

QUEEN'S QUARTERLY

watches the curse in the dead men's eyes, and yet, like the Wandering Jew, he himself cannot die. As he declares to the Wedding-Guest in Part VII:

O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide, wide sea:
So lonely 'twas, that God himself
Scarce seeméd there to be.

All is foul and fixed, as though for ever. Suddenly in this static horror of despair something moves,—the only moving, hope-renewing object within that wilderness of sea and sky. It is the normal, familiar Moon—symbol, as we have seen, of the inexhaustible loving-kindness of God. No contrast could be greater than that between the misery of the Mariner in his ominous surroundings and the gentle rising of the friendly Moon. Rossetti was always eloquent in his praise of the first stanza of 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.

But it is hard to find in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* more beautiful lines than the following, especially as related to their context:

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

Note the word *softly* and note its reappearance when the poet describes the Second Voice:

The other was a *softer* voice,
As *soft* as honey-dew:

But tell me, tell me! speak again,
Thy *soft* response renewing—

The moonbeams, says Coleridge,

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