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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK ELENE; JUDITH; ATHELSTAN, OR THE FIGHT AT BRUNANBURH; BYRHTNOTH, OR THE FIGHT AT MALDON; AND THE DREAM OF THE ROOD ***

**ELENE;
JUDITH;
ATHELSTAN, OR THE FIGHT AT
BRUNANBURH;
BYRHTNOTH, OR THE FIGHT AT MALDON;
AND
THE DREAM OF THE ROOD:**

Anglo-Saxon Poems.

TRANSLATED BY

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"BÉOWULF."

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TO PROFESSOR FRANCIS A. MARCH
CORYPHÆUS OF OLD ENGLISH STUDIES IN AMERICA
WITH SENTIMENTS OF THE HIGHEST REGARD

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ATHELSTAN, OR THE FIGHT AT BRUNANBURH.

Athelstan and Edmund, with their West-Saxons and Mercians, slaughter the Scots and Northmen. Constantine and his Scots flee to their homes in the North. Anlaf and his Northmen flee across the sea to Dublin. Athelstan and Edmund return home in triumph, and leave the corpses to the raven, the eagle, and the wolf.

BYRHTNOTH, OR THE FIGHT AT MALDON.

***** Byrhtnoth and his East-Saxons are drawn up on the bank of the Panta. The wikings' herald demands tribute. Byrhtnoth angrily offers arms for tribute. Wulfstan defends the bridge. Byrhtnoth proudly permits the wikings to cross. The fight rages. Byrhtnoth is wounded. He slays the foe. He is wounded again. He prays to God to receive his soul, and is hewn down by the heathen men. Godric flees on Byrhtnoth's horse. His brothers follow him. Ælfwine encourages the men to avenge the death of their lord. So does Offa, who curses Godric. Leofsunu will avenge his lord or perish. Dunnere also. Others follow their example. Offa is slain and many warriors. The fight still rages. The aged Byrhtwold exhorts them to be the braver as they become the fewer. So does another Godric, not he who fled. ***

THE DREAM OF THE ROOD.

In the middle of the night the writer beholds the vision of a cross decked with gold and jewels, but soiled with blood. Presently the cross speaks and tells how it was hewn and set up on a mount. Almighty God ascended it to redeem mankind. It bent not, but the nails made grievous wounds, and it was moistened with blood. All creation wept. The corse was placed in a sepulchre of brightest stone. The crosses were buried, but the thanes of the Lord raised it begirt with gold and silver, and it should receive honor from all mankind. The Lord of Glory honored it, who arose for help to men, and shall come again with His angels to judge each one of men. Then they will fear and know not what to say, but no one need fear who bears in his heart the best of beacons. The writer is ready for his journey, and directs his prayer to the rood. His friends now dwell in glory, and the rood of the Lord will bring him there where he may partake of joy with the saints. The Lord redeemed us, His Son was victorious, and with a band of spirits entered His heavenly home.

PREFACE.

This translation of the *ELENE* was made while reading the poem with a post-graduate student in the session of 1887-88, Zupitza's second edition being used for the text, which does not differ materially from that in his third edition (1888). It was completed before I received a copy of Dr. Weymouth's translation (1888), from Zupitza's text; but in the revision for publication I have referred to it, although I cannot always agree with the learned scholar in his interpretation of certain passages. Grein's text was, however, used to fill *lacunæ*, and in the revision the recently published (1888) Grein-Wülker text was compared in some passages. The line-for-line form has been employed, as in my translation of *BÉOWULF*; for it has been approved by high authority, and is unquestionably more serviceable to the student, even if I have not been able to attain ideal correctness of rhythm. I plead guilty in advance to any *lapsus* in that respect, but I strongly suspect that I have appreciated the difficulty more highly than my future critics. The *ELENE* is more suitable than the *BÉOWULF* for first reading in Old English poetry on account of its style and its subject, which make the interpretation considerably easier, and I concur with Körting, in his *Grundriss der Geschichte der Englischen Litteratur* (p. 47, 1887): "Die *ELENE* eignet sich sowohl wegen ihres anmutigen Inhaltes, als auch, weil sie in der trefflichen Ausgabe von Zupitza leicht zugänglich ist, als erste poetische Lectüre für Anfänger im Angelsächsischen." This statement is now the stronger for English readers because Zupitza's text is in course of publication, edited with introduction, notes, and glossary by Professor Charles W. Kent, of the University of Tennessee. I have appended a few notes which explain themselves, and have occasionally inserted words in brackets.

The translations of the *JUDITH* and the *BYRHTNOTH* were made in regular course of reading with

undergraduate classes, the former in 1886, and the latter in 1887, the texts in Sweet's "Anglo-Saxon Reader" being used, and compared with those in Grein and in Körner. The text of JUDITH is now accessible in Professor Cook's edition (1888).

The translation of the *ATHELSTAN* has been added from Körner's text, compared with Grein and Wülker, and in certain passages with Thorpe and Earle. For fuller literary information than the Introduction provides, the reader is referred to ten Brink's "Early English Literature," Kennedy's translation (1883), and to Morley's "English Writers," Vol. II. (1888).

JAMES M. GARNETT.

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA, VA.,
May, 1889.

PREFACE TO EDITION OF 1900.

I have added to this reprint of my "Elene and other Anglo Saxon Poems" a translation of the *DREAM OF THE ROOD*, which has been on hand for several years awaiting a suitable time to see the light. A brief Introduction to the poem has been prefixed, which, doubtless, leaves much to be desired, but it is all that the translator now has time for, and I must refer to the works mentioned for fuller information and discussion. With thanks for past consideration, and the hope that this addition has made the book more acceptable, I entrust it again to indulgent readers.

JAMES M. GARNETT.

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND,
October, 1900.

PREFACE TO EDITION OF 1911.

I have read over carefully these translations with a view to another reprint, which the publishers find necessary, but I have not compared them again with the texts used. I have corrected a few typographical errors of little importance.

For the bibliography I would refer to Brandl's *Sonderausgabe aus der zweiten Auflage von Paul's Grundriss der germanischen Philologie* (Strassburg, 1908), in which I find noted Holthausen's edition of the *ELENE* (Heidelberg, 1905), but I have not seen it.

I take advantage of this opportunity to say that my translation of *BÉOWULF*, of which the last reprint was issued in 1910, is not in *prose*, as some have misconceived it, but it is in the same metrical form as the translations in the present volume,—an accentual metre in rough imitation of the original. I agree with Professor Gummere and others that this is a better form for the translation of Old English poetry than plain prose. It was approved by the late Professor Child nearly *thirty* years ago, as noted in the Preface to the second edition of my translation of *BÉOWULF*, January, 1885.

JAMES M. GARNETT.

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND,
February, 1911.

INTRODUCTION.

In presenting to the public the following translations of the Old English (Anglo-Saxon) poems, *ELENE*, *JUDITH*, *ATHELSTAN*, *BYRHTNOTH*, and *THE DREAM OF THE ROOD*, it is desirable to prefix a brief account of them for the information of the general reader.

I. The *ELENE*, or Helena, is a poem on the expedition of the Empress Helena, mother of Constantine the Great, the first Christian emperor, to Palestine in search of the true cross, and its successful issue. The mediæval legend of the Finding of the Cross is given in the *Acta Sanctorum* under date of May 4, assigned by the Church to the commemoration of St. Helena's marvellous discovery. The Latin work is the Life of St. Quiriacus, or Cyriacus, Bishop of Jerusalem, that is, the Judas of the poem. It has been usually thought that the Old English poet used this Life as his source; but Glöde, in a recent volume of *Anglia* (IX. 271 ff.), has given reasons for thinking that the poet used some other Latin text. He rejects ten Brink's conjecture that the legend of Elene had come to England in a Greek form. As to the author of the poem, we know his name, but very little else about him. He has left us his name, imbedded in runic letters as an acrostic, in the last canto of the poem, *q.v.* These letters spell the word *CYNEWULF*; but who was Cynewulf? The question is hard to answer, and has given rise to much discussion, which cannot be gone into here. A good summary of it will be found in Wülker's *Grundriss zur Geschichte der Angelsächsischen Litteratur* (p. 147 ff., 1885), an indispensable work for students of Old English literature. The old view, propounded in the infancy of Anglo-Saxon studies, and held by Kemble, Thorpe, and, doubtfully, Wright, that he was the Abbot of Peterborough and Bishop of Winchester (992-1008), has been abandoned by all scholars, so far as I know, except Professor Earle of Oxford (see his "Anglo-Saxon Literature," p. 228). The later view of Leo,

Dietrich, Grein and Rieger, our chief authorities, that he was a Northumbrian, and of Dietrich and Grein, that he was Bishop of Lindisfarne (737-780), has more to be said for it. Sweet and ten Brink also hold that he was a Northumbrian of the eighth century, but not the Bishop of Lindisfarne, while Wülker regards him as a West-Saxon. Professor Henry Morley, in the current edition of his "English Writers," has devoted a chapter (Vol. II. Chap. IX., 1888) to Cynewulf, and virtually concludes that we know nothing about him except that he was a poet and probably lived in the eighth century. We shall not go far wrong in regarding him as a Northumbrian poet of the eighth century, possibly the Bishop of Lindisfarne, even though his works remain to us only in the West-Saxon dialect. As in the *ELENE*, so in the *CHRIST* and the *JULIANA*, Cynewulf has left us his name, hence all agree in ascribing to him these poems at least. To these some of the *RIDDLES*, if not all, are usually added, but this is now contested. Other poems, as the *GUTHLAC*, *PHENIX*, *CHRIST'S DESCENT INTO HELL*, *ANDREAS*, *DREAM OF THE ROOD*, and several other shorter poems, have been ascribed to him with more or less probability, and very recently Sarrazin (in *Anglia*, IX. 515 ff.) would credit him with the authorship of even the *BÉOWULF*(!). We might as well assign to him, as has been suggested, all the poems in the two great manuscripts, the Exeter Book and the Vercelli Book, and be done with it. It is desirable that his authorship of the *DREAM OF THE ROOD*, which ten Brink and Sweet assign to him, but Wülker rejects, should be proved or disproved; for with this is connected the question of his Northumbrian origin, and some lines from this poem have been inscribed in the Northumbrian dialect on the Ruthwell Cross in Dumfriesshire.

However it may be, a poet named Cynewulf wrote the *ELENE*, and thereby left us one of the finest Old English poems that time has preserved, on a subject that was of great interest to Christian Europe. A collection of "Legends of the Holy Rood" has been issued by the Early English Text Society (ed. Morris, 1871), from the Anglo-Saxon period to Caxton's translation of the *Legenda Aurea*; but they are arranged without system, and no study has been made of the date and relation of the several forms of the story. If Cynewulf made use of the Latin Life of Cyriacus in the *Acta Sanctorum*, he expanded his source considerably and showed great skill and originality in his treatment of the subject, as may be seen by comparing the translation with the Latin text in Zupitza's third edition of the *ELENE* (1888), or in Professor Kent's forthcoming American edition, after Zupitza. The Old English text was discovered by a German scholar, Dr. F. Blume, at Vercelli, Italy, in 1822, and the manuscript has since become well known as the Vercelli Book (cf. Wülker's *Grundriss*, p. 237 ff.). A reasonable conjecture as to how this MS. reached Vercelli may be found in Professor Cook's pamphlet, "Cardinal Guala and the Vercelli Book." A Bibliography of the *ELENE* will be found in Wülker, Zupitza, and Kent. English translations have been made by Kemble, in his edition of the *Codex Vercellensis* (1856), and very recently by Dr. R.F. Weymouth, Acton, England, after Zupitza's text (privately printed, 1888). A German translation will be found in Grein's *Dichtungen der Angelsachsen* (II. 104 ff., 1859), and of lines 1-275 in Körner's *Einleitung in das Studium des Angelsächsischen* (p. 147 ff., 1880). A good summary of the poem is given in Earle's "Anglo-Saxon Literature" (p. 234 ff., 1884), and a briefer one in Morley's "English Writers" (II. 196 ff.).

The *ELENE* is conceded to be Cynewulf's best poem, and ten Brink remarks of the *ANDREAS* and the *ELENE*: "In these Cynewulf appears, perhaps, at the summit of his art" (p. 58, Kennedy's translation). The last canto is a personal epilogue, of a sad and reflective character, evidently appended after the poem proper was concluded. This may be the last work of the poet, and there is good reason for ten Brink's view (p. 59) that "not until the writing of the *ELENE* had Cynewulf entirely fulfilled the task he had set himself in consequence of his vision of the cross. Hence he recalls, at the close of the poem, the greatest moment of his life, and praises the divine grace that gave him deeper knowledge, and revealed to him the art of song."

II. The *JUDITH* is a fragment, but a very torso of Hercules. The first nine cantos, nearly three-fourths of the poem, are irretrievably lost, so that we have left but the last three cantos with a few lines of the ninth. The story is from the apocryphal book of Judith, and the part remaining corresponds to chapters XII. 10 to XVI. 1, but the poet has failed to translate the grand thanksgiving of Judith in the sixteenth chapter. The story of Judith and Holofernes is too well known to need narration. The poet, doubtless, followed the Latin Vulgate, as we have no reason to think that a knowledge of Greek was a common possession among Old English poets; but, as Professor Cook says, "the order of events is not that of the original narrative. Many transpositions have been made in the interest of condensation and for the purpose of enhancing the dramatic liveliness of the story."

The Old English text is found in the same manuscript with the *BÉOWULF* (Cotton, Vitellius, A, xv.), and, to my mind, this poem reminds the reader more of the vigor and fire of *BÉOWULF* than does any other Old English poem; but its author is unknown. It has been assigned by some scholars to the tenth century, which is rather late for it; but Professor Cook has given reasons for thinking that it may have been written in the second half of the ninth century in honor of Judith, the step-mother of King Alfred. It was first printed as prose by Thwaites at the close of his "Heptateuch, Book of Job, and Gospel of Nicodemus" (1698), and has been often reprinted, its shortness and excellence making it a popular piece for inclusion in Anglo-Saxon Readers. A most complete edition has been recently (1888) issued by Professor Albert S. Cook, with an excellent introduction, a translation, and a glossary. A Bibliography is given by Professor Cook (pp. 71-73), and by Wülker (*Grundriss*, p. 140 ff.). To the translations therein enumerated may be added the one in Morley's "English Writers" (II. 180 ff.). Professor Cook has also given (pp. lxxix-lxxxii) the testimonies of scholars to the worth of this poem. To these the attention of the reader is especially called. The *JUDITH* has been treated by both ten Brink and Wülker as belonging to the Caedmon circle, but the former well says (p. 47): "This fragment produces an impression more

like that of the national epos than is the case with any other religious poetry of that epoch;" and Sweet (Reader, p. 157) regards it as belonging "to the culminating point of the Old Northumbrian literature, combining as it does the highest dramatic and constructive power with the utmost brilliance of language and metre."

III. The *ATHELSTAN*, or Fight at Brunanburh, is found in four manuscripts of the "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle" and in Wheloc's edition (1643), printed from a MS. that was burnt in the unfortunate fire among the Cottonian manuscripts (1731). It is entered under the year 937 in all but one MS., where it occurs under 938. The poem gives a brief, but graphic, description of the fight between King Athelstan and his brother Edmund on the one side, and Constantine and his Scots aided by Anlaf and his Danes, or Northmen, on the other, in which fight the Saxons were completely victorious. The poem will be found in all editions of the "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle" from Wheloc to Earle (1865), and has been repeatedly reprinted, its brevity causing it to be often included as a specimen of Old English, but it is omitted in Sweet's Reader. A Bibliography will be found in Wülker's *Grundriss* (p. 339 ff.). To the English translations there mentioned,—which include a poetical one by Lord Tennyson, after a prose translation by his son in the *Contemporary Review* for November, 1876,—may be added the prose translation by Kennedy in ten Brink (p. 91) and the rhythmical one by Professor Morley in his "English Writers" (II. 316-17). ten Brink thinks that the poem was not written by an eye-witness, and says (p. 92): "The poem lacks the epic perception and direct power of the folk-song as well as invention. The patriotic enthusiasm, however, upon which it is borne, the lyrical strain which pervades it, yield their true effect. The rich resources derived from the national epos are here happily utilised, and the pure versification and brilliant style of the whole stir our admiration." It well serves to diversify and enliven the usually dry annals of the "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle," and cannot be spared in the great dearth of poetry of this period.

IV. The *BYRHTNOTH*, or Fight at Maldon, relates in vigorous verse the contest between the Saxons, led by the Ealdorman Byrhtnoth, and the Danes at the river Panta, near Maldon in Essex, in which the Danes were victorious and Byrhtnoth was slain. The incident is mentioned in four manuscripts of the "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle" under the year 991, but one gives it under 993. The MS. in which the poem was contained was unfortunately burnt in the great fire above-mentioned (1731); but Thomas Hearne, the antiquary, had fortunately printed it, as prose, in his edition, of the Chronicle of John of Glastonbury (1726); hence this is now our sole authority for the text, which is defective at both the beginning and the end. The poem has been highly esteemed by scholars, and is a very valuable relic of late tenth century literature. It has been often reprinted, and translated several times in whole or in part. Grein does not translate either the *ATHELSTAN* or the *BYRHTNOTH*. Körner translates it in full, and so does Zernial in his Program "Das Lied von Byrhtnoth's Fall" (1882). This monograph contains the fullest study of the poem that has been made. It is translated into English, with some omissions, by Kennedy in ten Brink (pp. 93-96); it is barely mentioned by Earle (p. 147), and a summary of it is given by Morley in "English Writers" (II. 319-320). A Bibliography will be found in Wülker's *Grundriss* (pp. 344-5). An edition of both *ATHELSTAN* and *BYRHTNOTH* has been long announced in the "Library of Anglo-Saxon Poetry," but it has not yet appeared. [1] Sweet says of the *BYRHTNOTH* (Reader, p. 138): "Although the poem does not show the high technical finish of the older works, it is full of dramatic power and warm feeling"; and ten Brink, with more enthusiasm, calls it (p. 96) "one of the pearls of Old English poetry, full, as it is, of dramatic life, and fidelity of an eye-witness. Its deep feeling throbs in the clear and powerful portrayal." He recognizes, however, "the tokens of metrical decline, of the dissolution of ancient art-forms."

V. The *DREAM OF THE ROOD* is found in the Vercelli manuscript. Wülker's *Grundriss* gives the literature of the subject to the time of its publication (1885). Soon afterwards Morley's "English Writers," Vol. II., appeared (1888), in which an English translation is given (pp. 237-241); also Stopford Brooke, in his "History of Early English Literature" (1892), has given an account of the poem, with partial translation and epitome (pp. 436-443). (See also p. 337 and pp. 384-386 for further notice.) The poem is very briefly mentioned by Trautmann in his monograph on Cynewulf (1898, p. 40). There are some very interesting questions connected with the poem which cannot be discussed here. Was it by Cynewulf? On the affirmative side we find Dietrich, Rieger, Grein, ten Brink, D'Ham, and Sweet. On the negative, Wülker, Ebert, Trautmann, Stephens, Morley, Brooke, and others. Pacius, who edited the text, with a German translation, in 1873, thinks that we know nothing about the poet. Brooke has propounded a theory, previously adumbrated by the editors of the *Corpus Poeticum Boreale*, Vigfusson and Powell, that an older poem, possibly of Cædmonian origin, as shown by the long six-accent lines, has been worked over by Cynewulf, with additions, and that it is "his last work" (p. 440). Certain lines of the poem, in the Northumbrian dialect, are found on the Ruthwell Cross, which fact complicates the question of origin. These are compared by Brooke (p. 337). The other upholders of the Cynewulfian authorship think that this Dream, occurring in the early part of Cynewulf's religious life, led to the longer and more highly finished poem, the *ELENE*, written near the close of his life. The questions of the relationship of the poem to the Ruthwell Cross and to the *ELENE* deserve further discussion. With these is connected the question of date, and the poem has been placed all the way from 700 to 800 A.D., even a little before and a little after, possibly 675 to 825 A.D., so as yet there is no common agreement. The similarity of thought in the personal epilogue (II. 122 ff.) to the epilogue of the *ELENE* (II. 1237 ff.) is striking, and they may be compared by the curious reader. The translation is made from the Grein-Wülker text (Vol. II., pp. 116-125), with emendations from others, as seen in the notes. All can agree with Kemble (*Codex Vercellensis*, Part II., p. ix) that "it is in some respects the most striking of all the Anglo-Saxon remains, inasmuch as a departure from the mere conventional style of such compositions is very

perceptible in it. It contains some passages of real poetical beauty, and a good deal of fancy." Brooke says (*op. cit.*, p. 443): "This is the last of the important poems of the eighth century. It is good, but not very good. The older part, if my conjecture be right, is the best, and its reworking by Cynewulf has so broken it up that its dignity is much damaged. The shaping is rude, but the imagination has indeed shaped it." ten Brink says (p. 53): "Cynewulf himself has immortalized this vision in a poem, giving utterance to an irrepressible emotion, but still exhibiting the delicate lines of a beautifully designed composition." The other Germans are usually so taken up with technical and mechanical questions that they leave no room for æsthetic considerations. Whether Cynewulf wrote the poem or not,—and the probabilities favor his authorship, though we may not hesitate to say with Morley, "I don't know,"—it is certainly the work of a gifted Christian poet, who reverences the cross as the means of the redemption of mankind.

This brief Introduction will, it is hoped, be sufficient to interest the reader in the accompanying translations of some of the finest pieces of Old English poetry that remain to us from the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries. The earlier period was the golden age of Old English poetry in the Northumbrian dialect, which poetry, there is good reason to think, was copied into the West-Saxon dialect, and it now remains to us only in that form; for, when the Northmen harried Northumbria, destroyed its monasteries, massacred its inhabitants, and settled in its homes, manuscripts perished, and the light of learning in Western Europe was extinguished. It is sufficient to recall King Alfred's oft-quoted lament, in the Preface to his translation of Pope Gregory's "Pastoral Care," to realize the position held by Northumbria in respect to culture, and when learning was restored in Wessex by the efforts of the king himself, and poetry again revived, it shone but by a reflected light. Still we should treasure all that remains, and the Old English language should be at least as well known as Latin is now, and should occupy as prominent a position in education and general culture. Until that millennial period arrives, translations of Old English poems may not be without service.

[1] Crow's "Maldon and Brunnanburh," 1897.

ABBREVIATIONS IN NOTES.

- B. = Bouterwek;
- C. = Cook;
- Gm. = Grimm;
- Gn. = Grein;
- K. = Kemble;
- Kl. = Kluge;
- Kr. = Körner;
- S. = Sievers;
- Sw. = Sweet;
- Th. = Thorpe;
- W. = Wülker;
- Z. = Zupitza;
- Zl. = Zernial.

CYNEWULF'S ELENE.

I.

Whén had elapsed in course of years
 Two hundred and three, reckoned by number,
 And thirty alsó, in measure of time,
 Of winters for th' world, since mighty God
 Became incarnate, of kings the Glory,
 Upón mid-earth in human form, 5
 Light of the righteous; then sixth was the year
 Of Constantine's imperial sway,
 Since hé o'er the realm of the Roman people,
 The battle-prince, as ruler was raised.
 The ward of his folk, skilful with shield, 10
 Was gracious to earls. Strong grew the ætheling's [1]
 Might 'neath the heavens. Hé was true king,
 War-keeper of men. God him strengthened
 With honor and might, that to many became he
 Throughóut this earth to men a joy, 15
 To nations a vengeance, when weapon he raised
 Against his foes. Him battle was offered,
 Tumult of war. A host was assembled,
 Folk of the Huns and fame-loving Goths;
 War-brave they went, the Franks and the Hugs. [2] 20
 Bold were the men [in battle-byrnies, Gn.],
 Ready for war. Bright shone the spears,
 The ringéd corselets. With shouts and shields
 They hoisted the standards. The heroes were there

Plainly assembled, and [host, Gn.] all together. 25
 The multitude marched. A war-song howled
 The wolf in the wood, war-secret concealed not;
 The dew-feathered eagle uplifted his song
 On the trail of his foes. Hastened quickly
 O'er cities of giants [3] the greatest of war-hosts 30
 In bands to battle, such as king of the Huns
 Of dwellers-around anywhere might,
 Of city-warriors, assemble to war.
 Went greatest of armies,—the footmen were strengthened
 With chosen bands,—till in foreign land 35
 The fighters-with-darts upón the Danube's
 Bank were encamping, the brave in heart,
 'Round the welling of waters, with tumult of host.
 The realm of the Romans they wished to oppress,
 With armies destroy. Thére was Huns' coming 40
 Known to the people. Then bade the Cæsar
 Against the foes his comrades in war
 'Neath arrow-flight in greatest haste
 Gather for fight, form battle-array
 The heroes 'neath heavens. The Romans were, 45
 Men famed for victory, quickly prepared
 With weapons for war, though lesser army
 Had théy for the battle than king of the Huns. [4]
 They rode 'round the valiant: then rattled the shield,
 The war-wood clanged: the king with host marched, 50
 With army to battle. Aloft sang the raven,
 Dark and corpse-gréedy. The band was in motion.
 The horn-bearers blew, [5] the heralds called,
 Steed stamped the earth. The host assembled
 Quickly for contest. The king was affrighted, 55
 With terror disturbed, after the strangers,
 The Huns' and Hreths' hóst they [6] observed,
 That it [7] on the Romans' kingdom's border
 'Round the bank of the river a band assembled,
 A countless crowd. Heart-sorrow bore 60
 The Romans' ruler, of realm he hoped not
 For want of force; had warriors too few,
 Trusty comrades, 'gainst th' overnight
 Of the brave for battle. The army encamped,
 The earls 'round the ætheling nigh to the river 65
 In neighboring plain a night-long time,
 After force of their foes they first beheld.
 Thén in his sleep was shown to him,
 To the Cæsar himself where he slept 'mid his men,
 By the victory-famed seen, a vision of dream. 70
 Effulgent it seemed him, in form of a man,
 White and hue-bright, some one of heroes
 More splendid appeared than ere or since
 He saw 'neath the heavens. From sleep he awaked
 With boar-sign bedecked. The messenger quickly, 75
 Bright herald of glory, to him made address
 And called him by name (the night-veil vanished):
 "To thee, Constantine, bade King of the angels,
 Wielder of fates, his favor grant,
 The Lord of Hosts. Fear not for thyself, 80
 Though thee the strangers threaten with terror,
 With battle severe. Look thou to heaven,
 To the Lord of glory: there help wilt thou find,
 A token of victory." Soon was he ready
 At best of the holy, his heart-lock unloosed, 85
 Upwards he looked as the messenger bade him,
 Trusty peace-wéaver. He saw bright with gems
 Fair rood of glory o'er roof of the clouds
 Adorned with gold: the jewels shone,
 The glittering tree with letters was written 90
 Of brightness and light: "With this beacon thou
 On the dangerous journey [8] wilt the foe overcome,
 The loathly host let." The light then departed,
 Ascended on high, and the messenger too,
 To the realm of the pure. The king was the blither 95
 And freer from sorrow, chieftain of men,
 In thoughts of his soul, for thát fair sight.

II.

Bade then a likeness [\[9\]](#) defender of æthelings,
Ring-giver of heroes, to that beacon he saw,
Leader of armies, that in heaven before 100
To him had appeared, with greatest haste
[Bade] Constantine [like] the rood of Christ,
The glorious king, a token make.
He bade then at dawn with break of day
His warriors rouse and onset of battle, 105
The standard raise, and that holy tree
Before him carry, 'mid host of foes
God's beacon bear. The trumpets sang
Aloud 'fore the hosts. The raven rejoiced, [\[10\]](#)
The dew-feathered eagle beheld the march, 110
Fight of the fierce cries, the wolf raised his howl,
The wood's frequenter. War-terror arose.
There was shattering of shields and mingling of men,
Heavy handstroke and felling of foes,
After in arrow-flight first they had met. 115
On the fated folk showers of darts,
Spears over shields into hosts of foes,
Sword-fierce foemen battle-adders
With force of fingers forwards impelled.
The strong-hearted stepped, pressed onwards at once, 120
Broke the shield-covers, thrust in their swords,
Battle-brave hastened. Then standard was raised,
Sign 'fore the host, song of victory sung.
The golden helmet, the spear-points glistened
On field of battle. The heathen perished, 125
Peaceless they fell. Forthwith they fled,
The folk of the Huns, when that holy tree
The king of the Romans bade raise on high,
Fierce in the fight. The warriors became
Widely dispersed. Some war took away; 130
Some with labor their lives preserved
Upon that march; some half-alive
Fled to the fastness and life protected
Behind the stone-cliffs, held their abode
Around the Danube; some drowning took off 135
In the stream of the river at the end of their life.
Then wás of the proud ones the force in joy;
They followed the foreigners forth until even
From break of day. The ash-darts flew,
Battle-adders. The heap was destroyed, [\[11\]](#) 140
Shield-band of foes. Very few came
Of the host of the Huns home again thence.
Thén it was plain that victory gave
To Constantine the King Almighty
In the work of that day, glorious honor, 145
Might 'neath the heavens, through the tree of his rood.
Went helmet of hosts home again thence,
In booty rejoicing (the battle was ended),
Honored in war. Came warriors' defence
With band of his thanes to deck the strong shield, [\[12\]](#) 150
War-renowned king, to visit his cities.
Bade warriors' ward the wisest men
Swiftly to synod, who wisdom's craft
Through writings of old had learnt to know,
Held in their hearts counsels of heroes. 155
Then thát gan inquire chief of the folk,
Victory-famed king, throughout the wide crowd,
If any there were, elder or younger,
Who him in truth was able to tell,
Make known by speech, what the god were, 160
The giver of glory, [\[13\]](#) "whose beacon this was,
That seemed me so sheen, and saved my people,
Brightest of beacons, and gave to me glory,
War-speed against foes, through that beautiful tree."
They him any answer at all were unable 165
To give in reply, nor could they full well
Clearly declare of that victory-sign.
Thén did the wisest speak out in words
Before the armed host, that Heaven-king's

Token it was, and of that was no doubt. 170
 When they that heard who in baptism's lore
 Instructed had been, light was their mind,
 Rejoicing their soul, though of them there were few,
 That they 'fore the Cæsar might dare to proclaim
 The gift of the gospel, how the spirits' Defence, 175
 In form of the Trinity worshipped in glory,
 Incarnate became, Brightness of kings,—
 And how on the cross was God's own Son
 Hanged 'fore the hosts with hardest pains;
 The Son men saved from the bonds of devils, 180
 Sorrowful spirits, and a gift to them gave
 Through that same sign that appeared to him
 Before his own eyes the token of victory
 'Gainst onset of nations; and how the third day
 From out of the tomb the Glory of heroes, 185
 From death, arose, the Lord of all
 The race of mankind, and to Heaven ascended.
 So with cunning of mind in secrets of soul
 They said to the victor as they by Sylvester [14]
 Instructed had been. From him the folk-chief 190
 Baptism received, and continued to hold it
 For the time of his days at the will of the Lord.

III.

Thén was in bliss the giver of treasure,
 The battle-brave king. To him was new joy
 Inspired in his soul; greatest of comforts 195
 And highest of hopes was heaven's Defence.
 Then gan he God's law by day and by night
 Through gift of the Spirit with zeal proclaim,
 And truly himself devoted he eagerly,
 Gold-friend of men, to the service of God, 200
 Spear-famed, unfaltering. Then found the ætheling,
 Defence of his folk, through learned men, [15]
 War-brave, spear-bold, in books of God,
 Whére had been hanged with shouts of the host
 On tree of the rood the Ruler of heaven 205
 Through envy and hate, just ás the old fiend
 Misled with his lies, the people deceived,
 The race of the Jews, so that God himself
 They hanged, Lord of hosts: hence in misery shall they
 For ever and ever punishment suffer. 210
 Then praise of Christ by the Cæsar was
 In the thoughts of his mind [16] always remembered
 For that great tree, and his mother he bade
 Gó on a journey with a band of men
 To [land of] the Jews, earnestly seek 215
 With host of warriors where that tree of glory
 Holy 'neath earth hidden might be,
 The noble King's rood. Helena would not
 On that expedition be slow to start,
 Nor that joy-giver's command neglect, 220
 Her own [dear] son's, but soon she [17] was ready
 For the wished-for journey, as the helmet of men,
 Of mail-clad warriors, her had commanded.
 Gan then with speed the crowd of earls
 Hasten to ship. [18] The steeds of the sea 225
 'Round the shore of the ocean ready were standing,
 Cabled sea-horses, at rest on the water.
 Then plainly was known the voyage of the lady,
 When the welling of waves she sought with her folk.
 There many a proud one at Wendel-sea 230
 Stood on the shore. They severally hastened
 Over the mark-paths, band after band,
 And then they loaded with battle-sarks,
 With shields and spears, with mail-clad warriors,
 With men and women, the steeds of the sea. 235
 Then they let o'er the billows the foamy ones go,
 The high wave-rushers. The hull oft received
 O'er the mingling of waters the blows of the waves.
 The sea resounded. Not since nor ere heard I
 On water-stream a lady lead, 240

On ocean-street, a fairer force.
 There might he see, who that voyage beheld,
 Burst o'er the bath-way the sea-wood, hasten
 'Neath swelling sails, the sea-horse play,
 The wave-floater sail. The warriors were blithe, 245
 Courageous in mind; queen joyed in her journey.
 After to haven the ringèd-prowed
 O'er the sea-fastness had finished their course
 To the land of the Greeks, they let the keels
 At the shore of the sea beat by the breakers, 250
 The old sea-dwellings at anchor fast,
 On the water await the fate of the heroes,
 When the warlike queen with her band of men
 Over the east-ways should seek them again.
 There wás on [each] earl easily seen 255
 The braided byrnie and tested sword,
 Glittering war-weeds, many a helmet,
 Beautiful boar-sign. The spear-warriors were,
 Men 'round victor-queen, prepared for the march,
 Brave war-heroes. They marched with joy 260
 Into land of the Greeks, the Cæsar's heralds,
 Battle-warriors with armor protected.
 There wás to be seen treasure-gem set
 'Mid that army-host, gift of their lord.
 [Then] wás the blessed Helena mindful, 265
 Bold in her thought, of the prince's will,
 Eager in mind, in that shé of the Jews,
 O'er the army-fields with tested band
 Of warriors-with-shields, the land was seeking,
 With host of men; so it after befell 270
 In little while that thát force of men,
 War-famed heroes, to Híerusalem [\[19\]](#)
 Came to the city the greatest of crowds,
 Spear-famed earls, with the noble queen. 275

IV.

Bade she then order the dwellers-in-city
 Most skilled in lore, those far and wide
 Among the Jews, each one of men,
 For council-talk in meeting to come,
 Whó most deeply the secrets of God
 By righteous law were able to tell. 280
 Then was assembled from distant ways
 No little crowd who Moses' law
 Were able to tell. In number there were
 Of thousands three of thóse [learned] men
 Chosen for lore. The lovely woman 285
 The men of the Hebrews with words gan address:
 "I thát most surely have learnt to know
 Through secret words of prophets [of old]
 In the books of God, that in days of yore
 Ye worthy were of the glorious King, 290
 Dear to the Lord and daring in deed.
 Lo! yé that wisdom [very, Gn.] unwisely,
 Wrongly, rejected, when him ye condemned
 Who you from the curse through might of his glory,
 From torment of fire, thought to redeem, 295
 From fetters' force. Ye filthily spat
 On hís fair face who light of the eyes
 From blindness [restored], a remedy brought
 To you anew by that noble spittle,
 And often preserved you fróm the unclean 300
 Spirits of devils. This one to death
 Ye gan adjudge, who self from death
 Many awakened 'mong host of men
 Of your own race to the former life.
 So blinded in mind ye gan conjoin 305
 Lying with truth, light with darkness,
 Hatred with mercy, with evil thoughts
 Ye wickedness wove; therefore the curse
 You guilty oppresses. The purest Might
 Ye gan condemn, and have lived in error, 310
 In thoughts benighted, until this day.

Go ye now quickly, with prudence select
 Men firm in wisdom, crafty in word,
 Who yóur own law, with excellence skilled,
 In thoughts of their minds most thoroughly have, 315
 Who to me truly are able to say,
 Answer to tell for you hencefóρθ
 Of each one of tokens that I from thee seek."
 They went then away sorry-in-mind,
 The law-clever earls, oppressed with fear, 320
 Sad in their grief, earnestly sought
 The wisest men in secrets of words,
 That they to the queen might answer well
 Both of good and of ill, as shé from them sought.
 Then théy 'mong the host a thousand of men 325
 Found clever in mind whó the old story
 Among the Jews most readily knew.
 Then they pressed in a crowd where in pomp awaited
 On kingly throne the Cæsar's mother, [20]
 Stately war-queen with gold adorned. 330
 Helena spake and said 'fore the earls:
 "Hear, clever in mind, the holy secret,
 Word and wisdom. Lo! yé the prophets'
 Teaching received, hów the Life-giver
 In form of a child incarnate became, 335
 Ruler of might. Of him Moses sang
 And spake this [word], [21] warden of Israel:
 'To yóu shall be born a child in secret
 Renowned in might, though his mother shall nóт
 Be filled with fruit through love of a man.' 340
 Of him David the king a kingly psalm sang,
 The wise old sage, father of Solomon,
 And spake this word, prince of warriors:
 'The God of creation before me I saw,
 Lord of victories. He wás in my sight, 345
 Ruler of hosts, upon my right hand,
 Guardian of glory. Thence turn I nóт
 Ever in life my countenance from him.' [22]
 So it again of you Isaiah
 'Fore the people, the prophet, foretold in words, 350
 Thinking profoundly by spirit of the Lord:
 'I raised upon high sons young in years,
 And children begat, to whom glory I gave,
 Heart-comfort holy: but théy me rejected,
 With enmity hated, forethought possessed not, 355
 Wisdom of mind, and the wretched cattle,
 That on each day one drives and strikes,
 Their well-doer know, not at áll with revenge
 Bear hate to their friends who give them fodder.
 And the folk of Israel never were willing 360
 Me to acknowledge, though many for them,
 In worldly course, of wonders I wrought.' [23]

V.

"Lo! thát we heard through holy books,
 That the Lord to you gave blameless glory,
 The Maker, mights' Speed, to Moses said 365
 How the King of heaven ye should obey,
 His teaching perform. Of that ye soon wearied,
 And counter to right ye had contended;
 Ye shunned the bright Creator of all,
 The Lord [of Lords], [24] and followed error 370
 'Gainst right of God. Now quickly go
 And find ye still who writings of old
 Through craft of wit the best may know,
 Your books of law, that answer to me
 Through prudent mind they may return." 375
 Went then with a crowd depressed in mind
 The proud in heart, as thém the queen bade.
 Found they five hundred of cunning men,
 Chosen comrades, who craft of lore
 Through memory of mind the most possessed, 380
 Wisdom in spirit. They back to the hall
 In little while again were summoned,

Wards of the city. The queen them gan
 With words address (she glanced over all):
 "Often ye silly actions performed, 385
 Accursèd wretches, and writings despised,
 Lore of your fathers, ne'er more than now,
 When ye of your blindness the Healer rejected,
 Ánd ye contended 'gainst truth and right,
 That in Bethlehem the child of the Ruler, 390
 The only-born King, incarnate was,
 The Prince of princes. Though the law ye knew,
 Words of the prophets, ye wére not then willing,
 Workers of sin, the truth to confess."
 With one mind then they answered her: 395
 "Lo! wé the Hebrew law have learned,
 That in days of old our fathers knew,
 At the ark of God, nor know we well
 Why thou so fiercely, lady, with us
 Hast angry become. We know not the wrong 400
 That wé have done amid this nation,
 Chiefest of crimes [25] against thee ever."
 Helena said and 'fore the earls spake
 Without concealment; the lady proclaimed
 Aloud 'fore the hosts: "Now go ye quickly, 405
 Seek out apart who wisdom with you
 Might and mindcraft the most may have,
 That each of the things they boldly may tell me,
 Without delay, that I from them seek."
 Went they then from the council as the mighty queen, 410
 Bold in the palace, them had commanded,
 Sorry-in-mind eagerly searched they,
 With cunning sought, what were the sin
 That they in the folk might have committed
 Against the Cæsar, for which the queen blames them. 415
 Then there 'fore the earls óne them addressed,
 Cunning in songs (his name was Judas),
 Crafty in word: "I surely know,
 That she will seek of the victor-tree
 On which once suffered the Ruler of nations 420
 Free from all faults, own Son of God,
 Whom though guiltless [26] of every sin
 Through hatred hanged upon the high tree
 In days of old óur own fathers.
 That was terrible thought. There is now great need 425
 That we with firmness strengthen our minds,
 That we of this murder become not informers,
 Where the holy tree was hidden away
 After the war-storm, lest máy be rejected
 The wise old writings and óf our fathers 430
 The lore be lost. Not long will it be [27]
 That of Israelites the noble race
 Over the mid-earth may reign any more,
 The law-craft of earls, if this be revealed:
 That same long ago mine elder father 435
 Victory-famed said (his name was Zacchaéus),
 The wise old man, to mine own father,
 [Who afterwards made it known to his, Gn.][29] son,
 (He went from this world), and spake this word:
 'If to thée that happen in the days of thy life, 440
 That thou may'st hear of that holy tree
 Wise men inquire and questionings raise
 Of that victor-wood on which the true King
 Was hanged on high, Guardian of heaven,
 Child of all peace, then quickly declare it, 445
 Mine own dear son, ere death thee remove.
 Ne'er may after that the folk of the Hebrews,
 The wise in counsel, their kingdom hold,
 Rule over men, but *their* fame shall live
 And their dominion [be glorified ever, Gn.], [28] 450
 To world of worlds with joy be filled,
 Who the King that was hanged honor and praise.'

VI.

"Then quickly I to mine own father,

The old law-sage, answer returned: 455
 'How might that happen on kingdom of earth
 That they on the holy their hands should lay
 For reaving of life, our own fathers,
 Through hostile mind, if they ere knew
 That he were Christ, the King in heaven,
 True son of Creator, Saviour of souls.' 460
 Then to mé mine elder answer returned,
 Wise in his mind my father replied:
 'Perceive, young man, the might of God,
 The name of the Saviour. That is to each man
 Unutterable. Him may no one 465
 Upon this earth [ever] find out.
 Never that plan that this people framed
 Was I willing to follow, but I always myself
 Held aloof from their crimes, by no means wrought shame
 To mine own spirit. To them earnestly often 470
 On account of their wrong I made opposition,
 When the learned-in-lore counsel were taking,
 Were seeking in soul how the Son of their Maker,
 Men's Helm, [29] they might hang, the Lord of all,
 Both angels and men, noblest of children. 475
 They might not so foolish death fasten on him,
 Miserable men, as they ere weened,
 Afflict with pains, though he for a time
 Upon the cross his spirit gave up,
 Victor-child of God. Then afterwards was 480
 Raised from the rood the Ruler of heavens,
 Glory of all glories, three nights after
 Within the tomb was he abiding
 Under the darkness, and then on third day,
 Light of all light, he living arose, 485
 Prince of angels, and he to his thanes,
 True Lord of victories, himself revealed,
 Bright in his fame. Then did thy brother
 In time receive the bath of baptism,
 Enlightening belief. For love of the Lord 490
 Was Stephen then with stones assailed,
 Nor ill gave for ill, but for foes of old
 Patient implored, prayed King of glory
 That he the woe-deed would not lay to their charge,
 In that through hate the innocent One, 495
 Guiltless of sins, by the teachings of Saul
 They robbed of life, as he through enmity
 To misery many of the folk of Christ
 Condemned, to death. Yet later the Lord
 Mercy him showed, that to many became he 500
 Of people for comfort, when the God of creation,
 Saviour of men, had changed his name,
 And afterwards he the holy Paul
 Was called by name, and no one than he
 Of teachers of faith, [no] other, was better 505
 'Neath roof of heaven afterwards ever
 Of those man or woman brought into the world,
 Although he Stephen with stones them bade
 Slay on the mountain, thine own brother.
 Now may'st thou hear, mine own dear son, 510
 How gracious is the Ruler of all,
 Though we transgression 'gainst him oft commit,
 The wound of sins, if we soon after
 For those misdeeds repentance work
 And from unrighteousness afterwards cease. 515
 Therefore I truly, and my dear father,
 After believed [in the Giver of life, Gn.],
 That he had suffered, God of all glories,
 Leader of life, painful penalty
 For mighty need of the race of men. 520
 Therefore I teach thee through secret of song,
 My dearest child, that scornful words,
 Hatred or blasphemy, never thou work,
 Fierce contradiction 'gainst the Son of God.
 Then wilt thou merit that thee life eternal, 525
 Best of rewards, shall be given in heaven.'
 Thus mine own father in days of old
 Me unwaxen with words did teach,

Instruct with true speech (his name was Simon),
 Man wise in words. Now well do ye know 530
 What of that in your thought may seem to you best
 Plainly to tell, if us this queen
 Shall ask of that tree, now mine own mind
 And thought of heart ye [well] do know."
 Him then in reply the cleverest of all 535
 In the crowd of men with words addressed:
 "Ne'er did we hear any of men
 Among this folk save thee just now,
 Another thane, declare in this manner
 Of so secret event. Do as [best] seems thee, 540
 Thou wise in old lore, if thou be questioned
 'Mong the host of men. Of wisdom has need,
 Of wary words and sage's cunning,
 Who shall to the noble one answer return
 Before such a host among the assembly." 545

VII.

Words waxed in speech; men counsel took
 On every side; some hither, some thither,
 Considered and thought. Then came many thanes
 To the people's assembly. The heralds called,
 The Cæsar's criers: "This queen you invites, 550
 Men, to the hall, that the council-decisions
 Ye rightly may tell. Of rede have ye need
 In the place of assembly, of wisdom of mind."
 Ready they were, the sad-in-mind
 People's protectors, when they were summoned 555
 Through stern command; to court they went
 Craft's might to tell. Then gan the queen
 The Hebrew men in words address,
 Ask the life-weary of writings of old,
 How ere in the world the prophets sang, 560
 Men holy in spirit, of the Son of God,
 Where the Prince [of the people] his sufferings bore,
 True son of Creator, for love of souls.
 Stubborn they were, harder than stone,
 Would not that secret rightly make known 565
 Nor answer to her any would tell,
 Anger-provokers, of what she sought,
 But they of each word made a denial,
 Firm in their minds, of what she gan ask,
 Said that in life they any such thing 570
 Nor ere nor since ever had heard of.
 Helena spake and angrily said:
 "I [now] in truth to you will say,—
 And of this in your life there shall be no deception,—
 If ye in this falseness longer continue 575
 With treacherous lying, who stand here before me,
 That you on the mountain bale-fire shall take,
 Hottest of war-waves, and your corpses consume,
 The lambent flame, so for you shall that lie
 To leaving of life [surely] be turned. 580
 Ye may not prove that word, which ye just now in wrong
 Concealed 'neath heaps [30] of sins. Nor may ye hide that fate,
 Obscure its deepest might." In thought of death they were
 Of pyre and life's end, and delivered then one
 Well-skilled in songs (to him the name Judas 585
 Was given 'fore kinsmen);—him they gave to the queen,
 Said of him very wise: "He may truth to thee tell,
 Fate's secrets reveal, as thou askest in words,
 The law from beginning forth to the end.
 He is before earth of noble race, 590
 Wise in word-craft and son of a prophet,
 Bold in council. To him 'tis inborn
 That he the answers clever may have,
 Knowledge in heart. He to thee shall declare
 'Fore the crowd of men the gift of wisdom 595
 Through mickle might, as thy mind desires."
 In peace she permitted each one to seek
 His own [dear] home, and him alone took,
 Judas, as hostage, and earnestly prayed

That he of the rood would rightly teach, 600
 Which of old in its bed was long concealed,
 And she himself apart to her called.
 Helena spake to him alone,
 Glory-rich queen: "For thee two are ready,
 Or life or death, as liefer shall be, 605
 To thee to choose. Now quickly declare
 To which of the two thou wilt agree."
 Judas to her spake again (he might not the sorrow avoid,
 Avert the ire of the empress. [31] In the power of the queen was he):
 "How may him befall who out on the waste, 610
 Tired and foodless, treads the moorland,
 Oppressed with hunger, and bread and stone
 Both in his sight together [32] shall be,
 The hard and the soft, that he take the stone
 For hunger's defence, care not for the bread, 615
 Return to want and reject the food,
 Renounce the better, if both he enjoys?"

VIII.

To him then the blessed answer returned,
 Helena 'fore earls without concealment:
 "If thou in heaven willest to have 620
 Dwelling with angels and life on earth,
 Reward in the skies, tell me quickly
 Where rests the rood of the King of heaven
 Holy 'neath earth, which ye now long
 Through sin of murder from men have concealed." 625
 Judas replied (his mind was sad,
 Heat in his heart and woe for both,
 Whether hope of heaven with [all] his soul
 He should renounce, along with his present
 Kingdom 'neath skies, or show the rood): 630
 "How may I that find that long ago happened
 In course of winters? Now many are gone,
 Two hundred or more, reckoned by number;
 I may not recount, now the number I know not.
 Now many have since departed this life, 635
 Of wise and good who were before us,
 Of clever men. In youth was I
 In later days afterwards born,
 A child in years. I cannot what I know not
 Find in my heart that so long ago happened." 640
 Helena spake to him in answer:
 "How has it happened among this people,
 That ye so much in mind retain,
 Each one of all signs, just as the Trojans
 In fight effected? 'Twas greater terror, [33] 645
 Well-known old war, than this noble event,
 In course of years. Ye that can well
 Quickly recount, how many there were
 In number of men in that murderous fight
 Of throwers-with-darts fallen in death 650
 Under the shield-hedge. Ye have the graves
 Under the stone-slopes, and likewise the places
 And the number of winters in writings set down."
 Judas replied (great sorrow he bore):
 "That work of war, we, lady mine, 655
 Through direful need remember well,
 And that tumult of war in writing set down,
 The bearing of nations, but this one never
 By any man's mouth have we heard
 Made known to men except here now." 660
 The noble queen gave answer to him:
 "Thou resistest too much both truth and right
 Of the tree of life, and now little before
 Thou truly said'st of that victor-tree
 To thine own people, and now turn'st to a lie." 665
 To her Judas said that he spake that in sorrow
 And doubt extreme, worse evil expected.
 Him quickly answered the Cæsar's mother:
 "Lo! that have we heard through holy books
 Made known to men that there was hanged 670

On Calvarý the King's free child,
 God's Spirit-son. Thou fully shalt
 Wisdom reveal, as writings tell,
 About the plain, where the place may be,
 That Calvarý, ere misery take thee, 675
 Death for thy sins, that I afterwards may
 Purify ít at the will of Christ,
 For help to men, that holy God,
 Almighty Lord, the thought of my heart
 My wish may fulfil, men's Giver of glory, 680
 Helper of souls." Her Judas answered,
 Stubborn in mind: "I know not the place
 Nor aught of the plain, nor the thing do I know."
 Helena spake with angry mind:
 "This do I swear through the Son of the Maker 685
 The hangèd God, that with hunger thou shalt
 Before thy kinsmen be put to death,
 Unless thou forsake these lying tales
 And plainly to me the truth make known."
 Then bade she with band him lead alive, 690
 The guilty one cast (the servants delayed not)
 Into a dry pit, where robbed of joy,
 He lingered in sorrows seven nights' time
 Within the prison oppressed with hunger,
 Fastened with fetters, and then gan he call, 695
 Weakened by pains, on the seventh day,
 Tired and foodless (his strength was exhausted):
 "I you beseech through heaven's God,
 That me from these sufferings ye may release,
 Humbled by hunger. Of that holy tree 700
 Shall I willingly tell, now longer I may not
 For hunger conceal it. This bond is too strong,
 Distress too severe, and this misery too hard
 In number of days. I may not endure it,
 Nor longer conceal of the tree of life, 705
 Though with folly before I was thoroughly filled,
 And the truth too late I myself have perceived."

IX.

When she that heard, who men there ordered,
 The man's behavior, she quickly commanded
 That him from confinement and out of his dungeon, 710
 From the narrow abode, they shóuld release.
 They hastily thát did soon perform
 And him with honor then led they up
 From out of the prison as them the queen bade.
 Stepped they then to the place, the firm-in-mind, 715
 Upon the hill on which the Lord
 Before was hanged, heaven-kingdom's Ward,
 God's child, on the cross, and yet knew he not well,
 Weakened by hunger, where the holy rood
 Through cunning of foe [34] enclosed in earth, 720
 Long firm in its bed concealed from men, 721-2
 Remained in its grave. Now raised he his voice,
 Unmindful [35] of might, and in Hebrew he spake:
 "Saviour Lord, thou hast power of rule, 725
 And thou didst create through the might of thy glory
 Heaven and earth and the boisterous sea,
 The ocean's wide bosom, all creatures alike,
 And thou didst measure with thine own hands
 All the globe of the earth and the heaven above, 730
 And thou thyself sittest, Wielder of victories,
 Above the noblest order of angels,
 That fly through the air encircled with light,
 Great might of glory. There mankind may not
 From the paths of earth ascend on high 735
 In bodily form with thát bright host,
 Heralds of glory. These wroughtest thou,
 And for thine own service thém didst thou set,
 Holy and heavenly. Of these in the choir
 In joy eternal six are named, 740
 Who are surrounded with six wings apiece,
 [With them are] adorned, [and] fair they shine.

Of these are four who ever in flight
 The service of glory attend upon
 Before the face of the Judge eternal, 745
 Continually sing in glory the praise,
 With clearest voices, of the King of heaven,
 Most beauteous of songs, and say these words
 With voices pure (their name Cherubím):
 'Holy is the holy God of archangels, 750
 Ruler of hosts. Full of his glory
 Are heaven and earth and all the high powers
 With glory distinguished,' There are two among these,
 Victor-race in heaven, who Seraphím
 By name are called. They sháll Paradise 755
 And the tree of life with flaming sword
 Holy maintain. The hard-edged trembles,
 The etched brand wavers, and changes its form,
 Firm in their grips. Thát, [36] O Lord God,
 Ever thou wieldest, and thou the sinful, 760
 Guilt-working foes out of the heavens,
 The foolish, didst cast. The accursèd host then
 Under dwellings of darkness was forced to fall
 To perdition of hell. There now in the welling
 Endure they death-pain in the dragon's embrace, 765
 Enclosed in darkness. [Thee] he resisted,
 Thy princely rule; therefore in misery,
 Full [37] of all foulness, he guilty shall suffer,
 Slavery endure. There may he not
 Thy word reject: he is fast in torments, 770
 The author of sin, in misery bound.
 If thy will it be, Ruler of angels,
 That he may reign who was on the rood,
 And who through Mary upon the mid-earth
 Incarnate became in form of a child, 775
 Prince of the angels (if hé had not been
 Thy Son free from sin, never so many
 True wonders in world would hé have wrought
 In number of days. Thou wouldst not from death
 So gloriously him, Ruler of nations, 780
 Have awaked 'fore the hosts, if hé in glory
 Through the bright [maid] were not thy Son),—
 Now, Father of angels, send forth thy sign.
 As thou didst hear the holy man,
 Moses, in prayer, when thou, God of might, 785
 Didst show to the earl at the noble time
 Under the hill-slope the bones of Joseph,
 So, Ruler of hosts, if it be thy will,
 Through that bright form I'll pray to thee
 That to me the gold-hoard, Maker of spirits, 790
 Thou wilt reveal, that has been from men
 [So] long concealed. Let, Author of life,
 Now from this plain a winsome smoke
 'Neath heaven's expanse mount up on high
 Playing in the air. I'll the better believe, 795
 And I'll the more firmly stablish my mind,
 Undoubting trust, upon the hanged Christ,
 That hé be in truth the Saviour of souls,
 Eternal, Almighty, Israel's King,
 Forever may have glory in heaven, 800
 Rule without end the dwellings eternal."

X.

Then out of that place a vapor arose
 Like smoke 'neath the heavens. Thére was rejoiced
 The mind of the man. With both his hands,
 Happy and lów-clever, upward he clapped. 805
 Judas exclaimed, clever in thought:
 "Now I in truth myself have known
 In my hardened heart that thou art the Saviour
 Of [this] mid-earth. To thee, God of might,
 Sitting in glory, be thanks without end, 810
 That to me so sad and so full of sin
 Thou revealed'st in glory the secrets of fate.
 Now, Son of God, to thee will I pray,

Will-giver of peoples, now I know that thou art
 Declared and born of all kings the Glory, 815
 That thou no longer be of my sins,
 Those which I committed by no means seldom,
 O Maker, mindful. Let mé, God of might,
 Amid the number of thine own kingdom
 With the army of saints my dwelling have 820
 In that bright city, where is my brother
 Honored in glory, for that faith with thee
 He, Stephen, kept, though with handfuls of stones
 He was pelted to death. War's meed he has,
 Fame without end. There are in books 825
 The wonders he wrought, in writings, made known."
 Then gan he glad for the tree of glory,
 Constant in zeal, delve in the earth
 Beneath the turf, so thát at twenty
 Feet by measure he found far concealed, 830
 Down in the depths hidden in the earth
 'Neath cover of darkness,—there found he three
 Of roods together within the sad house
 Buried in sand, as in days of old
 The host of the wicked covered with earth, 835
 The folk of the Jews. 'Gainst the child of God
 Hatred they raised, although they should not,
 If the lore they'd not heard of the father of lies.
 Then wás his mind greatly rejoiced,
 His heart was strengthened by that holy tree, 840
 His spirit inspired, when the beacon he saw
 Holy 'neath earth. With his hands he clasped
 The cross [38] of glory, and it raised 'mid the crowd
 From its grave in the earth. The guests on foot,
 The æthelings, went on into the city. 845
 They set there in sight three victor-trees
 The firm-minded earls 'fore Helena's feet, [39]
 Courageous in heart. The queen rejoiced
 In the depth of her soul, and then gan ask
 On which of those trees the Son of the Ruler, 850
 Joy-giver of heroes, hangèd had been.
 "Lo! thát we have heard through holy books
 By tokens declared, that two with-him
 [Also] suffered, and himself was the third
 On the tree of the rood. All heaven was dark 855
 On that terrible day. Say, if thou canst,
 On which of these three the Prince of the angels
 Suffered [his doom], the Shepherd of glory."
 Her Judas might not (he knew not full well)
 Plainly inform of the victor-wood, 860
 On which one the Saviour uplifted had been,
 Victor-son of God, ere he bade them set
 Within the middle of that great city
 The trees with clamor, and there await
 Till to him declared the Almighty King 865
 The wonder 'fore the folk of that tree of glory.
 The victor-famed sat, their song they raised,
 The wise in rede, 'round the three roods
 Until the ninth hour; new joy they had
 With wonder found. Then came there a crowd, 870
 No little folk, and a man deceased
 They brought on a bier with heap of men
 In neighborhood [nigh] (ninth hour it was),
 A lifeless youth. Then Judas was there
 In thought of his heart greatly rejoiced. 875
 He bade then set the soul-less [youth],
 Deprived of life the corpse on the earth,
 The lifeless one, and up he raised,
 Declarer of truth, two of the crosses,
 The wise, in his arms o'er that fated house, 880
 Plunged deep in thought. It was dead as before,
 Corpse fast on its bier: the limbs were cold,
 Clad in distress. Then wás the third
 Holy upraised. The body awaited
 Until over it the Ætheling's [cross], 885
 His rood, was upraised, Heaven-king's tree,
 True token of victory. Soon he arose
 Ready in spirit, both together

Body and soul. There praise was uplifted
 Fair 'mid the folk. The Father they honored, 890
 And also the true Son of the Ruler
 They praised in words. Be glory and thanks
 To Him without end from all His creatures.

XI.

Then wás to the people in the depth of their souls
 Impressed on their minds, as ever shall be, 895
 The wonder that wrought the Lord of hosts
 For saving of souls of the race of men,
 The Teacher of life. There the sinner-through-lies
 Then stied in the air, the flying fiend.
 Gan then exclaim the devil of hell, 900
 The terrible monster, mindful of evils:
 "Lo! wát man is this, who now again
 With ancient strife my service will ruin,
 Increase the old hate, [and] plunder my goods?
 This contest's increasing. The souls cannot, 905
 Workers of sin, longer within
 My power remain, now a stranger is come,
 Whom I ere reckoned fast in his sins,
 Me has he robbed of every right,
 Of precious possessions. That's nót a fair course. 910
 To me many harms the Saviour has done,
 Contests oppressive, he who in Nazareth
 Was reared as a child. As soon as he grew
 From childhood's years, he to hím ever turned
 Mine own possessions. I may not now 915
 In any right thrive. His kingdom is broad
 Over the mid-earth. My might is lessened
 Under the heavens. The rood I need not
 Joyfully praise. Lo! me the Saviour
 In that narrow home again has confined 920
 Sadly for sorrow. Through Judas before
 Joyful I was, and now am I humbled,
 Deprived of goods, through Judas again,
 Despised and friendless. Still can I find
 Through evil deeds return hereafter [\[40\]](#) 925
 From the homes of the damned. 'Gainst thee will I rouse
 Another king [\[41\]](#) who will persecute thee,
 And he will reject thine own instruction,
 And sinful manners of mine will he follow,
 And thee will he send then into the blackest 930
 And into the worst terrors of torments,
 That with sorrow beset thou'lt firmly renounce
 The hangèd King whom ere thou obeyed'st."
 To him then the cunning Judas replied,
 The battle-brave man (in him Holy Spirit 935
 Was firmly implanted, fire-hot his love,
 His wit was welling with warrior's craft),
 And this word he spake with wisdom filled:
 "Thou need not so strongly, mindful of sins,
 Sorrow renew, and strife uprear, 940
 Sin-maker of murder, for thee mighty King
 In the depths beneath will thrust thee down,
 Worker of sin, to miseries' bottom
 Deprived of glory, who many of the dead
 With his word awaked. Know thou the readier, 945
 That thou with folly didst once renounce
 Brightest of lights and love of the Lord,
 The fairest joy, and in bath of fire,
 Surrounded with torments, didst afterwards dwell,
 Consumed with flame, and there ever shalt, 950
 Hostile in mind, punishment suffer,
 Misery endless." Helena heard
 How the fiend and the friend contests aroused,
 The blest and the base, on both their sides,
 The sinner and the saint. Her mind was the gladder 955
 For that she heard the hellish foe
 [The fiend] overcome, the worker of sins,
 And then she wondered at the wit of the man,
 How hé so truthful in so little time

And so untaught ever became 960
 With wisdom inspired. [Then] thanked she God,
 The King of glory, that her wish was fulfilled
 Through the Son of God of each of the two,
 Bóth for the sight of the victor-tree,
 And of the faith that [42] so bright she perceived, 965
 The glorious gift in the breast of the man.

XII.

Thén was made known among that folk,
 Throughout that nation widely proclaimed,
 The great morning-news for a grievance to many 970
 Of those who God's law wished to conceal,
 Announced in the towns far as waters embrace,
 In each of the cities, that the rood of Christ
 Once buried in earth had been discovered,
 Brightest of beacons, which since or before 975
 Holy 'neath heavens had been upheaved;
 And it was to the Jews the greatest of sorrows,
 Unhappy men, most hateful of fates,
 That they 'fore the world were unable to change it,
 The joy of the Christians. Then bade the queen 980
 'Mong the host of earls heralds to hasten,
 Quickly to journey; they should of the Romans
 O'er the high sea the lord seek out,
 And to that warrior the best of tidings
 Say, to himself, that the victor-sign 985
 Through Creator's favor had been recovered,
 Found in the earth, which ages before
 Had been concealed for sorrow to saints,
 To Christian folk. Then was to the king
 Through the glorious words his spirit gladdened,
 His heart rejoicing. Then was of inquirers 990
 'Neath golden garments no lack in the cities
 Come from afar. To him greatest of comforts
 It became in the world at the wished-for tidings,—
 His heart delighted,—which army-leaders 995
 Over the east-ways, messengers, brought him,
 How happy a journey over the swan-road
 The men with the queen successfully made
 To the land of the Greeks. The Cæsar bade them
 With greatest haste again prepare
 Themselves for the way. The men delayed not 1000
 As soon as they had the answer heard,
 The words of the ætheling. Bade he Helena hail,
 The war-famed greet, if they the sea-voyage
 And happy journey were able to make,
 Brave-minded men, to the holy city. 1005
 Bade also to her the messengers say
 Constantínus, that she a church
 On the mountain-slope for gain of both
 Should there erect, a temple of God,
 On Calvarý, for joy to Christ, 1010
 For help to men, where the holy rood
 Had been discovered, greatest of trees,
 Of those that earth-dwellers ever heard named
 Upon the earth. So she effected,
 After dear kinsmen brought from the west 1015
 Over the ocean many loved tidings.
 Then bade the queen those skilled in crafts
 To seek out apart, the best of all,
 Those who most cunningly knew how to work
 In joinings of stones, on the open plain 1020
 God's temple to build. As the Warden of spirits
 Her counselled from heaven, she bade the rood
 With gold adorn and gems of all kinds,
 With the most splendid of precious stones
 To set with skill, and in silver chest 1025
 To enclose with locks. There that tree of life,
 Best of victor-trees, has since remained
 In nature eternal. [43] There 'twill be ever ready
 A help to the sick 'gainst every ill,
 Distress and sorrow. There soon will they 1030

Through that holy creation assistance obtain,
A gift divine. Also Judas received
After fixed time the bath of baptism,
And cleansed became, trustful in Christ,
Dear to the Life-warden. His faith became 1035
Firm in his heart, when the Spirit of comfort
Made his abode in the breast of the man,
To repentance him urged. The better he chose,
The joy of glory, and the worse he refused,
The service of idols, and error rejected, 1040
Unlawful belief. To him King [44] eternal,
The Creator, was mild, God, Ruler of might.

XIII.

Then hé was baptized who often before
The ready light [had long rejected, Gn.],
Inspired was his soul for that better life, 1045
To glory turned. Fate surely ordained
That so full of faith and so dear to God
In realm of the world he should become,
[So] pleasing to Christ. That known became,
After that Helena bade them Eusebius, 1050
Bishop of Rome, into council with her
To bring for help, the very wise [man]
By means of men, [45] to the holy city,
That he might ordain to the sacred office
Judas for the folk in Jerúsalém, 1055
To be their bishop within the city,
Through gift of the Spirit for the temple of God
Chosen with wisdom, and him Cyriacus
Through counsel of wit she afterwards named
A second time. The name was changed 1060
Of the man in the city henceforth for the better,
For the law of the Saviour. Then still Helena's
Mind was disturbed at the wondrous fate,
Very much for the nails, those which the Saviour's
Feet had pierced through and likewise his hands, 1065
With which on the rood the Ruler of Heaven,
Lord mighty, was fastened. Of these gan ask
The Christians' queen, Cyriacus prayed
That still for her, by the might of his spirit,
For the wondrous fate the will he'd fulfil, 1070
Reveal by his gifts, and shé addressed
This word to the bishop, boldly she spake:
"Thou, earls' defence, the noble tree
Of heavens' King me rightly didst show,
On which was hanged by heathen hands 1075
The Helper of spirits, own Son of God,
Saviour of men. Still of the nails
In thought of my mind curiosity troubles me.
I would thou should'st find those which yet in the earth
Deeply buried remain concealed, 1080
Hidden in darkness. My heart ever sorrows,
Sad it complains and never will rest,
Ere for mé He fulfil, Almighty Father,
Ruler of hosts, mine own desire,
Saviour of men, by sight [46] of the nails, 1085
The Holy from height. Now quickly do thou
With all humility, most excellent man,
Direct thy prayer to the heavens bright,
To the Ruler of glory, pray Strength of warriors,
That to thee may reveal the Almighty King 1090
The hord 'neath the earth, that hidden still,
Concealed from men, in secret abides."
Then gan the holy one strengthen his heart,
Inspired in his breast the bishop of the folk,
Glad-minded, went with a crowd of men 1095
Those praising God, and earnestly then
Cyriacus on Calvary
Inclined his face, his secret concealed not,
With might of his spirit called upon God
With all humility, prayed Warden of angels 1100
To open to him the unknown fate

In his new distress, where he the nails
 Upon the plain Best need expect.
 Then caused he the token, where they were looking,
 The Father, hope's Spirit, in form of fire 1105
 Upwards to rise, where they most noble
 By means of men [47] had once been hidden
 With secret cunning, the nails in the earth.
 Then suddenly came brighter than sun
 The playing flame. The people saw 1110
 To the giver of their will [48] the wonder made known,
 When there out of darkness, like stars of heaven
 Or gems of gold, upon the bottom
 The nails from the narrow bed shining beneath
 Brilliantly glittered. The people rejoiced, 1115
 The glad-minded host, spake glory to God
 With one accord all, though ere they were
 By the devil's deceit long in error,
 Estranged from Christ. Thus did they speak:
 "Ourselves now we see the token of victory, 1120
 True wonder of God, that before we opposed
 With lying words. Now is come into light,
 Is revealed, fate's course. May glory for this
 Have in the highest heaven-kingdom's God!"
 Then hé was rejoiced who turned to repentance 1125
 Through the Son of God, the people's bishop,
 A second time. He took the nails,
 Disturbed with fear, ánd to the venerable
 Queen did he bring them. Cyriacus had 1130
 It all fulfilled as the noble one bade him,
 The woman's will. There was sound of weeping,
 Hot head-welling was poured o'er her cheeks,
 By no means for sorrow. The tears were falling
 O'er the plaiting of wires. [49] With glory fulfilled 1135
 Was the wish of the queen. She knelt on her knees
 With bright belief; she honored the gift,
 Rejoicing with joy, which wás to her brought
 For help in her sorrows. Then thanked she God,
 The Lord of victories, that the truth she had learnt 1140
 At that present time, that oft was announced
 So long before from creation of the world
 For comfort to the people. Shé was inspired
 With the gift of wisdom, and his dwelling held
 Holy Spirit of heaven, guarded her breast,
 Her noble heart. So her the Almighty 1145
 Victor-son of God after protected.

XIV.

Then eagerly gan she with secrets of soul
 Seek in her spirit by soothfastnéss
 The way to glory. Now God of hosts 1150
 His help bestowed, the Father in heaven,
 Almighty King, that the queen obtained
 Her will in the world. The prophecy was
 By sages of old sung long before
 All from beginning, as it afterwards happened 1155
 In respect to each thing. The folk-queen began
 Through gift of the Spirit gladly to seek
 With greatest care how best the nails,
 And in manner most worthy, she might apply
 For joy to the folk, what was will of the Lord. 1160
 Bade she then fetch a very wise man
 Quickly to counsel, him who wisdom
 Through clever might thoroughly knew,
 Wise in his heart, and gan him ask
 What in his soul seemed to him best 1165
 To do about that, and his teachings she chose
 In respect to her conduct. Her boldly [50] he answered:
 "That is becoming that word of the Lord
 Thou hold in heart, holy counsel,
 Most excellent queen, and the King's command 1170
 Gladly fulfil, now God has thee given
 Success of soul and craft of wit,
 The Saviour of men. Bid thou these nails

For that most excellent of earthly kings,
 Of owners of cities, put on his bridle
 For bit to his horse. To many that shall, 1175
 Throughout the mid-earth, become renowned,
 When with that in contest he may overcome
 Each one of his foes, when the brave-in-war
 On either side the battle seek,
 Sword-contenders, where they strive for victory, 1180
 Foe against foe. War-speed shall he have,
 Victory in fight and everywhere peace,
 In battle success, who carries in front
 The bridle on horse, when the famed-in-fight
 At clashing of spears, the choicest of men, 1185
 Bear shield and lance. To each one of men
 Against war-terror shall be invincible
 This weapon in war. The seer of it sang,
 Cunning in thought. Deep moved his mind,
 His wit of wisdom. This word he spake: 1190
 'That shall be known that the horse of the king
 Shall 'neath the proud with bit be adorned,
 With bridle-rings. That beacon to God
 Shall holy be called, and that one valor-blessed,
 Honored in war, who rides on that horse.'" 1195
 With haste then that did all perform
 Helena 'fore earls, bade the ætheling's,
 Heroes' ring-giver's, bridle adorn,
 To her own son sent as a present
 O'er ocean's stream the blameless gift. 1200
 She bade then together those whom as best
 Of men she knew among the Jews,
 Of the race of heroes, to the holy city,
 To the town to come. Then gan the queen
 The dear ones teach that love of the Lord 1205
 And peace likewise among themselves,
 The bond of friendship, they fast should hold
 Without reproach in time of their life,
 And they to the teacher's lore should hearken,
 The Christian virtues that Cyriacus taught them, 1210
 Clever in books. The office of bishop
 Was fairly made fast. From afar oft to him
 The lame, the sick, the crippled came,
 The halt, the wounded, the leprous and blind,
 The lowly, the sad; always there health 1215
 At the hands of the bishop, healing, they found
 Ever for ever. Yet Helena gave him
 Treasures as presents, when ready she was
 For the journey home, and bade she then all
 In that kingdom of men who worshipped God, 1220
 Men and women, that they should honor
 With mind and might that famous day,
 With thoughts of the heart, whereon holy rood
 Had been discovered, greatest of trees,
 Of those which from earth ever sprang up 1225
 Grown under leaves. Then spring was gone
 Except six nights ere coming of summer
 On the kalends of May. To each of those men
 Be hell's door shut, heaven's unclosed,
 Eternally opened the kingdom of angels, 1230
 Joy without end, and their portion appointed
 Along with. Mary, who takes into mind
 That one most dear of festal days
 Of that rood under heaven, that which the mightiest
 Ruler of all with arm protected. *Finit.* [51] 1235

XV.

Thus old and death-ready in this frail house
 Word-craft I wove and wondrously framed it,
 Reflected at times and sifted my thought
 Closely at night. I knew not well
 The truth of the rood, [52] ere wider knowledge 1240
 Through glorious might into thought of my mind
 Wisdom revealed to me. I was stained with crimes,
 Fettered with sins, pained with sorrows,

Bitterly bound, banefully vexed,
 Ere lore to me lent through light-bringing office 1245
 For help to the agèd, his blameless gift
 The mighty King meted, and poured in my mind,
 Brightness disclosed, widened with time,
 Bone-house unbound, breast-lock unwound,
 Song-craft unlocked, which I joyfully used, 1250
 With will, in the world. Of that tree of glory
 Often not once meditation I had,
 Ere that wonder I had revealed
 About that bright tree, as in books I found
 In course of events, in writings declared 1255
 Of that beacon of victory. Ay till then was the man
 With care-waves oppressed, a nickering *pine-torch*[C],
 Though he in the mead-hall treasures received,
 Apples of gold. [53] Mourned for his *bow*[Y]
 The comrade of *sorrow*[N], suffered distress, 1260
 His secret constrained, where before him the *horse*[E]
 Measured the mile-paths, with spirit ran
 Proud of his ornaments. *Hope*[W] is decreased,
 Joy, after years, youth is departed,
 The ancient pride. The *bison*[U] was once 1265
 The gladness of youth. Now are the old days
 In course of time gone forever,
 Life-joy departed, as *ocean*[L] flows by,
 Waves hurried along. To each one is *wealth* [54][F]
 Fleeting 'neath heaven, treasures of earth 1270
 Pass 'neath the clouds likest to wind,
 When before men it mounts up aloud,
 Roams 'round the clouds, raging rushes,
 And then all at once silent becomes,
 In narrow prison closely confined, 1275
 Strongly repressed. So passes this world,
 And likewise besides what things [55] have been
 In it produced flame will consume,
 When the Lord himself judgment will seek
 With host of angels. Every one there 1280
 Of speech-bearing men the truth shall hear
 Of every deed through mouth of the Judge,
 And likewise of words the penalty pay
 Of all that with folly were spoken before,
 Of daring thoughts. Then parts into three 1285
 Into clutch of fire each one of folk,
 Of those that have dwelt in course of time
 Upon the broad earth. The righteous shall be
 Upmost-in flame, host of the blessed,
 Crowd eager for glory, as they may bear it, 1290
 And without torment easily suffer,
 Band of the brave. For them shall be moderate
 The brightness of flame, [56] as it shall be easiest,
 Softest for them. The sinful shall be,
 Those spotted with evil, compressed in the middle, 1295
 Men sad-in-mind, within the hot waves
 Smothered with smoke. The third part shall be,
 Accursèd sinners, in the flood's abyss,
 False folk-haters, fastened in flame
 For deeds of old, gang of the godless 1300
 In grip of the gledes. To God never more
 From that place of torment come they in mind,
 To the King of glory, but théy shall be cast
 From that terrible fire to the bottom of hell,
 The workers of woe. To the [other] two parts 1305
 It will be unlike. They may angels' Lord,
 Victories' God, see. Théy shall be cleansed,
 Sundered from sins, as smelted gold,
 That is in the flame from every spot
 Through fire of the oven thoroughly cleansed, 1310
 Freed and refined. So shall each of those men
 Be freed and made pure from every sin,
 From heavy crimes through fire of that doom.
 Then afterwards théy may peace enjoy,
 Eternal bliss. To them angels' Warden 1315
 Shall be mild and gentle, for that théy every evil
 Despised, sins' work, and to Son of their Maker
 They called with words. Hence in beauty they shine now

- [1] Prince's.
- [2] MS. 'Huns,' but Z. reads 'Hugs.' Cf. W.
- [3] 'O'er land of Burgundians,' Gn.
- [4] Z. has no point, W. puts (;), Gn. (.)
- [5] 'Hurried,' Z.³
- [6] 'He,' W.
- [7] 'Which,' Z.
- [8] 'In the terrible danger,' Gn.
- [9] Lit. 'in like manner,' adv.
- [10] Add 'at the work.'
- [11] 'Diminished,' Gn.
- [12] *i.e.*, with precious stones. Kr. reads '(rattled strong shields).'
- [13] 'Gold,' Kr. 'Lord of the house,' Gn. Cf. W.
- [14] The Bishop of Rome.
- [15] Lit., 'smiths of lore.'
- [16] Z. supposes *lacuna* of one verse; W. thinks it unnecessary.
- [17] Lit., 'the woman.'
- [18] Lit., 'to the sea,' or 'sea-journey.'
- [19] A.-S. form retained for the sake of the accent and alliteration.
- [20] Lit., 'kinswoman.' The Elizabethan 'Kesar' would preserve the alliteration in this line.
- [21] Gn. and Z. W. omits.
- [22] Psalms xvi. 8, 9.
- [23] Isaiah i. 2, 3.
- [24] Gn., Z., W.
- [25] So W. 'Wrongs have committed,' Gm., Gn. and Z. [?]
- [26] W.
- [27] Add 'after that.'
- [28] *Lacuna* in MS., emended by Gn.
- [29] *i.e.*, 'defence, protector.'
- [30] Lit., 'under the lap (or bosom) of sins.'
- [31] MS. *rex* (Latin?), Z.; 'oppression of care' (*cearces*), Gn.; 'of hunger' (*ceaces*), Gm.; 'of smoke' (*rêces*), Schubert; *rex* = *cyninges*, Sievers and W.
- [32] Z.
- [33] Or, 'war,' Gn.; 'further oft,' Gm.
- [34] No *lacuna* in MS. Gn.¹ inserted one line, but Gn.² one word (*fêonda*), which W. prefers. Text as Z. (*fêondes*), which Sievers approves.
- [35] 'Mindful,' Gm. and Gn.; 'suffering,' Z. [?].
- [36] Referring to the sword.
- [37] Gn., or 'foul,' Z.

[38] Lit., 'joy-wood.'

[39] Lit., 'knee.'

[40] So Z.; 'rebellion for this,' W. See W.'s note.

[41] Julian the Apostate, suggests Gn.

[42] 'That,' relative, though it may be taken as conjunction, as Z.

[43] So Z.; 'The noble wood,' Gm. and Gn.

[44] Latin, *rex*.

[45] So Z.; 'With pomp of array,' Gn.

[46] Lit., 'coming.'

[47] Same expression as in 1054.

[48] Lit., 'will-giver,' *i.e.*, the queen.

[49] *i.e.*, her ornaments of gold.

[50] Gn.'s emendation.

[51] Here properly ends the legend of the Finding of the Cross. The last canto contains reflections of the poet.

[52] Gn.'s emendation.

[53] Lit., 'applied gold.'

[54] The words in italics are the names of the runes that make up the name CYNEWULF. This artificial use of words makes the interpretation obscure, and scholars differ about it.

[55] Or, 'those who.'

[56] Gn., Z.

JUDITH.

IX.

* * * * *

[The glorious Creator's] [1] gifts doubted she [not]
 Upón this wide earth; then found she there ready
 Help from the mighty Prince, when she most need did have
 Of grace from the highest Judge, that her 'gainst the greatest terror
 The Lord of Creation should shield. That Father in heaven to her
 The Glorious-in-mind did grant, for thát firm faith she had
 Ín the Almighty ever. Then heard I thát Holofernes
 Wine-summons eagerly wrought, and with all wonders a glorious
 Banquet had hé prepared; to thát bade the prince of men
 All his noblest thanes. Thát with mickle haste
 Did the warriors-with-shields perform; came to the mighty chief 10
 The people's leaders going. Ón the fourth day was thát
 After thát Judith, cunning in mind,
 The elf-sheen virgin, him first had sought.

X.

They then at the feast proceeded to sit,
 The proud to the wine-drinking, all his comrades-in-ill, 15
 Bold mailèd-warriors. There were lofty beakers
 Oft borne along the benches, alsó were cups and flagons
 Full to the hall-sitters borne. The fated partook of them,
 Brave warriors-with-shields, though the mighty weened not of it,
 Awful lord of earls. Thén was Holofernes, 20
 Gold-friend of men, full of wine-joy:
 He laughed and clamored, shouted and dinned,
 Thát children of men from afar might hear
 How the strong-minded both stormed and yelled,
 Moody and mead-drunken, often admonished 25
 The sitters-on-benches to bear themselves [2] well.

Thus did the hateful one during all day
 His liege-men [loyal] keep plying with wine,
 Stout-hearted giver of treasure, until they lay in a swoon,
 He drenched all his nobles [with drink], as if they were slain in death, 30
 Deprived [3] of each one of goods. Thus bade the prince of men
 The sitters-in-hall to serve, until to children of men
 The darkening night drew nigh. He bade then, filled with hate,
 The blessed maiden with haste to fetch
 To his bed of rest, laden with jewels, 35
 Adorned with rings. They quickly performed,
 The attendant thanes, what their lord them bade,
 Mailed-warriors' prince; like a flash they stepped
 Into the guest-room, where they Judith
 Wise-minded found, and quickly then 40
 The warriors-with-shields began to lead
 The glorious maid to the lofty tent
 Where the mighty himself always [4] rested
 By night within, to the Saviour hateful,
 Holofernes. There was an all-golden 45
 Beautiful fly-net around the folk-warrior's
 Bed suspended, so that the hateful
 Was able to look through, the chief of warriors,
 Upon each one that therein came
 Of the sons of heroes, and on him no one 50
 Of the race of men, unless the proud some one
 Of the strong-in-war bade to him nearer
 Of warriors for counsel to come. They then to him at rest brought
 Quickly the cunning woman; went then the stout-in-heart
 The men their lord to tell that the holy woman was 55
 Brought to his chamber-tent. The famous then in mind
 Was glad, the ruler of cities; he thought the beautiful maiden
 With spot and stain to defile: that Judge of glory would not
 Allow, the Keeper of honor, but him from that deed restrained
 The Lord, the Ruler of hosts. Went then the devilish one, 60
 The wanton [warrior-prince], [5] with [mickle] band of men,
 The baleful his bed to seek, where hé his life should lose
 Quickly within one night; he had then his end attained [6]
 On earth ungentle [end], such as before he wrought for,
 The mighty prince of men, while in this world he was, 65
 While he dwelt under roof of the clouds. Then fell so drunk with wine
 The mighty [chief] on his bed, as if he knew no rede
 Within his place of wit; the warriors stepped
 Out from the chamber with mickle haste,
 The wine-filled men, who the oath-breaker, 70
 Hateful folk-hater, had led to his bed
 For the very last time. Then was the Saviour's
 Glorious maiden earnestly mindful
 How she the terrible most easily might
 Of life deprive before the lustful, 75
 The wanton, awoke. The wreathed-locked took then,
 The Creator's handmaid, a sharp-edged sword
 Hardened by war-strokes [?], [7] and drew from its sheath
 With hér right hand; then Keeper of heaven
 By name she gan name, Saviour of all 80
 Dwellers-in-th' world, and this word she spake:
 "Thee, God of Creation, and Spirit of Comfort,
 Son of the Almighty, will I [now] pray
 For thine own mercy to me in my need,
 Trinity's Glory. To me greatly now then 85
 My heart is inflamed, and my mind is sad,
 Sorely with sorrows oppressed; grant, Lord of Heaven, to me
 Victory and faith without fear, that I with this sword may be able
 To hew down this dealer of murder; grant [too] my safety to me,
 Strong-hearted Leader of men; ne'er in this world had I 90
 Of thy mercy more urgent need: avenge now, mighty Lord,
 Glorious Giver of honor, that I am so angry in mind,
 So heated within my breast." Hé then the highest Judge
 Quickly with courage inspired, as doth he [ever] each one
 Of dwellers here [upon earth], who him for help to them seek 95
 With rede and righteous belief. Then roomy in mind she became,
 The holy one's hope was renewed; then took she the heathen man
 Fast by his own [long] hair, with hands him towards her she drew
 With marks of contempt, and the baleful one
 With cunning laid down, the loathsome man, 100
 As she the accursèd most easily might

Wield at her will. Struck then the curly-locked
 The hostile foe with shining [8] sword,
 The hateful-minded, that half-way she cut
 The [evil one's] neck, that he lay in a swoon, 105
 Drunken and wounded. Not yet was he dead,
 Thoroughly lifeless; struck she then earnestly,
 The maiden brave-minded, a second time
 The heathen hound, that his head rolled off
 Forth on the floor: the foul corpse lay 110
 Lifeless behind, went the spirit elsewhere
 Beneath the deep earth, and there was disgraced,
 In torment bound ever thereafter,
 Surrounded with serpents, with tortures encompassed,
 Strongly enchained in the fire of hell 115
 After his death. He need never hope,
 Enveloped with darkness, that thence he may go
 Out of that worm-hall, but there shall he dwell
 Ever for ever without end henceforth
 In that dark home, of hope-joys deprived. 120

XI.

Then had she gained glorious honor,
 Judith in war, as God to her granted,
 The Ruler of Heaven, who gave to her victory.
 The cunning maid then quickly brought
 The army-leader's head so bloody 125
 In that [very] vessel in which her attendant,
 The fair-faced woman, food for them both,
 In virtues renowned, thither had brought,
 And it then so gory to her gave in hand,
 To the thoughtful-in-mind to bear to their home, 130
 Judith to her maid. Went they forth thence,
 The women both in courage bold,
 Until they had come, proud in their minds,
 The women triumphant, out from the army,
 So that they plainly were able to see 135
 Of that beautiful city the walls [fair] shine,
 Béthulía. Then jewel-decked théy
 Upon the foot-path hastened to go,
 Until glad-minded they had arrived
 At the gate of the wall. The warriors sat, 140
 The watching men were keeping ward
 Within that fortress, as before to the folk,
 Sad in their minds, Judith had bidden,
 The cunning maiden, when she went on her journey,
 The stout-hearted woman. Then again was she come, 145
 Dear to her people, and then quickly ordered
 The wise-minded woman some one of the men
 To come to meet her from out the wide city,
 And hér in haste to admit within
 Through the gate of the wall, and this word she spake 150
 To the victor-folk: "To you can I say
 A thought-worthy [9] thing, that no longer ye need
 Mourn in your minds: your Creator is kind,
 Glory of kings: that is become known
 Wide through the world, that to you is success 155
 Glorious at hand, and honor is granted
 For [all] those sorrows which long ye suffered."
 Glad then were they, the dwellers-in-borough,
 After they heard how the holy one spake
 O'er the high wall. The host was in joy. 160
 To the fortress-gate the people hastened,
 Men, women together, in troops and heaps,
 In crowds and throngs, hurried and ran
 To meet the Lord's maid by thousands and thousands,
 Both old and young: to each one became 165
 Of men in the mead-city his mind rejoiced,
 After they knew that Judith was come
 Again to her home, and then in haste
 With reverence théy allowed her to enter.
 Then bade the clever, with gold adorned, 170
 Her servant-maid, thoughtful-in-mind,
 The army-leader's head to uncover,

And it as a proof bloody to show
 To the city-folk how she speeded in war.
 Then spake the noble one to all the folk: 175
 "Here ye may clearly, victory-blessed warriors,
 Chiefs of the people, upón the most hateful
 Heathen hero's head fix your gaze,
 On Holofernes deprived of life,
 Who chiefest of men wrought murders for us, 180
 Sorest sorrows, and that yet more
 Would he increase: but God him granted not
 A longer life, that hé with woes
 Might still afflict us. Of life I deprived him
 By help of God. Now I every man 185
 Of these city-dwellers will [earnestly] pray,
 Of shield-bearing warriors, that ye yourselves quickly
 Hasten to fight; when the God of creation,
 The glorious King, shall send from the east
 Bright beams of light, bear forth your shields, 190
 Boards before breasts and coats-of-mail,
 Bright helmets [too] among the foes,
 To fell the folk-leaders with shining swords,
 The fated chiefs. Your foes are now
 Condemned to death, and ye glory shall gain, 195
 Honor in battle, as to you hath betokened
 The mighty Lord through mine own hand."
 Then the band of the brave was quickly prepared,
 Of the bold for battle; stepped out the valiant
 Men and comrades, bore their banners, 200
 Went forth to fight straight on their way
 The heroes 'neath helmets from the holy city
 At the dawn itself; shields made a din,
 Loudly resounded. Thereat laughed the lank
 Wolf in the wood, and the raven wan, 205
 Fowl greedy for slaughter: both of them knew
 That for them the warriors thought to provide
 Their fill on the fated; and flew on their track
 The dewy-winged eagle eager for prey,
 The dusky-coated sang his war-song, 210
 The crooked-beaked. Stepped forth the warriors,
 The heroes for battle with boards protected,
 With hollow shields, who awhile before
 The foreign-folk's reproach endured,
 The heathens' scorn; fiercely was thát 215
 At the ash-spear's play to them all repaid,
 [All] the Assyrians, after the Hebrews
 Under their banners had [boldly] advanced
 To the army-camps. They bravely then
 Forthright let fly showers of arrows, 220
 Of battle-adders, óut from the horn-bows,
 Of strongly-made shafts; stormed they aloud,
 The cruel warriors, sent forth their spears
 Among the brave; the heroes were angry,
 The dwellers-in-land, with the loathéd race; 225
 The stern-minded stepped, the stout-in-heart,
 Rudely awakened their ancient foes
 Weary from mead; with hands drew forth
 The men from the sheaths the brightly-marked swords
 Most choice in their edges, eagerly struck 230
 Of the [host of] Assyrians the battle-warriors,
 The hostile-minded; not one they spared
 Of the army-folk, nor low nor high
 Of living men, whom théy might subdue. 235

XII.

Thus then the thanes in the morning-hours
 Pressed on the strangers unceasingly,
 Until they perceived, those who were hostile,
 The army-folk's chiefest leaders,
 That upón them sword-strokes mighty bestowed
 The Hebrew men. They thát in words 240
 To their most noted chiefs of the people
 Went to announce, waked helmeted warriors
 And to thém with fear the dread news told,

To the weary-from-mead the morning-terror, 245
 The hateful sword-play. Then learnt I that quickly
 The slaughter-fated men aroused from sleep
 And to the baleful's sleeping-bower
 The saddened [10] men pressed ón in crowds,
 To Holofernes: they only were thinking
 To their own lord to make known the fight, 250
 Ere terror on him should take its seat,
 The might of the Hebrews. They all imagined
 That the prince of men and the handsome maid
 In the beautiful tent were [still] together,
 Judith the noble and the lustful one, 255
 Dreadful and fierce; though no earl there was
 Whó the warrior durst [then] awake,
 Or durst discover how the helmeted warrior
 With the holy maid had passed his time,
 The Creator's handmaid. The force approached, 260
 The folk of the Hebrews, courageously fought
 With hard battle-arms, fiercely repaid
 Their former fights with shining [11] swords,
 The old-time grudge; was óf the Assyrians
 By thát day's work the glory diminished, 265
 The pride brought low. The warriors stood
 'Round their prince's tent strongly excited,
 Gloomy in mind. They then all together
 Began to groan, [12] to cry aloud
 And gnash with their teeth,—afar from God,— 270
 Showing their anger; 'twas the end of their glory,
 Of joy and valor. The earls were thinking
 To awaken their lord; they did not succeed.
 Then at last and too late was one so bold 275
 Of the battle-warriors that to the bower-tent
 He daringly ventured, since need him compelled:
 Found he then on the bed lying deadly-pale
 His [own] gold-giver of breath bereft,
 Of life deprived. Then quickly he fell 280
 Astounded to earth, gan tear his hair,
 Excited in mind, and his garments too,
 And this word he spake to the warriors [brave],
 Who saddened there were standing without:
 "Here is displayed our own destruction,
 The future betokened, that it is to the time 285
 Now amongst men [13] almost arrived,
 When wé our lives shall lose together,
 In battle perish: here lies with sword hewn
 Our lord beheaded." They then sad-in-mind
 Threw down their weapons and sorrowful went 290
 To hasten in flight. They fought on their tracks,
 The mighty folk, till the greatest part
 Of the army lay, in battle struck down,
 On the victor-plain, hewn down with swords,
 To wolves for pleasure, and to slaughter-greedy 295
 Fowls for a joy. Those who lived fled
 The shields of their foes. [14] Went on their tracks
 The Hebrews' host, honored with victory,
 With glory ennobled; them took the Lord God
 Fairly to help, the Lord Almighty. 300
 They bravely then with shining swords,
 Stout-hearted heroes, a war-path wrought
 Through heaps of their foes, hewed down their shields,
 Cut through their phalanx: the warriors were
 Enraged in battle, the Hebrew men; 305
 The thanes at that time were much delighted
 At the combat with spears. Here fell in the dust
 The highest part of the chiefest number
 Óf the Assyrians' princely nobility,
 Of the hateful race; very few came 310
 Alive to their homes. The nobly-bold turned,
 Warriors retiring, among the slaughtered,
 The smoking corpses; it was time to take
 For the dwellers-in-land from the loathsome ones,
 Their ancient foes deprived of life, 315
 The gory booty, the shining trappings,
 Shields and broad swords, brown-colored helmets,
 Precious treasures. Gloriously had they

On thát folk-place their foes overcome,
 The defenders of home their ancient foes 320
 With swords put-to-sleep: behind them rested
 Those who in life were most hateful to them
 Of living races. Then all the people,
 Of tribes most renowned, for one month's space,
 The proud twisted-locked, bore and carried 325
 To that bright city, Bethulia [named],
 Helmets and hip-swords, hoary byrnies,
 War-trappings of men adorned with gold,
 More precious treasures than any man
 Of the cunning-in-mind may be able to tell, 330
 All that the warriors with might had won,
 The bold under banners on the battle-place
 By means of Judith's [most] clever lore,
 The moody [15] maid's. As meed for her
 From that expedition, they brought for herself, 335
 The spear-strong earls, of Holofernes
 The sword and gory helm, likewise the byrnie broad,
 Adorned with reddish gold, all that the warrior-chief,
 The brave, of treasure had, or individual wealth,
 Of rings and jewels bright; thát to the lady fair, 340
 The wise-in-mind, gave théy. For all that Judith said
 Glory to the Lord of hosts, who honor to her gave,
 Fame in realm of earth, and meed in heaven too,
 Reward in the glory of heaven, because true faith she had
 In the Almighty ever; now at last she doubted not 345
 Of the meed which long she yearned for. For that to the dear Lord be
 Glory for ever and ever, who made both wind and air,
 The heavens and roomy lands, likewise the rushing streams,
 And joys of firmament too by means of his mercy mild. 350

[1] Gn.'s emendation to fill *lacuna* of MS.

[2] 'Loudly carouse,' Kr. and C.

[3] 'Gorged with,' Kr. and C.

[4] Or, 'after feast.'

[5] 'King,' Gn. and Kr., but *guðfreca* suits the verse better than *cyning*, and even that is not metrically sufficient to fill the *lacuna*.

[6] Lit., 'awaited.'

[7] So Gn.? 'Scouring,' Sw.?, Kr.?, C.

[8] 'Hostile,' Sw.?

[9] 'Thank-worthy,' Kr.

[10] So Sw.; 'weary in mind,' Gn., Kr., C.

[11] 'Hostile,' C., though 'flashing,' 194, and 'gleaming,' 302.

[12] Lit., 'cough.'

[13] So Gn. and Kr.; 'with violence,' Sw.; 'with afflictions,' C.

[14] So Sw. and Kr.; 'Of the hostile shield-warriors,' Gn. and C.

[15] *i.e.*, 'spirited.'

ATHELSTAN,

OR

THE FIGHT AT BRUNANBURH.

Æthelstan King, of earls the lord,
 Of heroes ring-giver, and his brother too,
 Edmund Ætheling, enduring fame
 Earned in the fight with edges of swords
 By Brunanburh. The board-wall they cleaved,
 The war-shields hewed with leavings of hammers

The sons of Edward. 'Twas natural to them
 By right of descent that in battle they oft
 'Gainst every foe their land defended,
 Their hoards and homes. The foes were fallen, 10
 Folk of the Scots and men of the ships,
 Fated they fell. The field ran thick [1]
 With heroes' blood, when the risen sun
 At morning-time, the mighty orb,
 Shone o'er the earth, bright candle of God,
 Eternal Lord, till the noble creature 15
 Sank to his rest. There many men lay
 Struck down [2] with spears, men from the North,
 Shot o'er the shield, and Scotsmen too,
 Weary [and] war-filled. The West-Saxons forth
 The live-long day with legions of warriors 20
 Pressed on the heels of the hostile foes;
 They felled the fleers with force from behind
 With sharp-ground swords. Shrank not the Mercians
 From hard hand-play with any of heroes,
 Of those who with Anlaf o'er welling of waves 25
 On the deck of the ship had sought the land,
 Fated for fight. Five of them lay
 On the battle-field, young kings [they were],
 Slaughtered [3] with swords, and also seven
 Earls of Anlaf, and unnumbered host 30
 Of seamen and Scots. There was forced to flee
 The Northmen's chief, by need compelled
 To the prow of his ship with few attendants.
 Keel crowded [4] the sea, the king went forth
 On the fallow flood; he saved his life. 35
 There too the agèd escaped by flight
 To his home in the North, Constantínus.
 The hoar war-hero was unable to boast
 Of attendance of men; he was robbed of his kinsmen,
 Bereaved of his friends on the battle-field, 40
 Conquered in fight, and he left his son
 On the place of slaughter wasted with wounds,
 The boy in the battle. He durst not boast,
 The gray-haired warrior, of the clash of swords,
 The agèd enemy, nor Anlaf the more. 45
 With their army-remnant they durst not rejoice
 That in deeds of war they proved to be better
 On the place of battle, the striking of standards,
 The mingling of spears, the meeting of men,
 The clashing of weapons, when on slaughter-field 50
 In contest with Edward's sons they contended.
 Departed the Northmen in nailèd ships,
 Drear remnant of darts, on the sea of Dyng [5][?],
 O'er the water deep Dublin to seek,
 Back to land of the Erse, depressed in mind. 55
 Likewise the brothers both together,
 King and ætheling, were seeking their home,
 West-Saxons' land, exulting in war.
 Behind them they let the corpses share
 The dark-feathered fowl, the raven black, 60
 The crooked-beaked, and the ashy-feathered,
 White-tailed eagle enjoy the prey,
 The greedy war-hawk, and the gray-clad beast,
 The wolf in the wood. More corpses there wére not
 Upon this island ever as yet 65
 Of folk down-felled before this time
 With edges of sword, as books to us tell,
 Sages of old, since hither from East
 Angles and Saxons came to this land,
 O'er the broad ocean Britain [once] sought, 70
 Haughty war-smiths the Welsh overcame,
 Earls eager for honor this earth acquired.

[1] Lit., 'became slippery,' Gn.; 'babbled' (as a brook), or 'became dark,' Kr.; 'streamed,' Th.

[2] 'Scattered,' Th.

[3] Lit., 'put to sleep.'

[4] Or, 'He pressed ship on the sea', 'drove,' Th.

[5] Gn. and W. take *Dyng* as a proper name, but no one knows who Dyng was. Kr. leaves *on dynges mere* untranslated, with the remark: "*ist unaufgeklärt.*" He thinks it refers to some bay in Ireland, from which the invaders set out, but why may it not be a name for the Irish Sea itself? Th. translates 'on the roaring sea,' but adds 'quite conjectural.'

BYRHTNOTH,

OR

THE FIGHT AT MALDON.

***** was broken.

Then bade he each youth his horse to forsake,
To hasten afar and forwards to go,
Be mindful of might, of mood courageous.
This Offa's kinsman at once perceived
That the earl was unwilling faint heart to endure. 5
Then he let from his hands his lief [1] hawk fly,
His hawk to the holt, and to battle he stepped;
By thát might one know that the knight was unwilling
To be weak in the war when to weapons he took.
By him too would Eadric, by his overlord, stand, 10
His chief in the fight; then forth gan he bear
His spear to the battle: brave spirit had he
The while that with hands he was able to hold
Shield and broad sword; his boast he fulfilled, [2]
When hé 'fore his lord was bound to fight. 15
There Byrhtnoth gan then his warriors embolden,
Rode and gave rede, instructed his men
Hów they should stand, and the stead sustain,
And bade that rimmed shields they rightly should hold
Fast with their fists, and frightened be never. 20
When hé had the folk fairly emboldened,
With his men he alighted where was liefest to him,
Whére his hearth-followers most faithful he knew.
Then stood on the stathe, [3] stoutly did call
The wikings' herald, with words he spake, 25
Who boastfully bore fróm the brine-farers
An errand to th' earl, where he stood on the shore:
"To thee me did send the seamen snell, [4]
Bade to thee say, thou must send to them quickly
Bracelets for safety; and 'tis better for you 30
That ye this spear-rush with tribute buy off
Than we in so fierce a fight engage.
We need not each spill, [5] if ye speed to this:
We will for the pay a peace confirm.
If thou that redest who art highest in rank, 35
If thou thy lieges art willing to loose,
To pay to the seamen at their own pleasure
Money for peace, and take peace from us,
We will with the treasure betake us to ship,
Fare on the flood, and peace with you confirm." 40
Byrhtnoth replied, his buckler uplifted,
Waved his slim spear, with words he spake,
Angry and firm gave answer to him:
"Hear'st thou, seafarer, what saith this folk?
They will for tribute spear-shafts you pay, 45
Poisonous points and trusty [6] swords,
Those weapons that you in battle avail not.
Herald of seamen, hark [7] back again,
Say to thy people much sadder words,
Here stands not unknown an earl with his band, 50
Whó will defend this father-land,
Æthelred's home, mine own liege lord's,
His folk and field: ye're fated to fall,
Ye heathen, in battle. Too base it me seems
That ye with our scats [8] to ship may go 55
Unfought against, so far ye now hither
Intó our country have come within;
Ye shall not so gently treasure obtain;

Shall spear and sword sooner beseem us,
 Grim battle-play, ere tribute we give." 60
 Then bade he shield bear, warriors advance,
 So that on the burn-stathe [9] they all were standing.
 Might not thère for the water one war-band to th' other,
 When flowing flood came after the ebb,
 Sea-streams interlocked; too long seemed it them 65
 Till they together their spears should bear.
 Then Panta's stream with pomp [10] [?] they beset,
 East-Saxons' chief and the host from the ships:
 No one of them might do harm to the other,
 But he who by dart's flight his death should receive. 70
 The flood ebbed forth; the fleetmen stood ready,
 Many of wikings, eager for war.
 Bade heroes' buckler [11] then hold the bridge
 A war-hardened warrior, who Wulfstan was named,
 Bold 'mid his kin (he was Ceola's son), 75
 Who the first man with his dart shot down
 That there most boldly stepped on the bridge.
 There stood with Wulfstan warriors fearless,
 Ælfhere and Maccus, courageous the twain;
 At the ford they would nót seek safety in flight, 80
 But firm 'gainst the foes themselves they defended,
 The while that they weapons were able to wield.
 When they that perceived and earnestly saw
 That there bridge-fenders [so] fierce they found,
 Began to lie these loathly guests: 85
 Begged that out-going they might obtain,
 Fare o'er the ford, their footmen lead.
 Then gan the earl on account of his pride
 Leave too much land to the loathly people.
 Began then to call o'er the water cold 90
 The son [12] of Byrthelm (the warriors listened):
 "Now room is allowed you, come quickly to us,
 Warriors to war; wot God alone
 Who thís battle-field may be able to keep."
 Waded the war-wolves, for water they recked not, 95
 The wikings' band, west over Panta,
 O'er the clear water carried their shields,
 Boatmen to bank their bucklers bore.
 There facing their foes ready were standing
 Byrhtnoth with warriors: with shields he bade 100
 The war-hedge [13] work, and the war-band hold
 Fast 'gainst the foes. Then fight was nigh,
 Glory in battle; the time was come
 That fated men should there [now] fall.
 Then out-cry was raised, the ravens circled, 105
 Eagle eager for prey; on earth was uproar.
 Then they let from their fists the file-hardened spears,
 The darts well-ground, [fiercely] [14] fly forth:
 The bows were busy, board point received,
 Bitter the battle-rush, warriors fell down, 110
 On either hands the youths lay dead.
 Wounded was Wulfmær, death-rest he chose,
 Byrhtnoth's kinsman, with bills [15] was hé,
 His sister's son, mightily hewn.
 There was to the wikings recompense given; 115
 Heard I that Edward one of them slew
 Strongly with sword, stroke he withheld not,
 That fell at his feet the fated warrior;
 For that did his prince give thanks to him,
 To his bower-thane, [16] when he had opportunity. 120
 So firmly stood the fierce-in-mind,
 The youths in fight, eagerly thought
 Who there with his spear might soonest be able
 From a fated man the life to win,
 A warrior with weapons: the dead to earth fell. 125
 Steadfast they stood; strengthened them Byrhtnoth,
 Bade that each youth of battle should think
 He whó on the Danes glory would gain.
 Went then a war-brave, his weapon uplifted,
 His shield for defence, and strode towards the chief; 130
 So earnest he went, the earl to the churl:
 Each for the other of evil was thinking.
 Sent then the seaman his spear from the south

That wounded wás the warrior's lord;
 Then he shoved with his shield that the shaft in two broke, 135
 And the spear was shivered; so sprang it back.
 Enraged was the warrior: with his spear he thrust
 The wiking proud, who the wound him gave.
 Wise was the warrior; he let his spear pierce
 Through the neck of the youth; his hand it guided 140
 So that hé his foe of life deprived.
 Then he another speedily shot,
 That the byrnie burst; in breast was he wounded
 Through the ringèd mail; there stood in his heart
 The poisonous point. The earl was the gladder; 145
 Laughed the proud man, to his Maker gave thanks
 For the work of that day that the Lord him gave.
 Then let one of warriors a dart from his hands,
 Fly from his fist, that forth it went
 Through that noble thane of Æthelred. 150
 There stood by his side a youth not grown,
 A boy in the fight, whó very boldly
 Drew from the warrior the bloody spear,
 The son of Wulfstan, Wulfmær the young;
 He let the hard weapon fly back again; 155
 The point in-pierced, that on earth he lay
 Who erst his lord strongly had struck.
 Went then an armored man to the earl,
 He would the warrior's jewels fetch back,
 Armor and rings and sword well-adorned. 160
 Then Byrhtnoth drew his sword from its sheath,
 Broad and brown-edged, and on byrnie he struck:
 Too quickly him hindered one of the seamen,
 When he of the earl the arm had wounded;
 Fell then to earth the fallow-hilt sword: 165
 He might not hold the hardened brand,
 His weapon wield. Yet the word he spake,
 The hoary hero the youths encouraged,
 Bade forwards go his good companions:
 He might not on foot longer stand firm; 170
 He looked up to heaven, [the earl exclaimed: [\[17\]](#)]
 "I thanks to thee give, Ruler of nations,
 For all those joys that on earth I experienced:
 Now, Maker mild, most need have I
 That thou to my spirit the blessing grant, 175
 That my soul to thee may take its course,
 Intó thy power, Prince of angels,
 With peace may go: I pray to thee,
 That fiends of hell may not it harm."
 Then hewed him down the heathen hinds, 180
 And both the warriors, who by him stood,
 Ælfnoth and Wulfmær both lay down dead,
 Beside their lord gave up their lives.
 Then bowed they from battle who there would not be;
 There Odda's sons were erst in flight: 185
 From battle went Godric, and the good one forsook,
 Who hád on him many a steed oft bestowed:
 He leaped on the horse that his lord had owned,
 Upon those trappings that right it was not,
 And his brothers with him both ran away, 190
 Godrinc and Godwig, recked not of war,
 But went from the fight, and sought the wood,
 Fled to the fastness, and saved their lives,
 And more of the men than wás at all meet,
 If they those services all had remembered, 195
 That he for their welfare to them had done;
 So Offa to him one day had erst said
 At the meeting-place, when he held a moot,
 That there [very] proudly they many things spake
 Which after in need they would not perform. [\[18\]](#) 200
 Thén was down-fallen the prince of the folk,
 Æthelred's earl: all of them saw,
 The hearth-companions, that their lord lay dead.
 Then hurried there forth the haughty thanes,
 The valiant men eagerly hastened: 205
 They would then all the one of the two,
 Their lives forsake or their loved one avenge.
 So urged them ón the son of Ælfric,

A winter-young warrior, with words them addressed. 210
 Then Ælfwine quoth (boldly he spake):
 "Remember the times that we oft at mead spake,
 When we on the bench our boast upraised,
 Heroes in hall, the hard fight anent:
 Now may be tested who is the true. [19]
 I will my lineage to all make known, 215
 That I 'mong the Mercians of mickle race was,
 My grandfather wás Ealhhelm by name,
 An alderman wise, with wealth endowed.
 Ne'er shall 'mong this folk me thanes reproach
 That I from this host will hasten to wend, 220
 My home to seek, now lies my lord
 Down-hewn in fight; to me 'tis great harm:
 By blood he was kin and by rank he was lord." [20]
 Then went he forth, was mindful of feud,
 That hé with his spear one of them pierced, 225
 A sailor o' the folk, that he lay on the ground
 Killed with his weapon. Gan he comrades exhort,
 Friends and companions, that forth they should go.
 Offa addressed them, his ash-spear shook:
 "Lo! Ælfwine, thóu hast all admonished, 230
 Thanés, of the need. Now lieth our lord,
 Earl on the earth, to us all there is need
 That each one of us should strengthen the other
 Warrior to war, while weapon he may
 [Still] have and hold, the hardened brand, 235
 Spear and good sword. Us hath Godric,
 Cowed son of Offa, all [basely] deceived:
 So many men thought when on mare he rode,
 On thát proud steed, that it wás our lord:
 Therefore in field here the folk was divided, 240
 The phalanx broken: may perish his deed,
 That he here so many men caused to flee!"
 Leofsunu spake, and uplifted his shield,
 His buckler for guard; to the warrior he quoth:
 "I promise thee this, that hence I will nót 245
 A foot's breadth flee, but further will go,
 Avenge in battle mine own dear lord.
 Me need not 'round Stourmere the steadfast heroes
 With words reproach, now my friend has fallen,
 That, lacking my lord, home I depart, 250
 Wend from the war, but weapons shall take me,
 Spear and iron." [21] Full angry he strode,
 Firmly he fought, flight he despised.
 Then Dunnere spake, his spear he shook,
 The agèd churl, called over all, 255
 Bade that each warrior should Byrhtnoth avenge:
 "He may not delay who thinks to avenge
 His lord on the folk, nor care for his life."
 Then forwards they went, they recked not of life;
 Gan then his followers valiantly fight, 260
 Spear-bearers grim, and to God they prayed,
 That théy might avenge their own dear lord,
 And upon their foes slaughter fulfil.
 Then gan the hostage eagerly help:
 He was 'mong Northumbrians of valiant race, 265
 The son of Ecglaf, his name was Æscferth:
 Ne'er wavered hé in that play of war,
 But he hastened forth many a dart;
 At times shot on shield, at times killed a chief,
 Ever and anon inflicted some wound, 270
 The while that he weapon was able to wield.
 Then still in front stood Edward the long,
 Ready and eager; boastingly said
 That hé would not flee a foot-breadth of land,
 Backwards withdraw, when his better lay dead: 275
 Broke he the shield-wall and fought 'gainst the warriors,
 Till hé his ring-giver upón the seamen
 Worthily avenged, ere he lay on the field.
 So [too] did Ætheric, noble companion,
 Ready and eager, earnestly fought he; 280
 Sigebyrht's brother and many another
 Cleft the curved [22] board, them bravely defended;
 Shield's border burst, and the byrnie sang

[18] Lit., 'suffer,' 'endure.'

[19] Lit., 'bold.'

[20] Lit., 'He was both my kinsman and my lord.'

[21] *i.e.*, 'sword.'

[22] *i.e.*, 'hollow shields.' *Cellod* is found only here and in Finnsburg, 29.

[23] *i.e.*, 'courage.'

THE DREAM OF THE ROOD.

Lo! choicest of dreams I will relate,
What dream I dreamt in middle of night
When mortal men reposed in rest.
Methought I saw a wondrous wood
Tower aloft with light bewound,
Brightest of trees; that beacon was all 5
Begirt with gold; jewels were standing
Four [1] at surface of earth, likewise were there five
Above on the shoulder-brace. All angels of God beheld it,
Fair through future ages; 'twas no criminal's cross indeed,
But holy spirits beheld it there, 10
Men upon earth, all this glorious creation.
Strange was that victor-tree, and stained with sins was I,
With foulness defiled. I saw the glorious tree
With vesture [2] adorned winsomely shine,
Begirt with gold; bright gems had there 15
Worthily decked the tree of the Lord. [3]
Yet through that gold I might perceive
Old strife of the wretched, that first it gave
Blood on the stronger [right] side. With sorrows was I oppressed,
Afraid for that fair sight; I saw the ready beacon 20
Change in vesture and hue; at times with moisture covered,
Soiled with course of blood; at times with treasure adorned.
Yet lying there a longer while,
Beheld I sad the Saviour's tree
Until I heard that words it uttered; 25
The best of woods gan speak these words:
"'Twas long ago (I remember it still)
That I was hewn at end of a grove,
Stripped from off my stem; strong foes laid hold of me there,
Wrought for themselves a show, bade felons raise me up; 30
Men bore me on their shoulders, till on a mount they set me;
Fiends many fixed me there. Then saw I mankind's Lord
Hasten with mickle might, for He would sty [4] upon me.
There durst I not 'gainst word of the Lord
Bow down or break, when saw I tremble 35
The surface of earth; I might then all
My foes have felled, yet fast I stood.
The Hero young begirt [5] Himself, Almighty God was He,
Strong and stern of mind; He stied on the gallows high,
Bold in sight of many, for man He would redeem. 40
I shook when the Hero clasped me, yet durst not bow to earth,
Fall to surface of earth, but firm I must there stand.
A rood was I upreared; I raised the mighty King,
The Lord of Heaven; I durst not bend me.
They drove their dark nails through me; the wounds are seen upon me 45
The open gashes of guile; I durst harm none [6] of them.
They mocked us both together; all moistened with blood was I,
Shed from side of the man, when forth He sent His spirit.
Many have I on that mount endured
Of cruel fates; I saw the Lord of Hosts 50
Strongly outstretched; darkness had then
Covered with clouds the corpse of the Lord,
The brilliant brightness; the shadow continued, [7]
Wan 'neath the welkin. There wept all creation,
Bewailed the King's death; Christ was on the cross. 55
Yet hastening thither they came from afar
To the Son of the King [8]: that all I beheld.
Sorely with sorrows was I oppressed; yet I bowed 'neath the hands of men,
Lowly with mickle might. Took they there Almighty God,
Him raised from the heavy torture; the battle-warriors left me 60

To stand bedrenched with blood; all wounded with darts was I.
 There laid they the weary of limb, at head of His corse they stood,
 Beheld the Lord of Heaven, and He rested Him there awhile,
 Worn from the mickle war. Began they an earth-house to work, 65
 Men in the murderers' [9] sight, carved it of brightest stone,
 Placed therein victories' Lord. Began sad songs to sing
 The wretched at eventide; then would they back return
 Mourning from the mighty prince; all lonely [10] rested He there.
 Yet weeping [11] we then a longer while
 Stood at our station: the [voice [12]] arose 70
 Of battle-warriors; the corse grew cold,
 Fair house of life. Then one gan fell
 Us [13] all to earth; 'twas a fearful fate!
 One buried us in deep pit, yet of me the thanes of the Lord,
 His friends, heard tell; [from earth they raised me], [14] 75
 And me begirt with gold and silver.
 Now thou mayst hear, my dearest man,
 That bale of woes [15] have I endured,
 Of sorrows sore. Now the time is come,
 That me shall honor both far and wide 80
 Men upon earth, and all this mighty creation
 Will pray to this beacon. On me God's Son
 Suffered awhile; so glorious now
 I tower to Heaven, and I may heal
 Each one of those who reverence me; 85
 Of old I became the hardest of pains,
 Most loathsome to ledes [16] [nations], the way of life,
 Right way, I prepared for mortal men. [17]
 Lo! the Lord of Glory honored me then
 Above the grove, [18] the guardian of Heaven, 90
 As He His mother, even Mary herself,
 Almighty God before all men
 Worthily honored above all women.
 Now thee I bid, my dearest man,
 That thou this sight shalt say to men, 95
 Reveal in words, 'tis the tree of glory,
 On which once suffered Almighty God
 For the many sins of all mankind,
 And also for Adam's misdeeds of old.
 Death tasted He there; yet the Lord arose 100
 With His mickle might for help to men.
 Then stied He to Heaven; again shall come
 Upon this mid-earth to seek mankind
 At the day of doom the Lord Himself,
 Almighty God, and His angels with Him; 105
 Then He will judge, who hath right of doom,
 Each one of men as here before
 In this vain life he hath deserved.
 No one may there be free from fear
 In view of the word that the Judge will speak. 110
 He will ask 'fore the crowd, where is the man
 Who for name of the Lord would bitter death
 Be willing to taste, as He did on the tree.
 But then they will fear, and few will bethink them
 What they to Christ may venture to say. 115
 Then need there no one be filled with fear [19]
 Who bears in his breast the best of beacons;
 But through the rood a kingdom shall seek
 From earthly way each single soul
 That with the Lord thinketh to dwell." 120
 Then I prayed to the tree with joyous heart,
 With mickle might, when I was alone
 With small attendance [20]; the thought of my mind
 For the journey was ready; I've lived through many
 Hours of longing. Now 'tis hope of my life 125
 That the victory-tree I am able to seek,
 Oftener than all men I alone may
 Honor it well; my will to that
 Is mickle in mind, and my plea for protection
 To the rood is directed. I've not many mighty 130
 Of friends on earth; but hence went they forth
 From joys of the world, sought glory's King;
 Now live they in Heaven with the Father on high,
 In glory dwell, and I hope for myself
 On every day when the rood of the Lord, 135

Which here on earth before I viewed,
 In this vain life may fetch me away
 And bring me then, where bliss is mickle,
 Joy in the Heavens, where the folk of the Lord
 Is set at the feast, where bliss is eternal; 140
 And may He then set me where I may hereafter
 In glory dwell, and well with the saints
 Of joy partake. May the Lord be my friend,
 Who here on earth suffered before
 On the gallows-tree for the sins of man! 145
 He us redeemed, and gave to us life,
 A heavenly home. Hope was renewed,
 With blessing and bliss, for the sufferers of burning.
 The Son was victorious on that fateful journey,
 Mighty and happy, [21] when He came with a many, [22] 150
 With a band of spirits to the kingdom of God,
 The Ruler Almighty, for joy to the angels
 And to all the saints, who in Heaven before
 In glory dwelt, when their Ruler came,
 Almighty God, where was His home. 155

[1] *Feowere*, B.'s emendation for MS. *fægere*, 'fair.'

[2] Silken cords, or tassels, *W.*; sailyards, ropes, in Hall and Sweet.

[3] *Wealdendes*, S.'s emendation for MS. *wealdes*, 'wood'; so Kl.

[4] *Sty*, 'mount,' common in Middle English.

[5] Here and below *W.* gives the corresponding verses from the Ruthwell Cross. They will also be found in Stopford Brooke's "Early English Literature," p. 337, *q.v.*

[6] Gr. changes MS. *nænigum* to *ænigum* and others follow; *W.* as MS.

[7] *Forð-eode*, not *for-ðeode*, 'overcame,' as Sw. *W.*'s note is an oversight.

[8] MS. *to þam æðelinge*. Sw. follows Ruthwell Cross, *æðele to anum*.

[9] *Banan* must be taken as gen. pl.; B. reads *banana*; Sw. thinks it "a mistake for some other [word], possibly *beorg*," and takes *banan* as gen. sing. referring to the cross, though he adds, "this is very improbable." Truly so, as the cross is speaking.

[10] *Maete werode*, lit., 'with a small band,' but it means 'by himself.'

[11] *Greotende* is Gr.'s emendation for MS. *reotende*; B. *hreatende*; K. *geotende*; Sw. as Gr.

[12] *Stefn* is Kl.'s emendation to fill *lacuna*. *W.* prefers it, but does not think it convincing.

[13] *Us* here must refer to the *three* crosses, that of Christ and those of the two thieves.

[14] This half-line is Gr.'s emendation to fill *lacuna* in MS. Sw. and *W.* leave it blank.

[15] Or, 'of the wicked,' 'of criminals.'

[16] I have used this Middle English word for sake of the alliteration.

[17] Sw.'s text ends here. It was translated a few years ago in *Poet-Lore* as if it were the whole poem.

[18] MS. *holmwudu*; K. *holtwudu*, and so Gr. with (?).

[19] MS. *unforht*, but Gr.'s *anforht* suits the sense better.

[20] *i.e.*, 'by myself.' See on 69.

[21] Lit., 'speedy,' 'successful.'

[22] A company, a crowd; common in Middle English.

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