

THE RIME OF ANCIENT MARINER AS A CHRISTIAN POEM

'The Rime of Ancient Mariner' is a story of 'Paradise Lost' and 'Paradise Regained'. Just as Adam loses paradise through his folly and regains it through his repentance and Christian redemptive efforts, the Ancient Mariner experiences spiritual wasteland through his own folly. Spiritual fertility stirs in him when he sheds his tears of repentance for his folly. The surface meaning of the poem is different from its symbolical meaning. The essential Christian spirit of the poet finds expression through the organised pattern of the Mariner's experience of woe and joy.

The Mariner commits an unprompted crime against the divine law of love. As a result there is an upheaval both in the internal world of mind and in

the external world of nature. The Albatross is not a mere bird. The way the bird reaches the place from nowhere out of 'fog and mist' is suggestive of its symbolical religious character to the Mariners who are happy at the sight of the bird as a good soul which has come here to help them:

- 63 At length did cross an Albatross,
Through the fog it came;
As if it had been a Christian soul,
66 We hailed it in God's name,
The bird answered the sailors, ate
human food and played with the
crew. The sailors call it 'the
pious bird of good omen.' The
Albatross thus becomes an impor-
tant character. It stands at the
same level of existence as the
Mariner and his companions.
The Mariner's wanton act of
killing, therefore is no ordinary
matter. It is a great crime or

sin against god, nature and the sanctified relations of guest and host.

The killing of the Albatross relates the story to Christ's crucifixion. This brought moral and spiritual decay in human beings and a great cataclysm in nature too. Thus the bird has its own obvious place not only in the natural order but in the system of both human and religious values, which is declared to have power over the ship and its crew through its connections with the weather.

The Mariner's suffering begins as a result of his crime against the divine law of nature. Like Macbeth's, his mind is 'full of scorpions' and the helplessness which are the common attributes of guilt. The world the Mariner faces after his crime is dead and loathsome. The ship has ceased