above!
God is with me, God is in me!
I cannot die, if Life be Love.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

On The Christening Of A Friend's Child

This day among the faithful placed,
And fed with fontal manna,
O with maternal title graced
Dear Anna's dearest Anna!--

While others wish thee wise and fair,
A maid of spotless fame,
I'll breathe this more compendious prayer--
May'st thou deserve thy name!

Thy mother's name--a potent spell,
That bids the virtues hie
From mystic grove and living cell
Confess'd to fancy's eye;--

Meek quietness without offence;
Content in homespun kirtle;
True love; and true love's innocence,
White blossom of the myrtle!

Associates of thy name, sweet child!
These virtues may'st thou win;
With face as eloquently mild
To say, they lodge within.

So, when her tale of days all flown,
Thy mother shall be mist here;
When Heaven at length shall claim its own,
And angels snatch their sister;

Some hoary-headed friend, perchance,
May gaze with stifled breath;
And oft, in momentary trance,
Forget the waste of death.

Ev'n thus a lovely rose I view'd,
In summer-swelling pride;
Nor mark'd the bud, that green and rude
Peep'd at the rose's side.

It chanced, I pass'd again that way
In autumn's latest hour,
And wond'ring saw the selfsame spray
Rich with the selfsame flower.

Ah, fond deceit! the rude green bud
Alike in shape, place, name,
Had bloom'd, where bloom'd its parent stud,
Another and the same!

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

Phantom Or Fact? A Dialogue In Verse

Author.

A lovely form there sate beside my bed,
And such a feeding calm its presence shed,
A tender love so pure from earthly leaven
That I unnethe the fancy might control,
'Twas my own spirit newly come from heaven
Wooing its gentle way into my soul!
But ah! the change -- It had not stirred, and yet
Alas! that change how fain would I forget?
That shrinking back, like one that had mistook!
That weary, wandering, disavowing Look!
'Twas all another, feature, look and frame,
And still, methought, I knew it was the same!

Friend.

This riddling Tale, to what does it belong?
Is't History? Vision? or an idle Song?
Or rather say at once, within what space
Of Time this wild disastrous change took place?

Author.

Call it a moment's work (and such it seems),
This Tale's a Fragment from the Life of Dreams;
But say, that years matured the silent strife,
And 'tis a Record from the Dream of Life.

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,
Bristowa'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

Religious Musings : A Desultory Poem Written On The Christmas Eve Of 1794

What tho' first,
In years unseason'd, I attuned the lay
To idle passion and unreal woe?
Yet serious truth her empire o'er my song
Hath now asserted : falsehood's evil brood
Vice and deceitful pleasure, she at once
Excluded, and my fancy's careless toil
Drew to the better cause! ~Akenside

ARGUMENT.

Introduction. Person of Christ. His prayer on the cross. The process of his doctrines on the mind of the individual. Character of the elect. Superstition. Digression to the present war. Origin and uses of government and property. The present state of society. French revolution. Millennium. Universal redemption. Conclusion.

This is the time, when most divine to hear
The voice of Adoration rouses me,
As with a Cherub's trump: and high upborne,
Yea, mingling with the Choir, I seem to view
The vision of the heavenly multitude,
Who hymned the song of Peace o'er Bethlehem's fields!
Yet thou more bright than all the Angel-blaze,
That harbingered thy birth, Thou Man of Woes!
Despiséd Galilæan ! For the Great
Invisible (by symbols only seen)
With a peculiar and surpassing light
Shines from the visage of the oppressed good man,
When heedless of himself the scourgéd saint
Mourns for the oppressor. Fair the vernal mead,
Fair the high grove, the sea, the sun, the stars ;
True impress each of their creating Sire !
Yet nor high grove, nor many-colour'd mead,
Nor the green ocean with his thousand isles,
Nor the starred azure, nor the sovran sun,
E'er with such majesty of portraiture
Imaged the supreme beauty uncreate,

As thou, meek Saviour ! at the fearful hour
When thy insulted anguish winged the prayer
Harped by Archangels, when they sing of mercy !
Which when the Almighty heard from forth his throne
Diviner light filled Heaven with ecstasy !
Heaven's hymnings paused : and Hell her yawning mouth
Closed a brief moment.

Lovely was the death
Of Him whose life was Love ! Holy with power
He on the thought-benighted Sceptic beamed
Manifest Godhead, melting into day
What floating mists of dark idolatry
Broke and misshaped the omnipresent Sire :
And first by Fear uncharmed the drowséd Soul
Till of its nobler nature it 'gan feel
Dim recollections; and thence soared to Hope.
Strong to believe whate'er of mystic good
The Eternal dooms for His immortal sons.
From Hope and firmer Faith to perfect Love
Attracted and absorbed : and centered there
God only to behold, and know, and feel,
Till by exclusive consciousness of God
All self-annihilated it shall make
God its Identity : God all in all !
We and our Father one !
And blest are they,
Who in this fleshly World, the elect of Heaven,
Their strong eye darting through the deeds of me
Adore with steadfast unpresuming gaze
Him Nature's essence, mind, and energy !
And gazing, trembling, patiently ascend
Treading beneath their feet all visible things
As steps, that upward to their Father's throne
Lead gradual--else nor glorified nor loved.
They nor contempt embosom nor revenge :
For they dare know of what may seem deform
The Supreme Fair sole operant : in whose sight
All things are pure, his strong controlling love
Alike from all educing perfect good.
Their's too celestial courage, inly armed--
Dwarfing Earth's giant brood, what time they muse
On their great Father, great beyond compare !

And marching onwards view high o'er their heads
His waving banners of Omnipotence.

Who the Creator love, created Might
Dread not : within their tents no Terrors walk.
For they are holy things before the Lord
Aye unprofaned, though Earth should league with Hell;
God's altar grasping with an eager hand
Fear, the wild-visag'd, pale, eye-starting wretch,
Sure-refug'd hears his hot pursuing fiends
Yell at vain distance. Soon refresh'd from Heaven
He calms the throb and tempest of his heart
His countenance settles; a soft solemn bliss
Swims in his eye--his swimming eye uprais'd
And Faith's whole armour glitters on his limbs !
And thus transfigured with a dreadless awe,
A solemn hush of soul, meek he beholds
All things of terrible seeming : yea, unmoved
Views e'en the immitigable ministers
That shower down vengeance on these latter days.
For kindling with intenser Deity
From the celestial Mercy-seat they come,
And at the renovating wells of Love
Have fill'd their vials with salutary wrath,
To sickly Nature more medicinal
Than what soft balm the weeping good man pours
Into the lone despoiléd traveller's wounds !

Thus from the Elect, regenerate through faith
Pass the dark Passions and what thirsty cares
Drink up the spirit, and the dim regards
Self-centre. Lo they vanish ! or acquire
New names, new features--by supernal grace
Enrobed with Light, and naturalised in Heaven.
As when a shepherd on a vernal morn
Through some thick fog creeps timorous with slow foot
Darkling he fixes on the immediate road
His downward eye : all else of fairest kind
Hid or deformed. But lo ! the bursting Sun !
Touched by the enchantment of that sudden beam
Straight the black vapour melteth, and in globes
Of dewy glitter gems each plant and tree;

On every leaf, on every blade it hangs !
Dance glad the new-born intermingling rays,
And wide around the landscape streams with glory !

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 fraternises man, this constitutes
Our charities and bearings. But 'tis God
Diffused through all, that cloth make all one whole;
This the worst superstition, him except
Aught to desire, Supreme Reality !
The plenitude and permanence of bliss !
O Fiends of Superstition ! not that oft
The erring Priest hath stained with brother's blood
Your grisly idols, not for this may wrath
Thunder against you from the Holy One !
But o'er some plain that steameth to the sun,
Peopled with Death; or where more hideous Trade
Loud-laughing packs his bales of human anguish ;

I will raise up a mourning, O ye Fiends !
And curse your spells, that film the eye of Faith,
Hiding the present God; whose presence lost,
The moral world's cohesion, we become
An Anarchy of Spirits ! 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 !

But first offences needs must come ! Even now
(Black Hell laughs horrible--to hear the scoff !)
Thee to defend, meek Galilaeen ! Thee
And thy mild laws of Love unutterable,
Mistrust and Enmity have burst the bands
Of social peace : and listening Treachery lurks
With pious fraud to snare a brother's life;
And childless widows o'er the groaning land
Wail numberless ; and orphans weep for bread !
Thee to defend, dear Saviour of Mankind !
Thee, Lamb of God ! Thee, blameless Prince of Peace !
From all sides rush the thirsty brood of War !--
Austria, and that foul Woman of the North,
The lustful murderess of her wedded lord !
And he, connatural Mind ! whom (in their songs
So bards of elder time had haply feigned)
Some Fury fondled in her hate to man,
Bidding her serpent hair in mazy surge
Lick his young face, and at his mouth imbreathe
Horrible sympathy ! And leagued with these
Each petty German princeling, nursed in gore
Soul-hardened barterers of human blood !
Death's prime slave-merchants ! Scorpion- whips of Fate !
Nor least in savagery of holy zeal,

Apt for the yoke, the race degenerate,
Whom Britain erst had blushed to call her sons !
Thee to defend the Moloch Priest prefers
The prayer of hate, and bellows to the herd,
That Deity, Accomplice Deity
In the fierce jealousy of wakened wrath
Will go forth with our armies and our fleets
To scatter the red ruin on their foes !
O blasphemy ! to mingle fiendish deeds
With blessedness !
Lord of unsleeping Love,
From everlasting Thou ! We shall not die.
These, even these, in mercy didst thou form,
Teachers of Good through Evil, by brief wrong
Making Truth lovely, and her future might
Magnetic o'er the fixed untrembling heart.

In the primeval age a dateless while
The vacant Shepherd wander'd with his flock,
Pitching his tent where'er the green grass waved.
But soon Imagination conjured up
An host of new desires : with busy aim,
Each for himself, Earth's eager children toiled.
So Property began, twy-streaming fount,
Whence Vice and Virtue flow, honey and gall.
Hence the soft couch, and many-coloured robe,
The timbrel, and arched dome and costly feast,
With all the inventive arts, that nursed the soul
To forms of beauty, and by sensual wants
Unsensualised the mind, which in the means
Learnt to forget the grossness of the end,
Best pleased with its own activity.
And hence Disease that withers manhood's arm,
The daggered Envy, spirit-quenching Want,
Warriors, and Lords, and Priests--all the sore ills
That vex and desolate our mortal life.
Wide-wasting ills ! yet each the immediate source
Of mightier good. Their keen necessities
To ceaseless action goading human thought
Have made Earth's reasoning animal her Lord;
And the pale-featured Sage's trembling hand
Strong as an host of arméd Deities,

Such as the blind Ionian fabled erst.

From Avarice thus, from Luxury and War
Sprang heavenly Science; and from Science Freedom.
O'er waken'd realms Philosophers and Bards
Spread in concentric circles : they whose souls,
Conscious of their high dignities from God,
Brook not Wealth's rivalry ! and they, who long
Enamoured with the charms of order, hate
The unseemly disproportion : and who'er
Turn with mild sorrow from the Victor's car
And the low puppetry of thrones, to muse
On that blest triumph, when the Patriot Sage
Called the red lightnings from the o'er-rushing cloud
And dashed the beauteous terrors on the earth
Smiling majestic. Such a phalanx ne'er
Measured firm paces to the calming sound
Of Spartan flute ! These on the fated day,
When, stung to rage by Pity, eloquent men
Have roused with pealing voice the unnumbered tribes
That toil and groan and bleed, hungry and blind--
These, hush'd awhile with patient eye serene,
Shall watch the mad careering of the storm ;
Then o'er the wild and wavy chaos rush
And tame the outrageous mass, with plastic might
Moulding Confusion to such perfect forms,
As erst were wont,--bright visions of the day !--
To float before them, when, the summer noon,
Beneath some arched romantic rock reclined
They felt the sea-breeze lift their youthful locks ;
Or in the month of blossoms, at mild eve,
Wandering with desultory feet inhaled
The wafted perfumes, and the flocks and woods
And many-tinted streams and setting sun
With all his gorgeous company of clouds
Ecstatic gazed ! then homeward as they strayed
Cast the sad eye to earth, and inly mused
Why there was misery in a world so fair.

Ah ! far removed from all that glads the sense,
From all that softens or ennobles Man
The wretched Many ! Bent beneath their loads

They gape at pageant Power, nor recognise
Their cots' transmuted plunder ! From the tree
Of Knowledge, ere the vernal sap had risen
Rudely disbranched ! Blessed Society !
Fitliest depicted by some sun-scorched waste,
Where oft majestic through the tainted noon
The Simoom sails, before whose purple pomp
Who falls not prostrate dies ! And where by night,
Fast by each precious fountain on green herbs
The lion couches : or hyaena dips
Deep in the lucid stream his bloody jaws;
Or serpent plants his vast moon-glittering bulk,
Caught in whose monstrous twine Behemoth yells,
His bones loud-crashing !
O ye numberless,
Whom foul Oppression's ruffian gluttony
Drives from Life's plenteous feast ! O thou poor Wretch
Who nursed in darkness and made wild by want,
Roamest for prey, yea thy unnatural hand
Dost lift to deeds of blood ! O pale-eyed form,
The victim of seduction, doomed to know
Polluted nights and days of blasphemy;
Who in loathed orgies with lewd wassailers
Must gaily laugh, while thy remembered Home
Gnaws like a viper at thy secret heart !
O agéd Women ! ye who weekly catch
The morsel tossed by law-forced charity,
And die so slowly, that none call it murder !
O loathly suppliants ! ye, that unreceived
Totter heart-broken from the closing gates
Of the full Lazar-house; or, gazing, stand,
Sick with despair ! O ye to Glory's field
Forced or ensnared, who, as ye gasp in death,
Bleed with new wounds beneath the vulture's beak !
O thou poor widow, who in dreams dost view
Thy husband's mangled corse, and from short doze
Start'st with a shriek; or in thy half-thatched cot
Waked by the wintry night-storm, wet and cold
Cov'rst o'er thy screaming baby ! Rest awhile
Children of Wretchedness ! More groans must rise,
More blood must stream, or ere your wrongs be full.
Yet is the day of Retribution nigh :

The Lamb of God hath opened the fifth seal :
 And upward rush on swiftest wing of fire
 The innumerable multitude of wrongs
 By man on man inflicted ! Rest awhile,
 Children of Wretchedness ! The hour is nigh
 And lo ! the Great, the Rich, the Mighty Men,
 The Kings and the Chief Captains of the World,
 With all that fixed on high like stars of Heaven
 Shot baleful influence, shall be cast to earth,
 Vile and down-trodden, as the untimely fruit
 Shook from the fig-tree by a sudden storm.
 Even now the storm begins : each gentle name.
 Faith and meek Piety, with fearful joy
 Tremble far-off--for lo ! the Giant Frenzy
 Uprooting empires with his whirlwind arm
 Mocketh high Heaven; burst hideous from the cell
 Where the old Hag, unconquerable, huge,
 Creation's eyeless drudge, black Ruin, sits
 Nursing the impatient earthquake.
 O return !
 Pure Faith ! meek Piety ! The abhorréd Form
 Whose scarlet robe was stiff with earthly pomp,
 Who drank iniquity in cups of gold,
 Whose names were many and all blasphemous,
 Hath met the horrible judgment ! Whence that cry ?
 The mighty army of foul Spirits shrieked
 Disherited of earth ! For she hath fallen
 On whose black front was written Mystery;
 She that reeled heavily, whose wine was blood;
 She that worked whoredom with the Daemon Power,
 And from the dark embrace all evil things
 Brought forth and nurtured : mitred Atheism !
 And patient Folly who on bended knee
 Gives back the steel that stabbed him; and pale Fear
 Haunted by ghastlier shapings than surround
 Moon-blasted Madness when he yells at midnight !
 Return pure Faith ! return meek Piety !
 The kingdoms the world are your's : each heart
 Self-governed, the vast family of Love
 Raised from the common earth by common toil
 Enjoy the equal produce. Such delights
 As float to earth, permitted visitants !

When in some hour of solemn jubilee
The massy gates of Paradise are thrown
Wide open, and forth come in fragments wild
Sweet echoes of unearthly melodies,
And odours snatched from beds of Amaranth,
And they, that from the crystal river of life
Spring up on freshened wing, ambrosial gales !
The favoured good man in his lonely walk
Perceives them, and his silent spirit drinks
Strange bliss which he shall recognise in heaven.
And such delights, such strange beatitudes
Seize on my young anticipating heart
When that blest future rushes on my view !
For in his own and in his Father's might
The Saviour comes ! While as the Thousand Years
Lead up their mystic dance, the Desert shouts !
Old Ocean claps his hands ! The mighty Dead
Rise to new life, who'er from earliest time
With conscious zeal had urged Love's wondrous plan
Coadjutors of God. To Milton's trump
The high groves of the renovated Earth
Unbosom their glad echoes : inly hushed,
Adoring Newton his serener eye
Raises to heaven : and he of mortal kind
Wisest, he first who marked the ideal tribes
Up the fine fibres through the sentient brain.
Lo ! Priestley there, patriot, and saint, and sage,
Him, full of years, from his loved native land
Statesmen blood-stained and priests idolatrous
By dark lies maddening the blind multitude
Drove with vain hate. Calm, pitying he retired,
And mused expectant on these promised years.
O Years ! the blest pre-eminence of Saints !
Ye sweep athwart my gaze, so heavenly bright,
The wings that veil the adoring Seraphs' eyes,
What time they bend before the Jasper Throne
Reflect no lovelier hues ! Yet ye depart,
And all beyond is darkness ! Heights most strange,
Whence Fancy falls, fluttering her idle wing.
For who of woman born may paint the hour,
When seized in his mid course, the Sun shall wane
Making noon ghastly ! Who of woman born

May image in the workings of his thought,
How the black-visaged, red-eyed Fiend outstretched
Beneath the unsteady feet of Nature groans,
In feverous slumbers--destined then to wake,
When fiery whirlwinds thunder his dread name
And Angels shout, Destruction ! How his arm
The last great Spirit lifting high in air
Shall swear by Him, the ever-living One,
Time is no more !
Believe thou, O my soul,
Life is a vision shadowy of Truth ;
And vice, and anguish, and the wormy grave
Shapes of a dream ! The veiling clouds retire
And lo ! the Throne of the redeeming God
Forth flashing unimagined day
Wraps in one blaze earth, heaven, and deepest hell.

Contemplant Spirits ! ye that hover o'er
With untired gaze the immeasurable fount
Ebullient with creative Deity !
And ye of plastic power, that interfused
Roll through the grosser and material mass
In organizing surge ! Holies of God !
(And what if Monads of the infinite mind?)
I haply journeying my immortal course
Shall sometime join your mystic choir ! Till then
I discipline my young and novice thought
In ministeries of heart-stirring song,
And aye on Meditation's heaven-ward wing
Soaring aloft I breathe the empyreal air
Of Love, omnific, omnipresent Love,
Whose day-spring rises glorious in my soul
As the great Sun, when he his influence
Sheds on the frost-bound waters--The glad stream
Flows to the ray and warbles as it flows.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

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

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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 dived for the ship's crew, and she (the latter) winneth the ancient Mariner.

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

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 bemocked 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 blesséd 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 corpses came again,
But a troop of spirits blest:

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

And from their bodies passed.

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

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

And now '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 away.

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 shrieve 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 marineres
That come from a far countree.

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

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

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

Songs Of The Pixies

I.

Whom the untaught Shepherds call
Pixies in their madrigal,
Fancy's children, here we dwell:
Welcome, Ladies! to our cell.
Here the wren of softest note
Builds its nest and warbles well;
Here the blackbird strains his throat;
Welcome, Ladies! to our cell.

II.

When fades the moon to shadowy-pale,
And scuds the cloud before the gale,
Ere the Morn, all gem-bedight,
Hath streak'd the East with rosy light,
We sip the furze-flower's fragrant dews
Clad in robes of rainbow hues:
Or sport amid the shooting gleams
To the tune of distant-tinkling teams,
While lusty Labour scouting sorrow
Bids the Dame a glad good-morrow,
Who jogs the accustomed road along,
And paces cheery to her cheering song.

III.

But not our filmy pinion
We scorch amid the blaze of day,
When Noontide's fiery-tressed minion
Flashes the fervid ray.
Aye from the sultry heat
We to the cave retreat
O'ercanopied by huge roots intertwined
With wildest texture, blackened o'er with age:
Round them their mantle green the ivies bind,
Beneath whose foliage pale
Fanned by the unfrequent gale
We shield us from the Tyrant's mid-day rage.

IV.

Thither, while the murmuring throng
Of wild-bees hum their drowsy song,
By Indolence and Fancy brought,
A youthful Bard, 'unknown to Fame',
Wooes the Queen of Solemn Thought,
And heaves the gentle misery of a sigh
Gazing with tearful eye,
As round our sandy grot appear
Many a rudely sculptured name
To pensive Memory dear!
Weaving gay dreams of sunny-tinctured hue
We glance before his view:
O'er his hush'd soul our soothing witcheries shed
And twine the future garland round his head.

V.

When Evening's dusky car
Crowned with her dewy star
Steals o'er the fading sky in shadowy flight;
On leaves of aspen trees
We tremble to the breeze
Veiled from the grosser ken of mortal sight.
Or, haply, at the visionary hour,
Along our wildly-bowered sequestered walk,
We listen to the enamoured rustic's talk;
Heave with the heavings of the maiden's breast,
Where young-eyed Loves have hid their turtle nest;
Or guide of soul-subduing power
The glance, that from the half-confessing eye
Darts the fond question or the soft reply.

VI.

Or through the mystic ringlets of the vale
We flash our faery feet in gamesome prank;
Or, silent-sandal'd, pay our defter court,
Circling the Spirit of the Western Gale,
Where wearied with his flower-caressing sport,
Supine he slumbers on a violet bank;
Then with quaint music hymn the parting gleam
By lonely Otter's sleep-persuading stream;
Or where his wave with loud unquiet song
Dashed o'er the rocky channel froths along;

Or where, his silver waters smoothed to rest,
The tall tree's shadow sleeps upon his breast.

VII.

Hence thou lingerer, Light!
Eve saddens into Night.
Mother of wildly-working dreams! we view
The sombre hours, that round thee stand
With down-cast eyes (a duteous band!)
Their dark robes dripping with the heavy dew.
Sorceress of the ebon throne!
Thy power the Pixies own,
When round thy raven brow
Heaven's lucent roses glow,
And clouds in watery colours drest
Float in light drapery o'er thy sable vest:
What time the pale moon sheds a softer day
Mellowing the woods beneath its pensive beam:
For mid the quivering light 'tis ours to play,
Aye dancing to the cadence of the stream.

VIII.

Welcome, Ladies! to the cell
Where the blameless Pixies dwell:
But thou, sweet Nymph! proclaimed our Faery Queen,
With what obeisance meet
Thy presence shall we greet?
For lo! attendant on thy steps are seen
Graceful Ease in artless stole,
And white-robed Purity of soul,
With Honour's softer mien;
Mirth of the loosely-flowing hair,
And meek-eyed Pity eloquently fair,
Whose tearful cheeks are lovely to the view,
As snow-drop wet with dew.

IX.

Unboastful Maid! though now the Lily pale
Transparent grace thy beauties meek;
Yet ere again along the impurpling vale,
The purpling vale and elfin-haunted grove,
Young Zephyr his fresh flowers profusely throws,

We'll tinge with livelier hues thy cheek;
And, haply, from the nectar-breathing Rose
Extract a Blush for Love!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Sonnet

To the River Otter

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 II. On A Discovery Made Too Late

Thou bleedest, my poor heart! and thy distress
Reas'ning I ponder with a scornful smile
And probe thy sore wound sternly, tho' the while
Swollen be mine eye and dim with heaviness.
Why didst thou listen to Hope's whisper bland?
Or list'ning, why forget the healing tale,
When Jealousy with fev'rish fancies pale
Jarred thy fine fibres with a maniac's hand?
Faint was that Hope, and rayless!--Yet 'twas fair,
And soothed with many a dream the hour of rest:
Thou shouldst have loved it most, when most opprest,
And nursed it with an agony of care,
Even as a Mother her sweet infant heir,
That wan and sickly droops upon her breast!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Sonnet Iii.

Thou gentle Look, that didst my soul beguile,
Why hast thou left me? Still in some fond dream
Revisit my sad heart, auspicious Smile!
As falls on closing flowers the lunar beam:
What time, in sickly mood, at parting day
I lay me down and think of happier years;
Of joys, that glimmered in Hope's twilight ray,
Then left me darkling in a vale of tears.
O pleasant days of Hope -- forever flown!
Could I recall you!-- But that thought is vain.
Availeth not Persuasion's sweetest tone
To lure the fleet-winged travellers back again:
Yet fair, tho' faint, their images shall gleam
Like the bright Rainbow on an evening stream.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Sonnet IX. To Priestley

Tho' roused by that dark Visir riot rude
Have driven our Priestly o'er the ocean swell;
Tho' Superstition and her wolfish brood
Bay his mild radiance, impotent and fell;
Calm in his halls of Brightness he shall dwell;
For lo! Religion at his strong behest
Starts with mild anger from the Papal spell,
And flings to Earth her tinsel-glittering vest,
Her mitred state and cumbrous pomp unholy;
And Justice wakes to bid th' Oppressor wail,
Insulting aye the wrongs of patient folly;
And from her dark retreat by Wisdom won,
Meek Nature slowly lifts her matron veil
To smile with fondness on her gazing son!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Sonnet V.

Sweet Mercy! how my very heart has bled
To see thee, poor old man! and thy gray hairs
Hoar with the snowy blast; while no one cares
To clothe thy shrivelled limbs and palsied head.
My Father! throw away this tattered vest
That mocks thy shiv'ring! take my garment--use
A young man's arm! I'll melt these frozen dews
That hang from thy white beard and numb thy breast.
My Sara, too, shall tend thee, like a child:
And thou shalt talk, in our fire-side's recess,
Of purple pride, that scowls on wretchedness.--
He did not scowl, the Galilaeen mild,
Who met the Lazar turned from rich man's doors,
And called him Friend, and wept upon his sores!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Sonnet Vi.

Pale Roamer thro' the Night! thou poor forlorn!
Remorse that man on his death-bed possess,
Who in the credulous hour of tenderness
Betrayed, then cast thee forth to Want and scorn!
The World is pityless; the Chaste one's pride,
Mimic of Virtue, scowls on thy distress;
Thy kindred, when they see thee, turn aside,
And Vice alone will shelter Wretchedness!
O! I am sad to think, that there should be
Men, born of woman, who endure to place
Foul offerings on the shrine of Misery,
And force from Famine the caress of Love!
Man has no feeling of thy sore Disgrace:
Keen blows the blast upon the moulting dove!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Sonnet VII. To Burke

As late I lay in Slumber's shadowy vale,
With wetted cheek and in a mourner's guise,
I saw the sainted form of FREEDOM rise:
She spake! not sadder moans the autumnal gale.
'Great Son of Genius! sweet to me thy name,
Ere in an evil hour with alter'd voice
Thou bad'st Oppression's hireling crew rejoice
Blasting with wizard spell my laurell'd fame.
Yet never, Burke! thou drank'st Corruption's bowl!
Thee stormy Pity, and the cherished lure
Of Pomp, and proud Precipitance of soul,
Wildered with meteor fires. Ah, Spirit pure!
That error's mist had left thy purged eye:
So might I clasp thee with a Mother's joy!'

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Sonnet VIII. To Mercy

Not always should the tear's ambrosial dew
Roll its soft anguish down thy furrowed cheek!
Not always heaven-breathed tones of suppliance meek
Beseem thee, Mercy! Yon dark Scowler view,
Who with proud words of dear-loved Freedom came--
More blasting than the mildew from the south!
And kissed his country with Iscariot mouth;
(Ah! foul apostate from his Father's fame!)
Then fixed her on the cross of deep distress,
And at safe distance marks the thirsty lance
Pierce her big side! But oh! if some strange trance
The eye-lids of thy stern-browed Sister press,
Seize, Mercy! thou more terrible the brand,
And hurl her thunderbolts with fiercer hand!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Sonnet X. To Erskine

When British Freedom for an happier land
Spread her broad wings, that fluttered with affright,
Erskine! thy voice she heard, and paused her flight
Sublime of hope! For dreadless thou didst stand
(Thy censer glowing with the hallowed flame)
An hireless Priest before th' insulted shrine,
And at her altar poured'st the stream divine
Of unmatched eloquence. Therefore thy name
Her Sons shall venerate, and cheer thy breast
With blessings heavenward breathed. And when the doom
Of Nature bids thee rise beyond the tomb,
Thy light shall shine: as sunk beneath the West
Tho' the great Summer Sun eludes our gaze,
Still burns wide Heaven with his distended blaze.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Sonnet Xi. To Sheridan

It was some spirit, Sheridan! that breath'd
O'er thy young mind such wildly-various power!
My soul hath marked thee in her shaping hour,
Thy temples with Hymettian flowrets wreath'd:
And sweet thy voice, as when o'er Laura's bier
Sad music trembled thro' Vauclusa's glade;
Sweet, as at dawn the love-lorn Serenade
That wafts soft dreams to Slumber's list'ning ear.
Now patriot Rage and Indignation high
Swell the full tones! And now thine eye-beams dance
Meanings of Scorn and Wit's quaint revelry!
Writhes inly from the bosom-probing glance
Th' Apostate by the brainless rout adores,
As erst that elder Fiend beneath great Michael's sword.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Sonnet Xii. To Mrs. Siddons

As when a child on some long winter's night
Affrighted clinging to its Grandam's knees
With eager wond'ring and perturbed delight
Listens strange tales of fearful dark decrees
Muttered to wretch by necromantic spell;
Or of those hags, who at the witching time
Of murky midnight ride the air sublime,
And mingle foul embrace with fiends of Hell:
Cold Horror drinks its blood! Anon the tear
More gentle starts, to hear the Beldame tell
Of pretty babes, that loved each other dear,
Murdered by cruel Uncle's mandate fell:
Ev'n such the shiv'ring joys thy tones impart,
Ev'n so thou, Siddons! meltest my sad heart!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Sonnet Xiii. To La Fayette

As when far off the warbled strains are heard
That soar on Morning's wing the vales among,
Within his cage th' imprisoned matin bird
Swells the full chorus with a generous song:
He bathes no pinion in the dewy light,
No Father's joy, no Lover's bliss he shares,
Yet still the rising radiance cheers his sight--
His Fellows' freedom soothes the Captive's cares!
Thou, Fayette! who didst wake with startling voice
Life's better Sun from that long wintry night,
Thus in thy Country's triumphs shalt rejoice
And mock with raptures high the dungeon's might:
For lo! the morning struggles into day,
And Slavery's spectres shriek and vanish from the ray!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Sonnet Xiv. Composed While Climbing The Left Ascent Of Brockley Coomb, In The County Of Somerset

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

Sonnet Xix. To A Friend, Who Asked How I Felt When The Nurse First Presented My Infant To Me

Charles! my slow heart was only sad, when first
I scanned that face of feeble infancy;
For dimly on my thoughtful spirit burst
All I had been, and all my babe might be!
But when I saw it on its Mother's arm,
And hanging at her bosom (she the while
Bent o'er its features with a tearful smile),
Then I was thrilled and melted, and most warm
Impressed a Father's kiss: and all beguiled
Of dark remembrance, and presageful fear,
I seemed to see an Angel's form appear--
'Twas even thine, beloved Woman mild!
So for the Mother's sake the Child was dear,
And dearer was the Mother for the Child.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Sonnet Xv. To Schiller

Schiller! that hour I would have wished to die,
If thro' the shudd'ring midnight I had sent
From the dark Dungeon of the Tower time-rent
That fearful voice, a famished Father's cry--
That in no after moment aught less vast
Might stamp me mortal! A triumphant shout
Black Horror screamed, and all her goblin rout
From the more with'ring scene diminished past.
Ah! Bard tremendous in sublimity!
Could I behold thee in thy loftier mood,
Wand'ring at eve with finely frenzied eye
Beneath some vast old tempest-swinging wood!
Awhile with mute awe gazing I would brood,
Then weep aloud in a wild ecstasy!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Sonnet Xvi. To Earl Stanhope

Not, Stanhope! with the Patriot's doubtful name
I mock thy worth -- Friend of the human race
Since scorning Faction's low and partial aim,
Aloof thou wendest in thy stately pace,
Thyself redeeming from that leprous stain,
Nobility: and aye unterrified,
Pourest thine Abdiel warnings on the train
That sit complotting with rebellious pride
'Gaint her, who from the Almighty's bosom leapt
With whirlwind arm, fierce Minister of Love!
Wherefore, ere Virtue o'er thy tomb hath wept,
Angels shall lead thee to the Throne above:
And thou from forth its clouds shall hear the voice,
Champion of Freedom and her God! rejoice!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Sonnet XVII. Composed On A Journey Homeward; The Author Having Received Intelligence Of The Birth Of A Son

Oft o'er my brain does that strange fancy roll
Which makes the present (while the flash dost last)
Seem a mere semblance of some unknown past,
Mixed with such feelings, as perplex the soul
Self-questioned in her sleep: and some have said
We lived ere yet this fleshy robe we wore.
O my sweet Baby! when I reach my door,
If heavy looks should tell me, thou wert dead
(As sometimes, thro' excess of hope, I fear),
I think, that I should struggle to believe
Thou were a Spirit, to this nether sphere
Sentenced for some more venial crime to grieve
Didst scream, then spring to meet Heaven's quick reprieve,
While we wept idly o'er thy little bier.

Sept. 20, 1796.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Sonnet XVIII. To The Autumnal Moon

Mild Splendor of the various-vested Night!
Mother of wildly-working visions! hail!
I watch thy gliding, while with watery light
Thy weak eye glimmers through a fleecy veil;
And when thou lovest thy pale orb to shroud
Behind the gather'd blackness lost on high;
And when thou dartest from the wind-rent cloud
Thy placid lightning o'er th' awakened sky.
Ah, such is Hope! As changeful and as fair!
Now dimly peering on the wistful sight;
Now hid behind the dragon-wing'd Despair:
But soon emerging in her radiant might
She o'er the sorrow-clouded breast of Care
Sails, like a meteor kindling in its flight.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Sonnet Xx.

The piteous sobs that choke the Virgin's breath
For him, the fair betrothed Youth, who lies
Cold in the narrow dwelling, or the cries
With which a Mother wails her Darling's death,
These from our Nature's common impulse spring
Unblamed, unpraised; but o'er the piled earth,
Which hides the sheeted corse of gray-haired Worth,
If droops the soaring Youth with slackened wing;
If he recall in saddest minstrelsy
Each tenderness bestowed, each truth impressed;
Such Grief is Reason, Virtue, Piety!
And from the Almighty Father shall descend
Comforts on his late Evening, whose young breast
Mourns with no transient love the aged friend.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Sonnet Xxi.

Pensive, at eve, on the hard world I mused,
And my poor heart was sad: so at the Moon
I gazed--and sighed, and sighed--for, ah! how soon
Eve saddens into night! Mine eyes perused,
With tearful vacancy, the dampy grass,
That wept and glitter'd in the paly ray,
And I did pause me on my lonely way,
And mused me on the wretched ones, who pass
O'er the black heath of Sorrow. But, alas!
Most of myself I thought: when it befell,
That the sooth Spirit of the breezy wood
Breath'd in mine ear--'All this is very well;
But much of one thing is for no thing good.'
Ah! my poor heart's inexplicable swell!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Sonnet Xxii. To Simplicity

O! I do love thee, meek Simplicity!
For of thy lays the lulling simpleness
Goes to my heart, and soothes each small distress--
Distress tho' small, yet haply great to me!
'Tis true, on Lady Fortune's gentlest pad
I amble on; yet tho' I know not why,
So sad I am! but should a friend and I
Grow cool and miff, O! I am very sad!
And then with sonnets and with sympathy
My dreamy bosom's mystic woes I pall;
Now of my false friend plaining plaintively,
Now raving at mankind in general:
But whether sad or fierce, 'tis simple all,
All very simple, meek Simplicity.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Sonnet: To The River Otter

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

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

Tell's Birth-Place. Imitated From Stolberg

I.

Mark this holy chapel well!
The birth-place, this, of William Tell.
Here, where stands God's altar dread,
Stood his parent's marriage-bed.

II.

Here, first, an infant to her breast,
Him his loving mother prest;
And kissed the babe, and blessed the day,
And prayed as mothers used to pray.

III.

'Vouchsafe him health, O God! and give
The child thy servant still to live!'
But God had destined to do more
Through him than through an armed power.

IV.

God gave him reverence of laws,
Yet stirring blood in Freedom's cause--
A spirit to his rocks akin,
The eye of the hawk and the fire therein!

V.

To Nature and to Holy Writ
Alone did God the boy commit:
Where flashed and roared the torrent, oft
His soul found wings, and soared aloft!

VI.

The straining oar and chamois chase
Had formed his limbs to strength and grace:
On wave and wind the boy would toss,
Was great, nor knew how great he was!

VII.

He knew not that his chosen hand,
Made strong by God, his native land

Would rescue from the shameful yoke
Of Slavery -- the which he broke!

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 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 tranquility ;
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

The Alienated Mistress; A Madrigal. (From An Unfinished Melodrama)

Lady.

If Love be dead (and you aver it!)
Tell me, Bard! where Love lies buried.

Poet.

Love lies buried where 'twas born,
Ah, faithless nymph! think it no scorn
If in my fancy I presume
To name thy bosom poor Love's Tomb,
And on that Tomb to read the line,
Here lies a Love that once was mine,
But took a chill, as I divine,
And died at length of a decline.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The Ballad Of The Dark Ladie. A Fragment.

Beneath yon birch with silver bark,
And boughs so pendulous and fair,
The brook falls scatter'd down the rock:
And all is mossy there!

And there upon the moss she sits,
The Dark Ladie in silent pain;
The heavy tear is in her eye,
And drops and swells again.

Three times she sends her little page
Up the castled mountain's breast,
If he might find the Knight that wears
The Griffin for his crest.

The sun was sloping down the sky,
And she had linger'd there all day,
Counting moments, dreaming fears--
Oh wherefore can he stay?

She hears a rustling o'er the brook,
She sees far off a swinging bough!
'Tis He! 'Tis my betrothed Knight!
Lord Falkland, it is Thou!

She springs, she clasps him round the neck,
She sobs a thousand hopes and fears,
Her kisses glowing on his cheeks
She quenches with her tears.

* * * * *

'My friends with rude ungentle words
They scoff and bid me fly to thee!
O give me shelter in thy breast!
O shield and shelter me!

'My Henry, I have given thee much,
I gave what I can ne'er recall,

I gave my heart, I gave my peace,
O Heaven! I gave thee all.'

The Knight made answer to the Maid,
While to his heart he held her hand,
'Nine castles hath my noble sire,
None statelier in the land.

'The fairest one shall be my love's,
The fairest castle of the nine!
Wait only till the stars peep out,
The fairest shall be thine:

'Wait only till the hand of eve
Hath wholly closed yon western bars,
And through the dark we two will steal
Beneath the twinkling stars!'

'The dark? the dark? No! not the dark?
The twinkling stars? How, Henry? How?
O God! 'twas in the eye of noon
He pledged his sacred vow!

'And in the eye of noon my love
Shall lead me from my mother's door,
Sweet boys and girls all clothed in white
Strewing flowers before:

'But first the nodding minstrels go
With music meet for lordly bowers,
The children next in snow-white vests,
Strewing buds and flowers!

'And then my love and I shall pace,
My jet black hair in pearly braids,
Between our comely bachelors
And blushing bridal maids.'

* * * * *

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 Blossoming Of The Solitary Date-Tree. A Lament

I.

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.

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Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The Complaint Of Ninathoma

How long will ye round me be swelling,
O ye blue-tumbling waves of the sea?
Not always in caves was my dwelling,
Nor beneath the cold blast of the tree.
Thro' the high-sounding halls of Cathlóma
In the steps of my beauty I stray'd;
The warriors beheld Ninathóma,
And they blessèd the white-bosomed maid!
A ghost! by my cavern it darted!
In moon-beams the spirit was drest--
For lovely appear the departed
When they visit the dreams of my rest!
But disturbed by the tempest's commotion
Fleet the shadowy forms of delight--
Ah, cease, thou shrill blast of the ocean!
To howl through my cavern by night.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The Destiny Of Nations. A Vision.

Auspicious Reverence! Hush all meaner song,
Ere we the deep preluding strain have poured
To the Great Father, only Rightful King,
Eternal Father! King Omnipotent!
To the Will Absolute, the One, the Good!
The I AM, the Word, the Life, the Living God!

Such symphony requires best instrument.
Seize, then, my soul! from Freedom's trophied dome
The harp which hangeth high between the shields
Of Brutus and Leonidas! With that
Strong music, that soliciting spell, force back
Man's free and stirring spirit that lies entranced.

For what is freedom, but the unfettered use
Of all the powers which God for use had given?
But chiefly this, him first, him last to view
Through meaner powers and secondary things
Effulgent, as through clouds that veil his blaze.
For all that meets the bodily sense I deem
Symbolical, one mighty alphabet
For infant minds; and we in this low world
Placed with our backs to bright reality,
That we may learn with young unwounded ken
The substance from its shadow. Infinite Love,
Whose latence is the plenitude of all,
Thou with retracted beams, and self-eclipse
Veiling, revealest thine eternal Sun.

But some there are who deem themselves most free
When they within this gross and visible sphere
Chain down the winged thought, scoffing ascent,
Proud in their meanness: and themselves they cheat
With noisy emptiness of learned phrase,
Their subtle fluids, impacts, essences,
Self-working tools, uncaused effects, and all
Those blind omniscients, those almighty slaves,
Untenanting creation of its God.

But properties are God: the naked mass
(If mass there be, fantastic guess or ghost)
Acts only by its inactivity.
Here we pause humbly. Others boldlier think
That as one body seems the aggregate
Of atoms numberless, each organized;
So by a strange and dim similitude
Infinite myriads of self-conscious minds
Are one all-conscious Spirit, which informs
With absolute ubiquity of thought
(His one eternal self-affirming act!)
All his involved Monads, that yet seem
With various province and apt agency
Each to pursue its own self-centring end.
Some nurse the infant diamond in the mine;
Some roll the genial juices through the oak;
Some drive the mutinous clouds to clash in air,
And rushing on the storm with whirlwind speed,
Yoke the red lightnings to their volleying car.
Thus these pursue their never-varying course,
No eddy in their stream. Others, more wild,
With complex interests weaving human fates,
Duteous or proud, alike obedient all,
Evolve the process of eternal good.

And what if some rebellious o'er dark realms
Arrogate power? yet these train up to God,
And on the rude eye, unconfirmed for day,
Flash meteor-lights better than total gloom.
As ere from Lieule-Oaive's vapoury head
The Laplander beholds the far-off sun
Dart his slant beam on unobeying snows,
While yet the stern and solitary night
Brooks no alternate sway, the Boreal Morn
With mimic lustre substitutes its gleam,
Guiding his course or by Niemi lake
Or Balda Zhiok, or the mossy stone
Of Solfar-kapper, while the snowy blast
Drifts arrowy by, or eddies round his sledge,
Making the poor babe at its mother's back
Scream in its scanty cradle: he the while
Wins gentle solace as with upward eye

He marks the streamy banners of the North,
Thinking himself those happy spirits shall join
Who there in floating robes of rosy light
Dance sportively. For Fancy is the power
That first unsensualizes the dark mind,
Giving it new delights; and bids it swell
With wild activity; and peopling air,
By obscure fears of beings in visible,
Emancipates it from the grosser thrall
Of the present impulse, teaching self-control,
Till Superstition with unconscious hand
Seat Reason on her throne. Wherefore not vain,
Nor yet without permitted power impressed,
I deem those legends terrible, with which
The polar ancient thrills his uncouth throng:
Whether of pitying Spirits that make their moan
O'er slaughtered infants, or that giant bird
Vuokho, of whose rushing wings the noise
Is tempest, when the unutterable shape
Speeds from the mother of Death, and utters once
That shriek, which never murderer heard, and lived.

Or if the Greenland Wizard in strange trance
Pierces the untravelled realms of Ocean's bed
Over the abysm, even to that uttermost cave
By mis-shaped prodigies beleaguered, such
As earth ne'er bred, nor air, nor the upper sea:
Where dwells the Fury Form, whose unheard name
With eager eye, pale cheek, suspended breath,
And lips half-opening with the dread of sound,
Unsleeping Silence guards, worn out with fear
Lest haply 'scaping on some treacherous blast
The fateful word let slip the elements
And frenzy Nature. Yet the wizard her,
Armed with Torngarsuck's power, the Spirit of Good,
Forces to unchain the foodful progeny
Of the Ocean stream; -- thence thro' the realm of Souls,
Where live the Innocent, as far from cares
As from the storms and overwhelming waves
That tumble on the surface of the Deep,
Returns with far-heard pant, hotly pursued
By the fierce Warders of the Sea, once more,

Ere by the frost foreclosed, to repossess
His fleshly mansion, that had staid the while
In the dark tent within a cow'ring group
Untenanted. -- Wild phantasies! yet wise,
On the victorious goodness of high God
Teaching reliance, and medicinal hope,
Till from Bethabra northward, heavenly Truth
With gradual steps, winning her difficult way,
Transfer their rude Faith perfected and pure.

If there be beings of higher class than Man,
I deem no nobler province they possess,
Than by disposal of apt circumstance
To rear up kingdoms: and the deeds they prompt,
Distinguishing from mortal agency,
They choose their human ministers from such states
As still the Epic song half fears to name,
Repelled from all the minstrelsies that strike
The palace-roof and soothe the monarch's pride.

And such, perhaps, the Spirit, who (if words
Witnessed by answering deeds may claim our faith)
Held commune with that warrior-maid of France
Who scourged the Invader. From her infant days,
With Wisdom, mother of retired thoughts,
Her soul had dwelt; and she was quick to mark
The good and evil thing, in human lore
Undisciplined. For lowly was her birth,
And Heaven had doomed her early years to toil
That pure from tyranny's least deed, herself
Unfeared by fellow-natures, she might wait
On the poor labouring man with kindly looks,
And minister refreshment to the tired
Way-wanderer, when along the rough hewn bench
The sweltry man had stretched him, and aloft
Vacantly watched the rudely pictured board
Which on the mulberry-bough with welcome creak
Swung to the pleasant breeze. Here, too, the Maid
Learnt more than schools could teach: Man's shifting mind,
His vices and his sorrows! And full oft
At tales of cruel wrong and strange distress
Had wept and shivered. To the tottering eld

Still as a daughter would she run: she placed
His cold limbs at the sunny door, and loved
To hear him story, in his garrulous sort,
Of his eventful years, all come and gone.

So twenty seasons passed. The Virgin's form,
Active and tall, nor sloth nor luxury
Had shrunk or paled. Her front sublime and broad,
Her flexile eye-brows wildly haired and low,
And her full eye, now bright, now unillumed,
Spake more than Woman's thought; and all her face
Was moulded to such features as declared
That pity there had oft and strongly worked,
And sometimes indignation. Bold her mien,
And like a haughty huntress of the woods
She moved: yet sure she was a gentle maid!
And in each motion her most innocent soul
Beamed forth so brightly, that who saw would say
Guilt was a thing impossible in her!
Nor idly would have said -- for she had lived
In this bad World, as in a place of tombs,
And touched not the pollutions of the dead.

'Twas the cold season when the rustic's eye
From the drear desolate whiteness of his fields
Rolls for relief to watch the skiey tints
And clouds slow varying their huge imagery;
When now, as she was wont, the healthful Maid
Had left her pallet ere one beam of day
Slanted the fog-smoke. She went forth alone
Urged by the indwelling angel-guide, that oft,
With dim inexplicable sympathies
Disquieting the heart, shapes out Man's course
To the predoomed adventure. Now the ascent
She climbs of that steep upland, on whose top
The Pilgrim-man, who long since eve had watched
The alien shine of unconcerning stars,
Shouts to himself, there first the Abbey-lights
Seen in Neufchatel's vale; now slopes adown
The winding sheep-track vale-ward: when, behold
In the first entrance of the level road
An unattended team! The foremost horse

Lay with stretched limbs; the others, yet alive
But stiff and cold, stood motionless, their manes
Hoar with the frozen night dews. Dismally
The dark-red dawn now glimmered; but its gleams
Disclosed no face of man. The maiden paused,
Then hailed who might be near. No voice replied.
From the thwart wain at length there reached her ear
A sound so feeble that it almost seemed
Distant: and feebly, with slow effort pushed,
A miserable man crept forth: his limbs
The silent frost had eat, scathing like fire.
Faint on the shafts he rested. She, mean time,
Saw crowded close beneath the coverture
A mother and her children -- lifeless all,
Yet lovely! not a lineament was marred --
Death had put on so slumber-like a form!
It was a piteous sight; and one, a babe,
The crisp milk frozen on its innocent lips,
Lay on the woman's arm, its little hand
Stretched on her bosom.

Mutely questioning,
The Maid gazed wildly at the living wretch.
He, his head feebly turning, on the group
Looked with a vacant stare, and his eye spoke
The drowsy calm that steals on worn-out anguish.
She shuddered; but, each vainer pang subdued,
Quick disentangling from the foremost horse
The rustic bands, with difficulty and toil
The stiff cramped team forced homeward. There arrived,
Anxiously tends him she with healing herbs,
And weeps and prays -- but the numb power of Death
Spreads o'er his limbs; and ere the noontide hour,
The hovering spirits of his wife and babes
Hail him immortal! Yet amid his pangs,
With interruptions long from ghastly throes,
His voice had faltered out this simple tale.

The village, where he dwelt a husbandman,
By sudden inroad had been seized and fired
Late on the yester-evening. With his wife
And little ones he hurried his escape.

They saw the neighbouring hamlets flame, they heard
Uproar and shrieks! and terror-struck drove on
Through unfrequented roads, a weary way!
But saw nor house nor cottage. All had quenched
Their evening hearth-fire: for the alarm had spread.
The air clipped keen, the night was fanged with frost,
And they provisionless! The weeping wife
Ill hushed her children's moans; and still they moaned,
Till fright and cold and hunger drank their life.
They closed their eyes in sleep, nor knew 'twas death.
He only, lashing his o'er-wearied team,
Gained a sad respite, till beside the base
Of the high hill his foremost horse dropped dead.
Then hopeless, strengthless, sick for lack of food,
He crept beneath the coverture, entranced,
Till wakened by the maiden. -- Such his tale.

Ah! suffering to the height of what was suffered,
Stung with too keen a sympathy, the Maid
Brooded with moving lips, mute, startful, dark!
And now her flushed tumultuous features shot
Such strange vivacity, as fires the eye
Of misery fancy-crazed! and now once more
Naked, and void, and fixed, and all within
The unquiet silence of confused thought
And shapeless feelings. For a mighty hand
Was strong upon her, till, in the heat of soul
To the high hill-top tracing back her steps,
Aside the beacon, up whose smouldered stones
The tender ivy-trails crept thinly, there,
Unconscious of the driving element,
Yea, swallowed up in the ominous dream, she sate
Ghastly as broad-eyed Slumber! a dim anguish
Breathed from her look! and still with pant and sob,
Inly she toil'd to flee, and still subdued,
Felt an inevitable Presence near.

Thus as she toiled in troublous ecstasy,
A horror of great darkness wrapt her round,
And a voice uttered forth unearthly tones,
Calming her soul, -- 'O Thou of the Most High
Chosen, whom all the perfected in Heaven

Behold expectant --'

[The following fragments were intended to form part of the poem when finished.]

'Maid beloved of Heaven!

(To her the tutelary Power exclaimed)

Of Chaos the adventurous progeny

Thou seest; foul missionaries of foul sire,

Fierce to regain the losses of that hour

When Love rose glittering, and his gorgeous wings

Over the abyss fluttered with such glad noise,

As what time after long and pestful calms,

With slimy shapes and miscreated life

Poisoning the vast Pacific, the fresh breeze

Wakens the merchant-sail uprising. Night

A heavy unimaginable moan

Sent forth, when she the Protoplast beheld

Stand beauteous on confusion's charmed wave.

Moaning she fled, and entered the Profound

That leads with downward windings to the cave

Of darkness palpable, desert of Death

Sunk deep beneath Gehenna's massy roots.

There many a dateless age the beldam lurked

And trembled; till engendered by fierce Hate,

Fierce Hate and gloomy Hope, a Dream arose,

Shaped like a black cloud marked with streaks of fire.

It roused the Hell-Hag: she the dew damp wiped

From off her brow, and through the uncouth maze

Retraced her steps; but ere she reached the mouth

Of that drear labyrinth, shuddering she paused,

Nor dared re-enter the diminished Gulf.

As through the dark vaults of some mouldered tower

(Which, fearful to approach, the evening hind

Circles at distance in his homeward way)

The winds breathe hollow, deemed the plaining groan

Of prisoned spirits; with such fearful voice

Night murmured, and the sound thro' Chaos went.

Leaped at her call her hideous-fronted brood!

A dark behest they heard, and rushed on earth;

Since that sad hour, in camps and courts adored,

Rebels from God, and tyrants o'er Mankind!

From his obscure haunt
Shrieked Fear, of Cruelty the ghastly dam,
Feverous yet freezing, eager-paced yet slow,
As she that creeps from forth her swampy reeds,
Ague, the biform hag! when early Spring
Beams on the marsh-bred vapours.

'Even so (the exulting Maiden said)
The sainted heralds of good tidings fell,
And thus they witnessed God! But now the clouds
Treading, and storms beneath their feet, they soar
Higher, and higher soar, and soaring sing
Loud songs of triumph! O ye spirits of God,
Hover around my mortal agonies!'
She spake, and instantly faint melody
Melts on her ear, soothing and sad, and slow,
Such measures, as at calmest midnight heard
By aged hermit in his holy dream,
Foretell and solace death; and now they rise
Louder, as when with harp and mingled voice
The white-robed multitude of slaughtered saints
At Heaven's wide-opened portals gratulant
Receive some martyr'd patriot. The harmony
Entranced the Maid, till each suspended sense
Brief slumber seized, and confused ecstasy.

At length awakening slow, she gazed around:
And through a mist, the relique of that trance
Still thinning as she gazed, and Isle appeared,
Its high, o'er-hanging, white, broad-breasted cliffs,
Glossed on the subject ocean. A vast plain
Stretched opposite, where ever and anon
The plough-man following sad his meagre team
Turned up fresh skulls unstartled, and the bones
Of fierce hate-breathing combatants, who there
All mingled lay beneath the common earth,
Death's gloomy reconciliation! O'er the fields
Stept a fair Form, repairing all she might,
Her temples olive-wreathed; and where she trod,
Fresh flowerets rose, and many a foodful herb.

But wan her cheek, her footsteps insecure,
And anxious pleasure beamed in her faint eye,
As she had newly left a couch of pain,
Pale convalescent! (Yet some time to rule
With power exclusive o'er the willing world,
That blest prophetic mandate then fulfilled --
Peace be on Earth!) A happy while, but brief,
She seemed to wander with assiduous feet,
And healed the recent harm of chill and blight,
And nursed each plant that fair and virtuous grew.

But soon a deep precursive sound moaned hollow:
Black rose the clouds, and now (as in a dream)
Their reddening shapes, transformed to warrior-hosts,
Coursed o'er the sky, and battled in mid-air.
Nor did not the large blood-drops fall from heaven
Portentous! while aloft were seen to float,
Like hideous features looming on the mist,
Wan stains of ominous light! Resigned, yet sad,
The fair Form bowed her olive-crowned brow,
Then o'er the plain with oft reverted eye
Fled till a place of tombs she reached, and there
Within a ruined sepulchre obscure
Found hiding-place.

The delegated Maid
Gazed through her tears, then in sad tones exclaimed --
'Thou mild-eyed Form! wherefore, ah! wherefore fled?
The power of Justice like a name all light,
Shone from thy brow; but all they, who unblamed
Dwelt in thy dwellings, call thee Happiness.
Ah! why, uninjured and unprofited,
Should multitudes against their brethren rush?
Why sow they guilt, still reaping misery?
Lenient of care, thy songs, O Peace! are sweet,
As after showers the perfumed gale of eve,
That flings the cool drops on a feverous cheek;
And gay thy grassy altar piled with fruits.
But boasts the shrine of demon War one charm,
Save that with many an orgie strange and foul,
Dancing around with interwoven arms,
The maniac Suicide and giant Murder

Exult in their fierce union! I am sad,
And know not why the simple peasants crowd
Beneath the Chieftains' standard!' Thus the Maid.

To her the tutelary Spirit said:

'When luxury and lust's exhausted stores
No more can rouse the appetites of kings;
When the low flattery of their reptile lords
Falls flat and heavy on the accustomed ear;
When eunuchs sing, and fools buffoonery make,
And dancers writhe their harlot-limbs in vain;
Then War and all its dread vicissitudes
Pleasingly agitate their stagnant hearts;
Its hopes, its fears, its victories, its defeats,
Insidious royalty's keen condiment!
Therefore uninjured and unprofited,
(Victims at once and executioners)
The congregated husbandmen lay waste
The vineyard and the harvest. As along
The Bothnic coast, or southward of the Line,
Though hushed the winds and cloudless the high noon,
Yet if Leviathan, weary of ease,
In sports unwieldy toss his island-bulk,
Ocean behind him billows, and before
A storm of waves breaks foamy on the strand.
And hence, for times and seasons bloody and dark,
Short Peace shall skin the wounds of causeless War,
And War, his strained sinews knit anew,
Still violate the unfinished works of Peace.
But yonder look! for more demands thy view!
He said: and straightway from the opposite Isle
A vapour sailed, as when a cloud, exhaled
From Egypt's fields that steam hot pestilence,
Travels the sky for many a trackless league,
Till o'er some death-doomed land, distant in vain,
It broods incumbent. Forthwith from the plain,
Facing the Isle, a brighter cloud arose,
And steered its course which way the vapour went.

The Maiden paused, musing what this might mean.
But long time passed not, ere that brighter cloud
Returned more bright; along the plain it swept;

And soon from forth its bursting sides emerged
A dazzling form, broad-bosomed, bold of eye,
And wild her hair, save where with laurels bound.
Not more majestic stood the healing God,
When from his bow the arrow sped that slew
Huge Python. Shriek'd Ambition's giant throng,
And with them hissed the locust-fiends that crawled
And glittered in Corruption's slimy track.
Great was their wrath, for short they knew their reign;
And such commotion made they, and uproar,
As when the mad tornado bellows through
The guilty islands of the western main,
What time departing from their native shores,
Eboe, or Koromantyn's plain of palms,
The infuriate spirits of the murdered make
Fierce merriment, and vengeance ask of Heaven.
Warmed with new influence, the unwholesome plain
Sent up its foulest fogs to meet the morn:
The Sun that rose on Freedom, rose in blood!

'Maiden beloved, and Delegate of Heaven!
(To her the tutelary Spirit said)
Soon shall the morning struggle into day,
The stormy morning into cloudless noon.
Much hast thou seen, nor all canst understand --
But this be thy best omen -- Save thy Country!'
Thus saying, from the answering Maid he passed,
And with him disappeared the heavenly Vision.

'Glory to Thee, Father of Earth and Heaven!
All conscious presence of the Universe!
Nature's vast ever-acting energy!
In will, in deed, impulse of All to All!
Whether thy Love with unrefracted ray
Beam on the Prophet's purged eye, or if
Diseasing realms the enthusiast, wild of thought,
Scatter new frenzies on the infected throng,
Thou both inspiring and predooming both,
Fit instruments and best, of perfect end:
Glory to Thee, Father of Earth and Heaven!'

And first a landscape rose

More wild and waste and desolate than where
The white bear, drifting on a field of ice,
Howls to her sundered cubs with piteous rage
And savage agony.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The Devil's Thoughts

From his brimstone bed at break of day
A walking the DEVIL is gone,
To visit his little snug farm of the earth
And see how his stock went on.

Over the hill and over the dale,
And he went over the plain,
And backward and forward he swished his long tail
As a gentleman swishes his cane.

And how then was the Devil drest?
Oh! he was in his Sunday's best:
His jacket was red and his breeches were blue,
And there was a hole where the tail came through.

He saw a LAWYER killing a Viper
On a dung heap beside his stable,
And the Devil smiled, for it put him in mind
Of Cain and _his_ brother, Abel.

A POTHECARY on a white horse
Rode by on his vocations,
And the Devil thought of his old Friend
DEATH in the Revelations.

He saw a cottage with a double coach-house,
A cottage of gentility!
And the Devil did grin, for his darling sin
Is pride that apes humility.

He went into a rich bookseller's shop,
Quoth he! we are both of one college,
For I myself sate like a cormorant once
Fast by the tree of knowledge.

Down the river there plied, with wind and tide,
A pig with vast celerity;
And the Devil look'd wise as he saw how the while,
It cut its own throat. 'There!' quoth he with a smile,

'Goes 'England's commercial prosperity.'

As he went through Cold-Bath Fields he saw
A solitary cell;
And the Devil was pleased, for it gave him a hint
For improving his prisons in Hell.

* * * * *

General ----- burning face
He saw with consternation,
And back to hell his way did he take,
For the Devil thought by a slight mistake
It was general conflagration.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The Dungeon

(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

Whilst through 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 beloved 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 heal'd 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 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 Foster Mother's Tale. A Dramatic Fragment

Ter. But that entrance, Selma?

Sel. Can no one hear? It is a perilous tale!

Ter. No one.

Sel. My husband's father told it me,
Poor old Sesina -- angels rest his soul;
He was a woodman, and could fell and saw
With lusty arm. You know that huge round beam
Which props the hanging wall of the old chapel?
Beneath that tree, while yet it was a tree,
He found a baby wrapped in mosses, lined
With thistle-beards, and such small locks of wool
As hang on brambles. Well, he brought him home,
And reared him at the then Lord Valdez' cost,
And so the babe grew up a pretty boy,
A pretty boy, but nought unteachable--
And never learn'd a prayer, nor told a bead,
But knew the names of birds, and mocked their notes,
And whistled, as he were a bird himself.
And all the autumn 'twas his only play
To gather seeds of wild flowers, and to plant them
With earth and water on the stumps of trees.
A Friar, who gathered simples in the wood,
A gray-haired man, he loved this little boy:
The boy loved him, and, when the Friar taught him,
He soon could write with the pen; and from that time
Lived chiefly at the convent or the castle.
So he became a rare and learned youth:
But O! poor wretch! he read, and read, and read,
Till his brain turned; and ere his twentieth year
He had unlawful thoughts of many things:
And though he prayed, he never loved to pray
With holy men, nor in a holy place.
But yet his speech, it was so soft and sweet,
The late Lord Valdez ne'er was wearied with him.
And once, as by the north side of the chapel
They stood together chained in deep discourse,
The earth heaved under them with such a groan,
That the wall tottered, and had well nigh fallen
Right on their heads. My Lord was sorely frightened!

A fever seized him, and he made confession
Of all the heretical and lawless talk
Which brought this judgement: so the youth was seized
And cast into that hole. My husband's father
Sobbed like a child -- it almost broke his heart:
And once as he was working near this dungeon,
He heard a voice distinctly; 'twas the youth's,
Who sung a doleful song about green fields,
How sweet it were on lake or wide savanna
To hunt for food, and be a naked man,
And wander up and down at liberty.
He always doted on the youth, and now
His love grew desperate; and defying death,
He made that cunning entrance I described,
And the young man escaped.

Ter. 'Tis a sweet tale:

Such as would lull a listening child to sleep,
His rosy face besoiled with unwiped tears.
And what became of him?

Sel. He went on shipboard

With those bold voyagers who made discovery
Of golden lands. Sesina's younger brother
Went likewise, and when he returned to Spain,
He told Sesina, that the poor mad youth,
Soon after they arrived in that new world,
In spite of his dissuasion, seized a boat,
And all alone, set sail by silent moonlight
Up a great river, great as any sea,
And ne'er was heard of more: but 'tis supposed,
He lived and died among the savage men.

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 dreary 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 Happy Husband

Oft, oft, methinks, the while with thee
I breathe, as from the heart, thy dear
And dedicated bame, I hear
A promise and a mystery,
A pledge of more than passing life,
Yea, in that very name of wife!

A pulse of love that ne'er can sleep!
A feeling that upbraids the heart
With happiness beyond desert,
That gladness half requests to weep!
Nor bless I not the keener sense
And unalarming turbulence.

Of transient joys, that ask no sting
From jealous fears, or coy denying;
But born beneath Love's brooding wing,
And into tenderness soon dying.
Wheel out their giddy moment, then
Resign the soul to love again;

A more precipitated vein
Of notes that eddy in the flow
Of smoothest song, they come, they go,
And leave their sweeter understrain
Its own sweet self-a love of thee
That seems, yet cannot greater be!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The Hour When We Shall Meet Again

Dim hour! that sleep'st on pillowing clouds afar,
O rise and yoke the turtles to thy car!
Bend o'er the traces, blame each lingering dove!
And give me to the bosom of my love!
My gentle love, caressing and carest,
With heaving heart shall cradle me to rest!
Shed the warm tear-drop from her smiling eyes,
Lull with fond woe, and med'cine me with sighs!
Chilled by the night, the drooping rose of May
Mourns the long absence of the lovely day;
Young day returning at her promised hour
Weeps o'er the sorrows of her fav'rite flower;
Weeps the soft dew, the balmy gale she sighs,
And darts a trembling lustre from her eyes.
New life and joy th' expanding floweret feels:
His pitying mistress mourns, and mourning heals!

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 improviso

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 Keepsake

The tedded hay, the first-fruits of the soil,
The tedded hay and corn-sheaves in one field,
Show summer gone, ere come. The foxglove tall
Sheds its loose purple bells, or in the gust,
Or when it bends beneath the up-springing lark,
Or mountain-finch alighting. And the rose
(In vain the darling of successful love)
Stands, like some boasted beauty of past years,
The thorns remaining, and the flowers all gone.
Nor can I find, amid my lonely walk
By rivulet, or spring, or wet road-side,
That blue and bright-eyed floweret of the brook,
Hope's gentle gem, the sweet Forget-me-not!
So will not fade the flowers which Emmeline
With delicate fingers on the snow-white silk
Has worked, (the flowers which most she knew I loved,)
And, more beloved than they, her auburn hair.

In the cool morning twilight, early waked
By her full bosom's joyous restlessness,
Softly she rose, and lightly stole along,
Down the slope coppice to the woodbine bower,
Whose rich flowers, swinging in the morning breeze
Over their dim fast-moving shadows hung,
Making a quiet image of disquiet
In the smooth, scarcely moving river-pool.
There, in that bower where first she owned her love,
And let me kiss my own warm tear of joy
From off her glowing cheek, she sate and stretched
The silk upon the frame, and worked her name
Between the Moss-Rose and Forget-me-not--
Her own dear name, with her own auburn hair!
That forced to wander till sweet spring return,
I yet might ne'er forget her smile, her look,
Her voice, (that even in her mirthful mood
Has made me wish to steal away and weep,)
Nor yet the entrancement of that maiden kiss
With which she promised, that when spring returned
She would resign one half of that dear name,

And own thenceforth no other name but mine!

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-steeped 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, a 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 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 Night-Scene : A Dramatic Fragment.

Sandoval. You loved the daughter of Don Manrique?

Earl Henry. Loved?

Sandoval. Did you not say you wooed her?

Earl Henry. Once I loved

Her whom I dared not woo!

Sandoval. And wooed, perchance,

One whom you loved not!

Earl Henry. Oh! I were most base,

Not loving Oropeza. True, I wooed her,

Hoping to heal a deeper wound; but she

Met my advances with impassioned pride,

That kindled love with love. And when her sire,

Who in his dream of hope already grasped

The golden circlet in his hand, rejected

My suit with insult, and in memory

Of ancient feuds poured curses on my head,

Her blessings overtook and baffled them!

But thou art stern, and with unkindly countenance

Art inly reasoning whilst thou listenest to me.

Sandoval. Anxiously, Henry! reasoning anxiously.

But Oropeza --

Earl Henry.

Blessings gather round her!

Within this wood there winds a secret passage,

Beneath the walls, which opens out at length

Into the gloomiest covert of the garden. --

The night ere my departure to the army,

She, nothing trembling, led me through that gloom,

And to that covert by a silent stream,

Which, with one star reflected near its marge,

Was the sole object visible around me.

No leaflet stirred; the air was almost sultry;

So deep, so dark, so close, the umbrage o'er us!

No leaflet stirred; -- yet pleasure hung upon

The gloom and stillness of the balmy night-air.

A little further on an arbour stood,

Fragrant with flowering trees -- I well remember

What an uncertain glimmer in the darkness

Their snow-white blossoms made -- thither she led me,

To that sweet bower! Then Oropeza trembled --
 I heard her heart beat -- if 'twere not my own.
 Sandoval. A rude and scaring note, my friend!
 Earl Henry. Oh! no!
 I have small memory of aught but pleasure.
 The inquietudes of fear, like lesser streams
 Still flowing, still were lost in those of love:
 So love grew mightier from the fear, and Nature,
 Fleeing from pain, sheltered herself in joy.
 The stars above our heads were dim and steady,
 Like eyes suffused with rapture. -- Life was in us:
 We were all life, each atom of our frames
 A living soul -- I vowed to die for her:
 With the faint voice of one who, having spoken,
 Relapses into blessedness, I vowed it:
 That solemn vow, a whisper scarcely heard,
 A murmur breathed against a lady's ear.
 Oh! there is joy above the name of pleasure,
 Deep self-possession, an intense repose.
 Sandoval [with a sarcastic smile]. No other than as eastern sages paint,
 The God, who floats upon a lotos leaf,
 Dreams for a thousand ages; then awaking,
 Creates a world, and smiling at the bubble,
 Relapses into bliss.
 Earl Henry. Ah! was that bliss
 Feared as an alien, and too vast for man?
 For suddenly, impatient of its silence,
 Did Oropeza, starting, grasp my forehead.
 I caught her arms; the veins were swelling on them.
 Through the dark bower she sent a hollow voice; --
 `Oh! what if all betray me? what if thou?'
 I swore, and with an inward thought that seemed
 The purpose and the substance of my being,
 I swore to her, that were she red with guilt,
 I would exchange my unblenched state with hers. --
 Friend! by that winding passage, to that bower
 I now will go -- all objects there will teach me
 Unwavering love, and singleness of heart.
 Go, Sandoval! I am prepared to meet her --
 Say nothing of me -- I myself will seek her --
 Nay, leave me, friend! I cannot bear the torment
 And keen inquiry of that scanning eye. --

[Earl Henry retires into the wood.]

Sandoval [alone]. O Henry! always striv'st thou to be great
By thine own act -- yet art thou never great
But by the inspiration of great passion.
The whirl-blast comes, the desert-sands rise up
And shape themselves: from earth to heaven they stand,
As though they were the pillars of a temple,
Built by Omnipotence in its own honour!
But the blast pauses, and their shaping spirit
Is fled: the mighty columns were but sand,
And lazy snakes trail o'er the level ruins!

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 Pang More Sharp Than All. An Allegory

I.

He too has flitted from his secret nest,
Hope's last and dearest child without a name!--
Has flitted from me, like the warmthless flame,
That makes false promise of a place of rest
To the tired Pilgrim's still believing mind;--
Or like some Elfin Knight in kingly court,
Who having won all guerdons in his sport,
Glides out of view, and whither none can find!

II.

Yes! he hath flitted from me--with what aim,
Or why, I know not! 'Twas a home of bliss,
And he was innocent, as the pretty shame
Of babe, that tempts and shuns the menaced kiss,
From its twy-cluster'd hiding place of snow!
Pure as the babe, I ween, and all aglow
As the dear hopes, that swell the mother's breast--
Her eyes down gazing o'er her clasped charge;--
Yet gay as that twice happy father's kiss,
That well might glance aside, yet never miss,
Where the sweet mark emboss'd so sweet a targe--
Twice wretched he who hath been doubly blest!

III.

Like a loose blossom on a gusty night
He flitted from me--and has left behind
(As if to them his faith he ne'er did plight)
Of either sex and answerable mind
Two playmates, twin-births of his foster-dame:--
The one a steady lad (Esteem he hight)
And Kindness is the gentler sister's name.
Dim likeness now, though fair she be and good,
Of that bright boy who hath us all forsook;--
But in his full-eyed aspect when she stood,
And while her face reflected every look,
And in reflection kindled--she became
So like him, that almost she seem'd the same!

IV.

Ah! he is gone, and yet will not depart!--
Is with me still, yet I from him exiled!
For still there lives within my secret heart
The magic image of the magic Child,
Which there he made up-grow by his strong art,
As in that crystal orb--wise Merlin's feat,--
The wondrous 'World of Glass,' wherein inisled
All long'd for things their beings did repeat;--
And there he left it, like a Sylph beguiled,
To live and yearn and languish incomplete!

V.

Can wit of man a heavier grief reveal?
Can sharper pang from hate or scorn arise?--
Yes! one more sharp there is that deeper lies,
Which fond Esteem but mocks when he would heal.
Yet neither scorn nor hate did it devise,
But sad compassion and atoning zeal!
One pang more blighting-keen than hope betray'd!
And this it is my woeful hap to feel,
When, at her Brother's hest, the twin-born Maid
With face averted and unsteady eyes,
Her truant playmate's faded robe puts on;
And inly shrinking from her own disguise
Enacts the faery Boy that's lost and gone.
O worse than all! O pang all pangs above
Is Kindness counterfeiting absent Love.

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 Raven. Christmas Tale, Told By A School-Boy To His Little Brothers And Sisters

Underneath an old oak tree
There was of swine a huge company
That grunted as they crunched the mast
For that was ripe, and fell full fast.
Then they trotted away, for the wind grew high:
One acorn they left, and no more might you spy.
Next came a Raven, that liked not such folly
He belonged, they did say, to the witch Melancholy!
Blacker was he than blackest jet,
Flew low in the rain, and his feathers not wet
He picked up the acorn and buried it straight
By the side of a river both deep and great.
Where then did the Raven go?
He went high and low
Over hill, over dale, did the black Raven go.
Many Autumns, many Springs
Traveled he with wandering wings:
Many summers, many Winters
I can't tell half his adventures.

At length he came back, and with him a She
And the acorn was grown to a tall oak tree.
They built them a nest in the topmost bough,
And young ones they had, and were happy enow.
But soon came a Woodman in leathern guise,
His brow, like a pent-house, hung over his eyes.
He'd an axe in his hand, not a word he spoke,
But with many a hem! and a sturdy stroke,
At length he brought down the poor Raven's own oak.
His young ones were killed; for they could not depart,
And their mother did die of a broken heart.
The boughs from the trunk the Woodman did sever;
And they floated it down on the course of the river.
They sawed it in planks, and its bark they did strip,
And with this tree and others they made a good ship.
The ship, it was launched; but in sight of the land
Such a storm there did rise as no ship would withstand.

It bulged on a rock, and the waves rush'd in fast;
Round and round flew the Raven, and cawed to the blast.
He heard the last shriek of the perishing souls--
See! see! o'er the topmast the mad water rolls!

Right glad was the Raven, and off he went fleet,
And Death riding home on a cloud he did meet,
And he thank'd him again and again for this treat:
They had taken his all; and Revenge it was sweet!

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 dived for the ship's crew, and she (the latter) winneth the ancient Mariner.

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

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 bemocked 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 blesséd 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 corpses came again,
But a troop of spirits blest :

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

And from their bodies passed.

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

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

And now '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 away.

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 shrieve 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 marineres
That come from a far countree.

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

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

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 Rose

As late each flower that sweetest blows
I pluck'd, the Garden's pride!
Within the petals of a Rose
A sleeping Love I 'spied.

Around his brows a beamy wreath
Of many a lucent hue;
All purple glow'd his cheek, beneath,
Inebriate with the dew.

I softly seiz'd th' unguarded Power,
Nor scar'd his balmy rest:
And plac'd him, cag'd within the flower,
On spotless Sara's breast.

But when unweeting of the guile
Awoke the pris'ner sweet,
He struggled to escape awhile
And stamp'd his faery feet.

Ah! soon the soul entrancing sight
Subdued th' impatient boy!
He gaz'd! he thrill'd with deep delight!
Then clapp'd his wings for joy.

'And O!' he cried -- 'Of magic kind
What charms this Throne endear!
Some other Love let Venus find
I'll fix my empire here.'

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The Sigh

I.

When youth his fairy reign began,
Ere sorrow had proclaimed me man;
While peace the present hour beguiled,
And all the lovely prospect smiled;
Then, Mary! 'mid my lightsome glee
I heaved the painless sigh for thee.

II.

And when, as tossed on waves of woe,
My harassed heart was doomed to know
The frantic burst, the outrage keen,
And the slow pang that gnaws unseen;
Then shipwrecked on life's stormy sea,
I heaved an anguish'd sigh for thee!

III.

But soon reflection's power imprest
A stiller sadness on my breast;
And sickly hope with waning eye
Was well content to droop and die:
I yielded to the stern decree,
Yet heaved a languid sigh for thee!

IV.

And tho' in distant climes to roam,
A wanderer from my native home,
I feign would soothe the sense of care
And lull to sleep the joys, that were!
Thy image may not banished be--
Still, Mary! still I sigh for thee.

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 Graves. A Fragment Of A Sexton's Tale

The grapes upon the Vicar's wall
Were ripe as ripe could be;
And yellow leaves in sun and wind
Were falling from the tree.

On the hedge-elms in the narrow lane
Still swung the spikes of corn:
Dear Lord! it seems but yesterday--
Young Edward's marriage-morn.

Up through that wood behind the church,
There leads from Edward's door
A mossy track, all over boughed,
For half a mile or more.

And from their house-door by that track
The bride and bridegroom went;
Sweet Mary, though she was not gay,
Seemed cheerful and content.

But when they to the church-yard came,
I've heard poor Mary say,
As soon as she stepped into the sun,
Her heart it died away.

And when the Vicar join'd their hands,
Her limbs did creep and freeze;
But when they prayed, she thought she saw
Her mother on her knees.

And o'er the church-path they returned--
I saw poor Mary's back,
Just as she stepped beneath the boughs
Into the mossy track.

Her feet upon the mossy track
The married maiden set:
That moment--I have heard her say--
She wished she could forget.

The shade o'er-flushed her limbs with heat--
Then came a chill like death:
And when the merry bells rang out,
They seemed to stop her breath.

Beneath the foulest mother's curse
No child could ever thrive:
A mother is a mother still,
The holiest thing alive.

So five months passed: the mother still
Would never heal the strife;
But Edward was a loving man,
And Mary a fond wife.

'My sister may not visit us,
My mother says her nay:
O Edward! you are all to me,
I wish for your sake I could be
More lifesome and more gay.

'I'm dull and sad! indeed, indeed
I know I have no reason!
Perhaps I am not well in health,
And 'tis a gloomy season.'

'Twas a drizzly time--no ice, no snow!
And on the few fine days
She stirred not out, lest she might meet
Her mother in the ways.

But Ellen, spite of miry ways
And weather dark and dreary,
Trudged every day to Edward's house,
And made them all more cheery.

Oh! Ellen was a faithful friend,
More dear than any sister!
As cheerful too as singing lark;
And she ne'er left them till 'twas dark,
And then they always missed her.

And now Ash-Wednesday came-that day
But few to church repair:
For on that day you know we read
The Communion prayer.

Our late old Vicar, a kind man,
Once, Sir, he said to me,
He wished that service was clean out
Of our good Liturgy.

The mother walked into the church--
To Ellen's seat she went:
Though Ellen always kept her church
All church-days during Lent.

And gentle Ellen welcomed her
With courteous looks and mild:
Thought she, 'What if her heart should melt,
And all be reconciled!'

The day was scarcely like a day--
The clouds were black outright:
And many a night, with half a moon,
I've seen the church more light.

The wind was wild; against the glass
The rain did beat and bicker;
The church-tower swinging over head,
You scarce could hear the Vicar!

And then and there the mother knelt,
And audibly she cried-
'Oh! may a clinging curse consume
This woman by my side!

'O hear me, hear me, Lord in Heaven,
Although you take my life--
O curse this woman, at whose house
Young Edward woo'd his wife.

'By night and day, in bed and bower,

O let her cursed be!!! '
So having prayed, steady and slow,
She rose up from her knee!

And left the church, nor e'er again
The church-door entered she.
I saw poor Ellen kneeling still,
So pale! I guessed not why:
When she stood up, there plainly was
A trouble in her eye.

And when the prayers were done, we all
Came round and asked her why:
Giddy she seemed, and sure, there was
A trouble in her eye.

But ere she from the church-door stepped
She smiled and told us why:
'It was a wicked woman's curse,'
Quoth she, 'and what care I?'

She smiled, and smiled, and passed it off
Ere from the door she stept--
But all agree it would have been
Much better had she wept.

And if her heart was not at ease,
This was her constant cry--
'It was a wicked woman's curse--
God's good, and what care I?'

There was a hurry in her looks,
Her struggles she redoubled:
'It was a wicked woman's curse,
And why should I be troubled?'

These tears will come--I dandled her
When 'twas the merest fairy--
Good creature! and she hid it all:
She told it not to Mary.

But Mary heard the tale: her arms

Round Ellen's neck she threw;
'O Ellen, Ellen, she cursed me,
And now she hath cursed you!'

I saw young Edward by himself
Stalk fast adown the lee,
He snatched a stick from every fence,
A twig from every tree.

He snapped them still with hand or knee,
And then away they flew!
As if with his uneasy limbs
He knew not what to do!

You see, good Sir! that single hill?
His farm lies underneath:
He heard it there, he heard it all,
And only gnashed his teeth.

Now Ellen was a darling love
In all his joys and cares:
And Ellen's name and Mary's name
Fast-linked they both together came,
Whene'er he said his prayers.

And in the moment of his prayers
He loved them both alike:
Yea, both sweet names with one sweet joy
Upon his heart did strike!

He reach'd his home, and by his looks
They saw his inward strife:
And they clung round him with their arms,
Both Ellen and his wife.

And Mary could not check her tears,
So on his breast she bowed;
Then frenzy melted into grief,
And Edward wept aloud.

Dear Ellen did not weep at all,
But closelier did she cling,

And turned her face and looked as if
She saw some frightful thing.

PART II.

To see a man tread over graves
I hold it no good mark;
'Tis wicked in the sun and moon,
And bad luck in the dark!

You see that grave? The Lord he gives,
The Lord, he takes away:
O Sir! the child of my old age
Lies there as cold as clay.

Except that grave, you scarce see one
That was not dug by me;
I'd rather dance upon 'em all
Than tread upon these three!

'Aye, Sexton!'tis a touching tale.'
You, Sir! are but a lad;
This month I'm in my seventieth year,
And still it makes me sad.

And Mary's sister told it me,
For three good hours and more;
Though I had heard it, in the main,
From Edward's self, before.

Well! it passed off! the gentle Ellen
Did well nigh dote on Mary;
And she went oftener than before,
And Mary loved her more and more:
She managed all the dairy.

To market she on market-days,
To church on Sundays came;
All seemed the same: all seemed so, Sir!
But all was not the same!

Had Ellen lost her mirth? Oh! no!

But she was seldom cheerful;
And Edward look'd as if he thought
That Ellen's mirth was fearful.

When by herself, she to herself
Must sing some merry rhyme;
She could not now be glad for hours,
Yet silent all the time.

And when she soothed her friend, through all
Her soothing words 'twas plain
She had a sore grief of her own,
A haunting in her brain.

And oft she said, I'm not grown thin!
And then her wrist she spanned;
And once when Mary was down-cast,
She took her by the hand,
And gazed upon her, and at first
She gently pressed her hand;

Then harder, till her grasp at length
Did gripe like a convulsion!
'Alas!' said she, 'we ne'er can be
Made happy by compulsion!'

And once her both arms suddenly
Round Mary's neck she flung,
And her heart panted, and she felt
The words upon her tongue.

She felt them coming, but no power
Had she the words to smother;
And with a kind of shriek she cried,
'Oh Christ! you're like your mother!'

So gentle Ellen now no more
Could make this sad house cheery;
And Mary's melancholy ways
Drove Edward wild and weary.

Lingering he raised his latch at eve,

Though tired in heart and limb:
He loved no other place, and yet
Home was no home to him.

One evening he took up a book,
And nothing in it read;
Then flung it down, and groaning cried,
'O! Heaven! that I were dead.'

Mary looked up into his face,
And nothing to him said;
She tried to smile, and on his arm
Mournfully leaned her head.

And he burst into tears, and fell
Upon his knees in prayer:
'Her heart is broke! O God! my grief,
It is too great to bear!'

'Twas such a foggy time as makes
Old sextons, Sir! like me,
Rest on their spades to cough; the spring
Was late uncommonly.

And then the hot days, all at once,
They came, we knew not how:
You looked about for shade, when scarce
A leaf was on a bough.

It happened then ('twas in the bower,
A furlong up the wood:
Perhaps you know the place, and yet
I scarce know how you should,)

No path leads thither, 'tis not nigh
To any pasture-plot;
But clustered near the chattering brook,
Lone hollies marked the spot.

Those hollies of themselves a shape
As of an arbour took,
A close, round arbour; and it stands

Not three strides from a brook.

Within this arbour, which was still
With scarlet berries hung,
Were these three friends, one Sunday morn,
Just as the first bell rung.

'Tis sweet to hear a brook, 'tis sweet
To hear the Sabbath-bell,
'Tis sweet to hear them both at once,
Deep in a woody dell.

His limbs along the moss, his head
Upon a mossy heap,
With shut-up senses, Edward lay:
That brook e'en on a working day
Might chatter one to sleep.

And he had passed a restless night,
And was not well in health;
The women sat down by his side,
And talked as 'twere by stealth.

'The Sun peeps through the close thick leaves,
See, dearest Ellen! see!
'Tis in the leaves, a little sun,
No bigger than your ee;

'A tiny sun, and it has got
A perfect glory too;
Ten thousand threads and hairs of light,
Make up a glory gay and bright
Round that small orb, so blue.'

And then they argued of those rays,
What colour they might be;
Says this, 'They're mostly green'; says that,
'They're amber-like to me.'

So they sat chatting, while bad thoughts
Were troubling Edward's rest;
But soon they heard his hard quick pants,

And the thumping in his breast.

'A mother too!' these self-same words
Did Edward mutter plain;
His face was drawn back on itself,
With horror and huge pain.

Both groan'd at once, for both knew well
What thoughts were in his mind;
When he waked up, and stared like one
That hath been just struck blind.

He sat upright; and ere the dream
Had had time to depart,
'O God, forgive me!' (he exclaimed)
'I have torn out her heart.'

Then Ellen shrieked, and forthwith burst
Into ungentle laughter;
And Mary shivered, where she sat,
And never she smiled after.

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

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

The Two Founts. Stanzas Addressed To A Lady On Her Recovery, With Unblemished Looks, From A Severe Attack Of Pain

'Twas my last waking thought, how it could be,
That thou, sweet friend, such anguish should'st endure
When straight from Dreamland came a dwarf, and he
Could tell the cause, forsooth, and knew the cure.

Methought he fronted me with peering look
Fixed on my heart; and read aloud in game
The loves and griefs therein, as from a book;
And uttered praise like one who wished to blame.

In every heart (quoth he) since Adam's sin
Two Founts there are, of Suffering and of Cheer!
That to let forth, and this to keep within!
But she, whose aspect I find imaged here,

Of Pleasure only will to all dispense,
That Fount alone unlock, by no distress
Choked or turned inward; but still issue thence
Unconquered cheer, persistent loveliness.

As on the driving cloud the shiny Bow,
That gracious thing made up of tears and light,
Mid the wild rack and rain that slants below
Stands smiling forth, unmoved and freshly bright:

As though the spirits of all lovely flowers,
In weaving each its wreath and dewy crown,
Or e'er they sank to earth in vernal showers,
Had built a bridge to tempt the angels down.

Ev'n so, Eliza! on that face of thine,
On that benignant face, whose look alone
(The soul's translucence through her crystal shrine!)
Has power to soothe all anguish but thine own.

A beauty hovers still, and ne'er takes wing,

But with a silent charm compels the stern
And tort'ring Genius of the Bitter Spring,
To shrink aback, and cower upon his urn.

Who then needs wonder, if (no outlet found
In passion, spleen, or strife,) the Fount Of Pain
O'erflowing beats against its lovely mound,
And in wild flashes shoots from heart to brain?

Sleep, and the Dwarf with that unsteady gleam
On his raised lip, that aped a critic smile,
Had passed: yet I, my sad thoughts to beguile,
Lay weaving on the tissue of my dream:

Till audibly at length I cried, as though
Thou hadst indeed been present to my eyes,
O sweet, sweet sufferer! if the case be so,
I pray thee, be less good, less sweet, less wise!

In every look a barbed arrow send,
On those soft lips let scorn and anger live!
Do any thing, rather than thus, sweet friend!
Hoard for thyself the pain, thou wilt not give!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The Virgin's Cradle-Hymn. Copied From A Print Of The Virgin, In A Roman Catholic Village In Germany

Dormi, Jesu! Mater ridet
Quae tam dulcem somnum videt,
Dormi, Jesu! blandule!
Si non dormis, Mater plorat,
Inter fila cantans orat,
Blande, veni, somnule.

ENGLISH.

Sleep, sweet babe! my cares beguiling:
Mother sits beside thee smiling;
Sleep, my darling, tenderly!
If thou sleep not, mother mourneth,
Singing as her wheel she turneth:
Come, soft slumber, balmily!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The Visionary Hope

Sad lot, to have no Hope! Though lowly kneeling
He fain would frame a prayer within his breast,
Would fain entreat for some sweet breath of healing,
That his sick body might have ease and rest;
He strove in vain! the dull sighs from his chest
Against his will the stifling load revealing,
Though Nature forced; though like some captive guest,
Some royal prisoner at his conqueror's feast,
An alien's restless mood but half concealing,
The sternness on his gentle brow confessed,
Sickness within and miserable feeling:
Though obscure pangs made curses of his dreams,
And dreaded sleep, each night repelled in vain,
Each night was scattered by its own loud screams:
Yet never could his heart command, though fain,
One deep full wish to be no more in pain.
That Hope, which was his inward bliss and boast,
Which waned and died, yet ever near him stood,
Though changed in nature, wander where he would--
For Love's Despair is but Hope's pining Ghost!
For this one hope he makes his hourly moan,
He wishes and can wish for this alone!
Pierced, as with light from Heaven, before its gleams
(So the love-stricken visionary deems)
Disease would vanish, like a summer shower,
Whose dews fling sunshine from the noon-tide bower!
Or let it stay! yet this one Hope should give
Such strength that he would bless his pains and live.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The Visit Of The Gods. Imitated From Schiller

Never, believe me,
Appear the Immortals,
Never alone:
Scarce had I welcomed the Sorrow-beguiler,
Iacchus! but in came Boy Cupid the Smiler;
Lo! Phoebus the Glorious descends from his throne!
They advance, they float in, the Olympians all!
With Divinities fills my
Terrestrial hall!

How shall I yield you
Due entertainment,
Celestial quire?
Me rather, bright guests! with your wings of upbuoyance
Bear aloft to your homes, to your banquets of joyance,
That the roofs of Olympus may echo my lyre!
Hah! we mount! on their pinions they waft up my soul!
O give me the nectar!
O fill me the bowl!

Give him the nectar!
Pour out for the poet,
Hebe! pour free!
Quicken his eyes with celestial dew,
That Styx the detested no more he may view,
And like one of us Gods may conceit him to be!
Thanks, Hebe! I quaff it! Io Paeon, I cry!
The wine of the Immortals
Forbids me to die!

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.

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 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.

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

To A Friend Who Had Declared His Intention Of Writing No More Poetry

Dear Charles! whilst yet thou wert a babe, I ween
That Genius plunged thee in that wizard fount
High Castalie: and (sureties of thy faith)
That Pity and Simplicity stood by.
And promised for thee that thou shouldst renounce
The world's low cares and lying vanities,
Steadfast and rooted in the heavenly Muse,
And washed and sanctified to Poesy.
Yes -- thou wert plunged but with forgetful hand
Held, as by Thetis erst her warrior son:
And with those recreant unbaptized heels
Thou'rt flying from thy bounden minist'ries--
So sore it seems and burthensome a task
To weave unwithering flowers! But take thou heed:
For thou art vulnerable, wild-eyed boy,
And I have arrows mystically dipt,
Such as may stop thy speed. Is thy Burns dead?
And shall he die unwept, and sink to earth
'Without the meed of one melodious tear?'
Thy Burns, and Nature's own beloved bard,
Who to the 'Illustrious of his native Land,
So properly did look for patronage.'
Ghost of Maecenas! hide thy blushing face!
They snatched him from the sickle and the plough--
To gauge ale-firkins.
Oh! for shame return!
On a bleak rock, midway the Aonian mount,
There stands a lone and melancholy tree,
Whose aged branches to the midnight blast
Make solemn music: pluck its darkest bough,
Ere yet the unwholesome night-dew be exhaled,
And weeping wreath it round thy Poet's tomb.
Then in the outskirts, where pollutions grow,
Pick the rank henbane and the dusky flowers
Of night-shade, or its red and tempting fruit,
These with stopped nostril and glove-guarded hand
Knit in nice intertexture, so to twine,

The illustrious brow of Scotch Nobility.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

To A Friend, In Answer To A Melancholy Letter

Away, those cloudy looks, that lab'ring sigh,
The peevish offspring of a sickly hour!
Nor meanly thus complain of fortune's power,
When the blind gamester throws a luckless die.

Yon setting sun flashes a mournful gleam
Behind those broken clouds, his stormy train:
To-morrow shall the many-colord main
In brightness roll beneath his orient beam!

Wild as th' autumnal gust, the hand of Time
Flies o'er his mystic lyre! in shadowy dance
Th' alternate groups of joy and grief advance,
Responsive to his varying strains sublime!

Bears on its wing each hour a load of fate.
The swain, who lulled by Seine's wild murmurs, led
His weary oxen to their nightly shed,
To-day may rule a tempest-troubled State.

Nor shall not fortune with a vengeful smile
Survey the sanguinary despot's might,
And haply hurl the pageant from his height,
Unwept to wander in some savage isle.

There, shiv'ring sad beneath the tempest's frown,
Round his tired limbs to wrap the purple vest;
And mixed with nails and beads, an equal jest!
Barter for food the jewels of his crown.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

To A Friend, With An Unfinished Poem

Thus far my scanty brain hath built the rhyme
Elaborate and swelling; - yet the heart
Not owns it. From thy spirit-breathing powers
I ask not now, my friend! the aiding verse
Tedious to thee, and from thy anxious thought
Of dissonant mood. In fancy (well I know)
From business wand'ring far and local cares,
Thou creepest round a dear-loved sister's bed
With noiseless step, and watchest the faint look,
Soothing each pang with fond solicitude,
And tenderest tones medicinal of love.
I, too, a sister had, an only sister --
She loved me dearly, and I doted on her;
To her I pour'd forth all my puny sorrows;
(As a sick patient in a nurse's arms,)
And of the heart those hidden maladies -
That e'en from friendship's eye will shrink ashamed.
O! I have waked at midnight, and have wept
Because she was not! - Cheerily, dear Charles!
Thou thy best friend shalt cherish many a year;
Such warm presages feel I of high hope!
For not uninterested the dear maid
I've view'd - her soul affectionate yet wise,
Her polish'd wit as mild as lambent glories
That play around a sainted infant's head.
He knows (the Spirit that in secret sees,
Of whose omniscient and all-spreading love
Aught to implore were impotence of mind!)
That my mute thoughts are sad before his throne, -
Prepared, when He his healing ray vouchsafes,
Thanksgiving to pour forth with lifted heart,
And praise him gracious with a brother's joy!

Dec. 1794

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

To A Lady, Offended By A Sportive Observation That Women Have No Souls

Nay, dearest Anna! why so grave?
I said, you had no soul, 'tis true!
For what you are, you cannot have:
'Tis I, that have one since I first had you!

I have heard of reasons manifold
Why Love must needs be blind,
But this the best of all I hold--
His eyes are in his mind.

What outward form and feature are
He guesseth but in part;
But what within is good and fair
He seeth with the heart.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

To A Lady, With Falconer's 'shipwreck'

Oh! not by Cam or Isis, famous streams
In arched groves, the youthful poet's choice;
Nor while half-listening, mid delicious dreams,
To harp and song from lady's hand and voice;

Nor yet while gazing in sublimer mood
On cliff, or cataract, in Alpine dell;
Nor in dim cave with bladderly sea-weed strewed,
Framing wild fancies to the ocean's swell;

Our sea-bard sang this song! which still he sings,
And sings for thee, sweet friend! Hark, Pity, hark
Now mounts, now totters on the tempest's wings,
Now groans, and shivers, the replunging bark!

'Cling to the shrouds!' In vain! The breakers roar--
Death shrieks! With two alone of all his clan
Forlorn the poet paced the Grecian shore,
No classic roamer, but a ship-wrecked man!

Say then, what muse inspired these genial strains
And lit his spirit to so bright a flame?
The elevating thought of suffered pains,
Which gentle hearts shall mourn; but chief, the name

Of gratitude! remembrance of friend,
Or absent or no more! shades of the Past,
Which Loves make substance! Hence to thee I send,
O dear as long as life and memory last!

I send with deep regards of heart and head,
Sweet maid, for friendship formed! this work to thee
And thou, the while thou canst not choose but shed
A tear for Falconer, wilt remember me.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

To A Primrose

The first seen in the season

Nitens et roboris experts
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 oppressed 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! thy 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!

To A Young Lady, With A Poem On The French Revolution

Much on my early youth I love to dwell,
Ere yet I bade that friendly dome farewell,
Where first, beneath the echoing cloisters, pale,
I heard of guilt and wondered at the tale!
Yet tho' the hours flew by on careless wing,
Full heavily of sorrow would I sing.
Aye as the star of evening flung its beam
In broken radiance on the wavy stream,
My soul amid the pensive twilight gloom
Mourned with the breeze, O, Lee Boo! o'er thy tomb.
Where'er I wanderd, pity still was near,
Breathed from the heart and glistened in the tear:
No knell that tolled, but filled my anxious eye,
And suffering nature wept that one should die!

Thus to sad sympathies I soothed my breast,
Calm, as the rainbow in the weeping west:
When slumb'ring freedom roused by high disdain
With giant fury burst her triple chain!
Fierce on her front the blasting dog-star glowed;
Her banners like a midnight meteor flowed;
Amid the yelling of the storm-rent skies
She came, and scattered battles from her eyes!
Then exultation waked the patriot fire
And swept with wilder hand the Alcaean lyre:
Red from the tyrant's wound I shook the lance,
And strode in joy the reeking plains of France!
Fall'n is th' oppressor, friendless, ghastly, low,
And my heart aches tho' mercy struck the blow.
With wearied thought once more I see the shade,
Where peaceful virtue weaves the myrtle braid.
And O! if eyes, whose holy glances roll,
Swift messengers, and eloquent of soul;
If smiles more winning, and a gentler mien,
Than the love-wildered maniac's brain hath seen
Shaping celestial forms in vacant air,
If these demand th' impassioned poet's care--

If mirth, and softened sense, and wit refined,
The blameless features of a lovely mind;
Then haply shall my trembling hand assign
No fading wreath beauty's saintly shrine.
Nor, Sara! thou these early flowers refuse----
Ne'er lurked the snake beneath their simple hues,
No purple bloom the child of nature brings
From flatt'ry's night-shade: as he feels, he sings.
Sept. 1794.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

To A Young Lady. On Her Recovery From A Fever

Why need I say, Louisa dear!
How glad I am to see you here,
A lovely convalescent;
Risen from the bed of pain and fear,
And feverish heat incessant.

The sunny showers, the dappled sky,
The little birds that warble high,
Their vernal loves commencing,
Will better welcome you than I
With their sweet influencing.

Believe me, while in bed you lay,
Your danger taught us all to pray:
You made us grow devouter!
Each eye looked up and seemed to say
How can we do without her?

Besides, what vexed us worse, we knew,
They have no need of such as you
In the place where you were going:
This World has angels all too few,
And Heaven is overflowing!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

To An Infant

Ah cease thy tears and sobs, my little life!
I did but snatch away the unclasped knife:
Some safer toy will soon arrest thine eye,
And to quick laughter change this peevish cry!
Poor stumbler on the rocky coast of woe,
Tutored by pain each source of pain to know!
Alike the foodful fruit and scorching fire
Awake thy eager grasp and young desire:
Alike the good, the ill offend thy sight,
And rouse the stormy sense of shrill affright!
Untaught, yet wise! mid all thy brief alarms
Thou closely clingest to thy mother's arms,
Nestling thy little face in that fond breast
Whose anxious heavings lull thee to thy rest!
Man's breathing miniature! thou mak'st me sigh--
A babe art thou -- and such a thing am I!

To anger rapid and as soon appeased,
For trifles mourning and by trifles pleased;
Break friendship's mirror with a tetchy blow,
Yet snatch what coals of fire on pleasure's altar glow!

Oh thou that rearest with celestial aim
The future seraph in my mortal frame,
Thrice holy Faith! whatever thorns I meet
As on I totter with unpractised feet,
Still let me stretch my arms and cling to thee,
Meek nurse of souls through their long infancy!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

To An Unfortunate Woman At The Theatre

Maiden, that with sullen brow
Sitt'st behind those virgins gay,
Like a scorched and mildew'd bough,
Leafless mid the blooms of May.

Him who lured thee and forsook,
Oft I watch'd with angry gaze,
Fearful saw his pleading look,
Anxious heard his fervid phrase.

Soft the glances of the youth,
Soft his speech, and soft his sigh;
But no sound like simple truth,
But no true love in his eye.

Loathing thy polluted lot,
Hie thee, maiden, hie thee hence!
Seek thy weeping mother's cot,
With a wiser innocence.

Thou hast known deceit and folly,
Thou hast felt that vice is woe;
With a musing melancholy,
Inly armed, go, maiden! go.

Mother, sage of self dominion,
Firm thy steps, O melancholy!
The strongest plume in wisdom's pinion
Is the memory of past folly.

Mute the sky-lark and forlorn
While she moults the firstling plumes,
That had skimm'd the tender corn,
Or the bean-field's odorous blooms.

Soon with renovated wing,
Shall she dare a loftier flight,
Upward to the day-star spring,
And embathe in heavenly light.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

To An Unfortunate Woman, Whom The Author Had Known In The Days Of Her Innocence

Myrtle leaf, that ill besped
Pinest in the gladsome ray,
Soiled beneath the common tread
Far from thy protecting spray!

When the partridge o'er the sheaf
Whirred along the yellow vale,
Sad, I saw thee, heedless leaf!
Love the dalliance of the gale.

Lightly didst thou, foolish thing!
Heave and flutter to his sighs,
While the flatt'rer on his wing
Wooed and whispered thee to rise.

Gayly from thy mother stalk
Wert thou danced and wafted high;
Soon on this unsheltered walk
Flung to fade, to rot, and die!

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 C. Lloyd, On His Proposing To Domesticate With The Author

A mount, not wearisome and bare and steep,
But a green mountain variously up-piled
Where o'er the jutting rocks soft mosses creep
Or colored lichens with slow oozing weep;
Where cypress and the darker yew start wild;
And 'mid the summer torrent's gentle dash
Dance brightened the red clusters of the ash;
Beneath whose boughs, by stillest sounds beguiled,
Calm pensiveness might muse herself to sleep;
Till haply startled by some fleecy dam,
That rustling on the bushy cliff above
With melancholy bleat of anxious love
Made meek enquiry for her wand'ring lamb:
Such a green mountain 'twere most sweet to climb
E'en while the bosom ached with loneliness--
How heavenly sweet, if some dear friend should bless
Th' advent'rous toil, and up the path sublime
Now lead, now follow; the glad landscape round
Wide and more wide, increasing without bound!

O then 'twere loveliest sympathy, to mark
The berries of the half up-rooted ash
Dripping and bright; and list the torrent's dash--
Beneath the cypress, or the yew more dark,
Seated at ease, on some smooth mossy rock;
In social silence now, and now t' unlock
The treasured heart; arm linked in friendly arm,
Save if the one, his muse's witching charm
Mutt'ring brow-bent, at unwatched distance lag;
Till high o'er-head his beck'ning friend appears,
And from the forehead of the topmost crag
Shouts eagerly; for haply there uprears
That shadowing pine its old romantic limbs
Which latest shall detain the enamoured sight
Seen from below, when eve the valley dims,
Tinged yellow with the rich departing light;
And haply, basoned in some unsunned cleft,

A beauteous spring, the rock's collected tears,
Sleeps unsheltered there, scarce wrinkled by the gale!
Together thus, the world's vain turmoil left,
Stretched on the crag, and shadowed by the pine,
And bending o'er the clear delicious fount,
Ah, dearest Charles! it were a lot divine
To cheat our noons in moralizing mood,
While west winds fanned our temples, toil-bedewed
Then downwards slope, oft-pausing, from the mount
To some low mansion in some woody dale,
Where, smiling with blue eye, domestic bliss
Gives this the husband's, that the brother's kiss!

Thus rudely versed in allegoric lore,
The hill of knowledge I essayed to trace;
That verd'rous hill with many a resting-place
And many a stream, whose warbling waters pour
To glad and fertilize the subject plains;
That hill with secret springs, and nooks untrod,
And many a fancy-blest and holy sod
Where inspiration, his diviner strains
Low-murm'ring, lay; and starting from the rocks
Stiff evergreens, whose spreading foliage mocks
Want's barren soil, and the bleak frosts of age,
And mad oppression's thunder-clasping rage!

O meek retiring spirit! we will climb,
Cheering and cheered, this lovely hill sublime;
And from the stirring world uplifted high
(Whose noises faintly wafted on the wind
To quiet musings shall attune the mind,
And oft the melancholy theme supply),
There while the prospect thro' the gazing eye
Pours all its healthful greenness on the soul,
We'll laugh at wealth, and learn to laugh at fame,
Our hopes, our knowledge, and our joys the same,
As neighb'ring fountains image each the whole.

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 Sara

One kiss, dear maid! I said and sighed,
Your scorn the little boon denied.
Ah why refuse the blameless bliss?
Can danger lurk within a kiss?

Yon viewless wand'rer of the vale,
The spirit of the western gale,
At morning's break, at evening's close
Inhales the sweetness of the rose
And hovers o'er th' uninjured bloom
Sighing back the soft perfume.
Vigor to the zephyr's wing
Her nectar-breathing kisses fling;
And he the glitter of the dew
Scatters on the rose's hue.
Bashful, lo! she bends her head,
And darts a blush of deeper red!

Too well those lovely lips disclose
The triumphs of the op'ning rose:
O fair! O graceful! bid them prove
As passive to the breath of love.
In tender accents, faint and low,
Well-pleased I hear the whispered 'No!'
The whispered 'No' ---- how little meant!
Sweet falsehood, that endears consent!
For on those lovely lips the while
Dawns the soft relenting smile,
And tempts with feigned dissuasion coy
The gentle violence of joy.

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 blessed 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 aged 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
Sorrow'd in silence! He who counts alone
The beatings of the solitary heart,
That Being knows, how I have lov'd thee ever,
Lov'd as a brother, as a son rever'd thee!
Oh! 'tis to me an ever new delight,
To talk of thee and thine: or when the blast
Of the shrill winter, rattling our rude sash,
Endears the cleanly hearth and social bowl;
Or when, as now, on some delicious eve,
We in our sweet sequester'd orchard-plot
Sit on the tree crook'd earth-ward; whose old boughs,
That hang above us in an arborous roof,
Stirr'd by the faint gale of departing May,
Send their loose blossoms slanting o'er our heads!

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!

These various strains,

Which I have fram'd in many a various mood,
Accept, my Brother! and (for some perchance
Will strike discordant on thy milder mind)
If aught of error or intemperate truth
Should meet thine ear, think thou that riper Age

Will calm it down, and let thy love forgive it!

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

To The Reverend George Coleridge, Of Ottery St. Mary, Devon

A blessed lot hath he, who having past
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 aged knees, and climb that lap,
On which first kneeling his own infancy
Lisp'd its brief prayer. Such, O my earliest friend!
Thine and thy brothers' favorable lot.
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 th' Eternal Wisdom hath dispensed
A different fortune and more different mind.--
Me from the spot where first I sprang to light,
Too soon transplanted, ere my soul had fixed
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, or a sudden breeze
Ruffled the boughs, they on my head at once
Dropt the collected shower: and some most false,
False and fair-foliaged as the manchineel,
Have tempted me to slumber in their shade
E'en mid the storm; then breathing subtlest damps,
Mixed their own venom with the rain from heaven,
That I woke poisoned! But (the praise be His
Who gives us all things) more have yielded me
Permanent shelter: and beside one friend,
I, as beneath the covert of an oak,
Have raised a lowly shed, and know the names
Of husband and of father; nor 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 colors!
Yet at times
My soul is sad, that I have roamed 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,
Rebuked each fault and wept o'er all my woes.
Who counts the beatings of the lonely heart,
That Being knows, how I have loved thee ever,
Loved as a brother, as a son revered thee!
O 'tis to me an ever new delight,
To talk of thee and thine; or when the blast
Of the shrill winter, rattling our rude sash,
Endears the cleanly hearth and social bowl;
Or when, as now, on some delicious eve,
We in our sweet sequestered orchard-plot
Sit on the tree crooked earthward; whose old boughs,
That hand above us in an arborous roof,
Stirred by the faint gale of departing May,
Send their loose blossoms slanting o'er our heads!

Nor dost thou sometimes recall those hours,
When with the joy of hope thou gav'st thine ear
To my wild firstling lays. Since then my song
Hath sounded deeper notes, such as beseem
Of that sad wisdom, folly leaves behind;
Or the high raptures of prophetic faith;
Or such as, tuned to these tumultuous times,
Cope with the tempest's swell!
These various songs,
Which I have framed in many a various mood,
Accept, my brother; and (for some perchance
Will strike discordant on thy milder mind)
If aught of error or intemperate truth
Should meet thine ear, think thou that riper age
Will calm it down, and let thy loves forgive it!

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 linkéd 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

Water Ballad

Come hither, gently rowing,
Come, bear me quickly o'er
This stream so brightly flowing
To yonder woodland shore.
But vain were my endeavour
To pay thee, courteous guide;
Row on, row on, for ever
I'd have thee by my side.

Good boatman, prithee haste thee,
I seek my father-land. --
Say, when I there have placed thee,
Dare I demand thy hand?
A maiden's head can never
So hard a point decide;
Row on, row on, for ever
I'd have thee by my side.

The happy bridal over
The wanderer ceased to roam,
For, seated by her lover,
The boat became her home.
And they still sang together
As steering o'er the tide:
Row on through wind and weather
For ever by my side.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

What If You Slept ...

What if you slept
And what if
In your sleep
You dreamed
And what if
In your dream
You went to heaven
And there plucked a strange and beautiful flower
And what if
When you awoke
You had that flower in you hand
Ah, what then?

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

What Is An Epigram?

What is an Epigram? A dwarfish whole,
Its body brevity, and wit its soul.

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

Written In Early Youth. The Time,--An Autumnal Evening

O thou wild fancy, check thy wing! No more
Those thin white flakes, those purple clouds explore!
Nor there with happy spirits speed thy light
Bathed in rich amber-glowing floods of light;
Nor in yon gleam, where slow descends the day,
With western peasants hail the morning ray!
Ah! rather bid the perished pleasures move,
A shadowy train, across the soul of love!
O'er disappointment's wintry desert fling
Each flower that wreathed the dewy locks of Spring,
When blushing, like a bride, from hope's trim bower
She leapt, awakened by the pattering shower.

Now sheds the sinking sun a deeper gleam,
Aid, lovely sorceress! aid thy poet's dream!
With fairy wand O bid the maid arise,
Chaste joyance dancing in her bright blue eyes;
As erst when from the Muses' calm abode
I came, with learning's meed not unbestowed:
When, as she twined a laurel round my brow,
And met my kiss, and half returned my vow,
O'er all my frame shot rapid my thrilled heart,
And every nerve confessed the electric dart.
O dear conceit! I see the maiden rise,
Chaste joyance dancing in her bright blue eyes,
When first the lark high-soaring swells his throat
Mocks the tired eye, and scatters the loud note,
I trace her footsteps on the accustomed lawn,
I mark her glancing mid the gleams of dawn.
When the bent flower beneath the night-dew weeps,
And on the lake the silver lustre sleeps,
Amid the paly radiance soft and sad
She meets my lonely path in moon-beams clad.
With her along the streamlet's brink I rove;
With her I list the warblings of the grove;
And seems in each low wind her voice to float
Lone-whispering pity in each soothing note!

Spirits of love! ye heard her name! Obey
The powerful spell, and to my haunt repair,
Whither on clust'ring pinions ye are there,
Where rich snows blossom on the myrtle trees,
Or with fond languishment around my fair
Sigh in the loose luxuriance of her hair;
O heed the spell, and hither wing your way,
Like far-off music, voyaging the breeze!
Spirits! to you the infant maid was given,
Formed by the wondrous alchemy of Heaven!
No fairer maid does love's wide empire know,
No fairer maid e'er heaved the bosom's snow.
A thousand loves around her forehead fly;
A thousand loves sit melting in her eye;
Love lights her smile -- in joy's bright nectar dips
The flamy rose, and plants it on her lips!
Tender, serene, and all devoid of guile,
Soft is her soul, as sleeping infant's smile:
She speaks! and hark that passion-warbled song--
Still, fancy! still those mazy notes prolong.
Sweet as th' angelic harps, whose rapturous falls
Awake the softened echoes of heaven's halls!
O (have I sighed) were mine the wizard's rod,
Or mine the power of Proteus, changeful god!
A flower-entangled arbor I would seem
To shield my love from noontide's sultry beam:
Or bloom a myrtle, from whose od'rous boughs
My love might weave gay garlands for her brows.
When twilight stole across the fading vale,
To fan my love I'd be the evening gale;
Mourn in the soft folds of her swelling vest,
And flutter my faint pinions on her breast!
On seraph wing I'd float a dream, by night,
To soothe my love with shadows of delight:--
Or soar aloft to be the spangled skies,
And gaze upon her with a thousand eyes!

As when the savage, who his dowsy frame
Had basked beneath the sun's unclouded frame,
Awakes amid the troubles of the air,
The skyey deluge, and white lightning's glare--

Aghast he scours before the tempest's sweep,
And sad recalls the sunny hour of sleep:--
So tost by storms along life's wild'ring way
Mine eye reverted views that cloudless day,
When by my native brook I wont to rove
While hope with kisses nursed the infant love.

Dear native brook! like peace, so placidly
Smoothing thro' fertile fields thy current meel!
Dear native brook! where first young poesy
Stared wildly-eager in her noontide dream,
Where blameless pleasures dimple quiet's cheek,
As water-lilies ripple a slow stream!
Dear native haunts! where virtue still is gay:
Where friendship's fixed star sheds a mellowed ray
Where love a crown of thornless roses wears:
Where softened sorrow smiles within her tears;
And mem'ry, with a vestal's chaste employ,
Unceasing feeds the lambent flame of joy!
No more your skylarks melting from the sight
Shall thrill th' attuned heart-string with delight:--
No more shall deck your pensive pleasures sweet
With wreaths of sober hue my evening seat.
Yet dear to fancy's eye your varied scene
Of wood, hill, dale, and sparkling brook between!
Yet sweet to fancy's ear the warbled song,
That soars on morning's wing your vales among.

Scenes of my hope! the aching eye ye leave
Like yon bright hues that paint the clouds of eve!
Tearful and sadd'ning with the saddened blaze
Mine eye the gleam pursues with wistful gaze;
Sees shades on shades with deeper tint impend,
Till chill and damp the moonless night descend.

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,
When I was young!
When I was young? -Ah, woeful When!
Ah! for the change 'twixt Now and Then!
This breathing house not built with hands,
This body that does me grievous wrong,
O'er aery cliffs and glittering sands
How lightly then it flashed along,
Like those trim skiffs, unknown of yore,
On winding lakes and rivers wide,
That ask no aid of sail or oar,
That fear no spite of wind or tide!
Nought cared this body for wind or weather
When Youth and I lived in't together.

Flowers are lovely; Love is flower-like;
Friendship is a sheltering tree;
O the joys! that came down shower-like,
Of Friendship, Love, and Liberty,
Ere I was old!
Ere I was old? Ah woeful Ere,
Which tells me, Youth's no longer here!
O Youth! for years so many and sweet
'Tis known that Thou and I were one,
I'll think it but a fond conceit -
It cannot be that Thou art gone!
Thy vesper-bell hath not yet tolled -
And thou wert aye a masker bold!
What strange disguise hast now put on,
To make believe that thou art gone?
I see these locks in silvery slips,
This drooping gait, this altered size:
But 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 housemates still.

Dew-drops are the gems of morning,
But the tears of mournful eve!
Where no hope is, life's a warning
That only serves to make us grieve
When we are old:
That only serves to make us grieve
With oft and tedious taking-leave,
Like some poor nigh-related guest
That may not rudely be dismiss;
Yet hath out-stayed 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