

Narration prior to and within "The Inchcape Bell"

Poem by Robert Southey

*A favorite poem was Southey's poem "The Inchcape Bell," a story of a priest and a pirate. A good priest in order to warn seamen in dark stormy weather hung a big bell on the dangerous Inchcape Rock. The greater the storm and higher the waves, the louder rang the warning bell, until it was cut off and sunk by wicked Ralph the Rover. One fine day (**THE INCHCAPEBELL BEGINS**) as the story goes, when the bell was ringing gently, the pirate put out to the rock, saying, "I'll Sink that bell and plague the Abbot of Aberbrothok." So he cut the rope, and down went the bell "with a gurgling sound; the bubbles rose and burst around," etc. Then "Ralph the Rover sailed away; he scoured the seas for many a day; and now, grown rich with plundered store, he steers his course for Scotland's shore." Then came a terrible storm with cloud darkness and night darkness and high roaring waves. "Now where we are," cried the pirate, "I cannot tell, but I wish I could hear the Inchcape bell." And the story goes on to tell how the wretched rover "tore his hair," and cursed himself in his despair," when "with a shivering shock" the stout ship struck on the Inchcape Rock, and went down with Ralph and his plunder beside the good priest's bell.*