

With these advantages, mental and physical, our hero set out on his career as a man, and earned for about three years a precarious living as a lecturer, poet, editor, and preacher in Unitarian pulpits. The faults in his character soon became manifest, an unconquerable dilatoriness which rendered it impossible to rely on his promise to do anything, an unmanly disposition to allow his wants to be provided for by others, and a tendency to make and announce plans and projects, and to imagine that when he had done so they were nearly executed. In 1795 he married, and his married life was for some years a happy one. In politics he was at this time strongly opposed to Pitt and the war against France, and his views were very forcibly expressed in his lectures and in *The Watchman*, a weekly newspaper, of which he published ten numbers. The year 1797 may be termed the *Annus Mirabilis* of his life as in it he wrote his finest and most characteristic poems—*The Ancient Mariner*, the first part of *Christabel*, and *Kubla Khan*, as well as his best tragedy, *Remorse*, the *Ode to France*, and the beautiful little poem entitled *Love*. In this year, too, he formed the acquaintance of Wordsworth and his sister whom he impressed as no other contemporary seems to have impressed them. This was the beginning of a life-long friendship, of which one of the first fruits was the production of a joint volume of verse, the *Lyrical Ballads*, among which *The Ancient Mariner* was included.

In the year in which the volume was published, namely 1798, Coleridge made up his mind to accept and did accept a call from the Unitarian congregation at Shrewsbury to act as their pastor, but was induced to reconsider his acceptance at the instance of the Messrs. Wedgewood, sons of the famous manufacturer of porcelain, and engaged in the same business, who had formed a high opinion of his talents and thought it a pity that his life should be wasted in the performance of duties which would prevent him from carrying out the great literary projects he was understood to have in view. They accordingly offered him an annuity of £150 a year for an indefinite period, provided he would abandon his intention of becoming a minister and devote himself to literature, and the offer was accepted. One cannot help feeling that it is a pity that this proposal was ever made or acceded to. If Coleridge had been compelled to earn his bread like most other mortals, under the penalty of starvation, the stern discipline might have corrected the defects which proved the ruin of his lavishly endowed nature.

The immediate result of his being set free from ordinary cares in this way was a trip to Germany undertaken in company with the Wordsworths. Here he acquired the language, gained an acquaint-