

THE ANCIENT MARINER

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The Ancient Mariner by Samuel Taylor Coleridge

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SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

**THE ANCIENT
MARINER**



S. J. Cotendge

THE
ANCIENT MARINER

By
SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

By
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“ For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.”

BOSTON, U.S.A.
D. C. HEATH & CO., PUBLISHERS
1897

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To

E. A. G.

Whether to me shall be allotted life,
And, with life, power to accomplish aught of worth,
That will be deemed no insufficient plea
For having given the story of myself,
Is all uncertain : but, beloved Friend !
When, looking back, thou seest, in clearer view
Than any liveliest sight of yesterday,
That summer, under whose indulgent skies
Upon smooth Quantock's airy ridge we roved
Uncheck'd, or loitered 'mid her sylvan combs,
Thou in bewitching words, with happy heart,
Didst chaunt the vision of that Ancient Man,
The bright-eyed Mariner, and rueful woes
Didst utter of the Lady Christabel ;
And I, associate with such labor, steeped
In soft forgetfulness the livelong hours,
Murmuring of him who, joyous hap, was found,
After the perils of his moonlight ride,
Near the loud waterfall ; or her who sat
In misery near the miserable Thorn ;
When thou dost to that summer turn thy thoughts,
And hast before thee all which then we were,
To thee, in memory of that happiness,
It will be known, by thee at least, my Friend !
Felt, that the history of a Poet's mind
Is labor not unworthy of regard :
To thee the work shall justify itself.

WORDSWORTH: *Prelude*, xiv.

PREFACE.

A study of the genesis of Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* suggests a consideration of those literary friendships which from time to time have reddened the blood and quickened the pulse of English poesy.

How beautiful are the revelations of the love of man for a man! Witness the nobility, sweetness, and purity of Spenser's love for his gracious and generous friend, Sir Philip Sidney, that typical English gentleman "fashioned in virtue and gentle discipline"; Shakespeare's eternal passion for W. H., the only begetter of the Sonnets; Shelley's fervid devotion to Keats, the "youngest and dearest" of the tuneful choir; Tennyson's noble loyalty to Arthur Hallam,—a loyalty that could carry him through "calm despair and wild unrest" to "the fuller gain of after bliss"; Arnold's peacefully tender and delicate love of Clough, the Scholar-Gipsy.

That notable day at Racedown, in June, 1797, which revealed the natural kinship of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William and Dorothy Wordsworth, and "made three people one soul," has not been celebrated in any single

great poem ; yet it created that little volume, the *Lyrical Ballads*, which has exerted a greater influence on English literature than has any other single volume.

Natural and beautiful was the association of Wordsworth and Coleridge, and the history of our literature has nothing more interesting and suggestive than the friendship of these men. The circumstances under which this love was fostered and sustained, and in consequence of which each attained heights from which has been shed ever-enduring radiance, are worthy of frequent repetition. The fact that the main impulse to that poetry and criticism, which has been the most stimulating and productive "in its application of ideas to life, in its natural magic and moral profundity," was the creation of this friendship, is a sufficient reason for dwelling upon it here.

Professor Dowden says: "In 1797 there were two movements in our literature, each operating apart from the other, and each prone to excess, — naturalism, tending to a hard, dry, literal manner, unilluminated by the light of imagination ; romance, tending to become a coarse revel in material horrors. English poetry needed first that romance should be saved and ennobled by the presence and the power of truth, and, secondly, that naturalism, without losing any of its fidelity to fact, should be saved and ennobled by the presence and