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Poem, by

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BEOWULF

AN ANGLO-SAXON EPIC
POEM

TRANSLATED
FROM THE HEYNE-SOCIN TEXT

BY

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TO
My Wife

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PREFACE.

THE present work is a modest effort to reproduce approximately, in modern measures, the venerable epic, *Beowulf*. *Approximately*, I repeat; for a very close reproduction of Anglo-Saxon verse would, to a large extent, be prose to a modern ear.

The Heyne-Socin text and glossary have been closely followed. Occasionally a deviation has been made, but always for what seemed good and sufficient reason. The translator does not aim to be an editor. Once in a while, however, he has added a conjecture of his own to the emendations quoted from the criticisms of other students of the poem.

This work is addressed to two classes of readers. From both of these alike the translator begs sympathy and co-operation. The Anglo-Saxon scholar he hopes to please by adhering faithfully to the original. The student of English literature he aims to interest by giving him, in modern garb, the most ancient epic of our race. This is a bold and venturesome undertaking; and yet there must be some students of the Teutonic past willing to follow even a daring guide, if they may read in modern phrases of the sorrows of Hrothgar, of the prowess of *Beowulf*, and of the feelings that stirred the hearts of our forefathers in their primeval homes.

In order to please the larger class of readers, a regular cadence has been used, a measure which, while retaining the essential characteristics of the original, permits the reader to see ahead of him in reading.

Perhaps every Anglo-Saxon scholar has his own theory as to how *Beowulf* should be translated. Some have given us prose versions of what we believe to be a great poem. Is it any reflection on our honored Kemble and Arnold to say that their translations fail to show a layman that *Beowulf* is justly called our first *epic*? Of those translators who have used verse, several have written from what would seem a mistaken point of view. Is it proper, for instance, that the grave and solemn speeches of *Beowulf* and Hrothgar be put in ballad measures, tripping lightly and airily along? Or, again, is it fitting that the rough martial music of Anglo-Saxon verse be interpreted to us in the smooth measures of modern blank verse? Do we hear what has been beautifully called "the clanging tread of a warrior in mail"?

Of all English translations of *Beowulf*, that of Professor Garnett alone gives any adequate idea of the chief characteristics of this great Teutonic epic.

The measure used in the present translation is believed to be as near a reproduction of the original as modern English affords. The cadences closely resemble those used by Browning in some of his most striking poems. The four stresses of the Anglo-Saxon verse are retained, and as much thesis and anacrusis is allowed as is consistent with a regular cadence. Alliteration has been used to a large extent; but it was thought that modern ears would hardly tolerate it on every line. End-rhyme has been used occasionally; internal rhyme, sporadically. Both have some warrant in Anglo-Saxon poetry. (For end-rhyme, see 1 53, 1 54; for internal rhyme, 2 21, 6 40.)

What Gummere¹ calls the "rime-giver" has been studiously kept; *viz.*, the first accented syllable in the second half-verse always carries the alliteration; and the last accented syllable alliterates only sporadically. Alternate alliteration is occasionally used as in the original. (See 7 61, 8 5.)

No two accented syllables have been brought together, except occasionally after a cæsural pause. (See 2 19 and 12 1.) Or, scientifically speaking, Sievers's C type has been avoided as not consonant with the plan of translation. Several of his types, however, constantly occur; *e.g.* A and a variant (/ x | / x) (/ x x | / x); B and a variant (x / | x /) (x x / | x /); a variant of D (/ x | / x x); E (/ x x | /). Anacrusis gives further variety to the types used in the translation.

The parallelisms of the original have been faithfully preserved. (*E.g.*, 1 16 and 1 17: "Lord" and "Wielder of Glory"; 1 30, 1 31, 1 32; 2 12 and 2 13; 2 27 and 2 28; 3 5 and 3 6.) Occasionally, some loss has been sustained; but, on the other hand, a gain has here and there been made.

The effort has been made to give a decided flavor of archaism to the translation. All words not in keeping with the spirit of the poem have been avoided. Again, though many archaic words have been used, there are none, it is believed, which are not found in standard modern poetry.

With these preliminary remarks, it will not be amiss to give an outline of the story of the poem.

THE STORY.

Hrothgar, king of the Danes, or Scyldings, builds a great mead-hall, or palace, in which he hopes to feast his liegemen and to give them presents. The joy of king and retainers is, however, of short duration. Grendel, the monster, is seized with hateful jealousy. He cannot brook the sounds of joyance that reach him down in his fen-dwelling near the hall. Oft and anon he goes to the joyous building, bent on direful mischief. Thane after thane is ruthlessly carried off and devoured, while no one is found strong enough and bold enough to cope with the monster. For twelve years he persecutes Hrothgar and his vassals.

Over sea, a day's voyage off, Beowulf, of the Geats, nephew of Higelac, king of the Geats, hears of Grendel's doings and of Hrothgar's misery. He resolves to crush the fell monster and relieve the aged king. With fourteen chosen companions, he sets sail for Dane-land. Reaching that country, he soon persuades Hrothgar of his ability to help him. The hours that elapse before night are spent in beer-drinking and conversation. When Hrothgar's bedtime comes he leaves the hall in charge of Beowulf, telling him that never before has he given to another the absolute wardship of his palace. All retire to rest, Beowulf, as it were, sleeping upon his arms.

Grendel comes, the great march-stepper, bearing God's anger. He seizes and kills one of the sleeping warriors. Then he advances towards Beowulf. A fierce and desperate hand-to-hand struggle ensues. No arms are used, both combatants trusting to strength and hand-grip. Beowulf tears Grendel's shoulder from its socket, and the monster retreats to his den, howling and yelling with agony and fury. The wound is fatal.

The next morning, at early dawn, warriors in numbers flock to the hall Heorot, to hear the news. Joy is boundless. Glee runs high. Hrothgar and his retainers are lavish of gratitude and of gifts.

Grendel's mother, however, comes the next night to avenge his death. She is furious and raging. While Beowulf is sleeping in a room somewhat apart from the quarters of the other warriors, she seizes one of Hrothgar's favorite counsellors, and carries him off and devours him. Beowulf is called. Determined to leave Heorot entirely purified, he arms himself, and goes down to look for the female monster. After traveling through the waters many hours, he meets her near the sea-bottom. She drags him to her den. There he sees Grendel lying dead. After a desperate and almost fatal struggle with the woman, he slays her, and swims upward in triumph, taking with him Grendel's head.

Joy is renewed at Heorot. Congratulations crowd upon the victor. Hrothgar literally pours treasures into the lap of Beowulf; and it is agreed among the vassals of the king that Beowulf will be their next liegeland.

Beowulf leaves Dane-land. Hrothgar weeps and laments at his departure.

When the hero arrives in his own land, Higelac treats him as a distinguished guest. He is the hero of the hour.

Beowulf subsequently becomes king of his own people, the Geats. After he has been ruling for fifty years, his own neighborhood is wofully harried by a fire-spewing dragon. Beowulf determines to kill him. In the ensuing struggle both Beowulf and the dragon are slain. The grief of the Geats is inexpressible. They determine, however, to leave nothing undone to honor the memory of their lord. A great funeral-pyre is built, and his body is burnt. Then a memorial-barrow is made, visible from a great distance, that sailors afar may be constantly reminded of the prowess of the national hero of Geatland.

The poem closes with a glowing tribute to his bravery, his gentleness, his goodness of heart, and his generosity.

It is the devout desire of this translator to hasten the day when the story of Beowulf shall be as familiar to English-speaking peoples as that of the Iliad. Beowulf is our first great epic. It is an epitomized history of the life of the Teutonic races. It brings vividly before us our forefathers of pre-Alfredian eras, in their love of war, of sea, and of adventure.

My special thanks are due to Professors Francis A. March and James A. Harrison, for advice, sympathy, and assistance.

J.L. HALL.

[1] Handbook of Poetics, page 175, 1st edition.

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE NOTES.

B. = Bugge. C. = Cosijn. Gr. = Grein. Grdvtg. = Grundtvig. H. = Heyne. H. and S. = Harrison and Sharp. H.-So. = Heyne-Socin. K. = Kemble. Kl. = Kluge. M. = Müllenhoff. R. = Rieger. S. = Sievers. Sw. = Sweet. t.B. = ten Brink. Th. = Thorpe. W. = Wülcker.

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GLOSSARY OF PROPER NAMES.

[The figures refer to the divisions of the poem in which the respective names occur. The large figures refer to fitts, the small, to lines in the fitts.]

- Ælfhere.**—A kinsman of Wiglaf.—36 3.
- Æschere.**—Confidential friend of King Hrothgar. Elder brother of Yrmenlaf. Killed by Grendel.—21 3; 30 89.
- Beanstan.**—Father of Breca.—9 26.
- Beowulf.**—Son of Scyld, the founder of the dynasty of Scyldings. Father of Healfdene, and grandfather of Hrothgar.—1 18; 2 1.
- Beowulf.**—The hero of the poem. Sprung from the stock of Geats, son of Ecgtheow. Brought up by his maternal grandfather Hrethel, and figuring in manhood as a devoted liegeman of his uncle Higelac. A hero from his youth. Has the strength of thirty men. Engages in a swimming-match with Breca. Goes to the help of Hrothgar against the monster Grendel. Vanquishes Grendel and his mother. Afterwards becomes king of the Geats. Late in life attempts to kill a fire-spewing dragon, and is slain. Is buried with great honors. His memorial mound.—6 26; 7 2; 7 9; 9 3; 9 8; 12 28; 12 43; 23 1, etc.
- Breca.**—Beowulf's opponent in the famous swimming-match.—9 8; 9 19; 9 21; 9 22.
- Brondings.**—A people ruled by Breca.—9 23.
- Brosinga mene.**—A famous collar once owned by the Brosings.—19 7.
- Cain.**—Progenitor of Grendel and other monsters.—2 56; 20 11.
- Dæghrefn.**—A warrior of the Hugs, killed by Beowulf.—35 40.
- Danes.**—Subjects of Scyld and his descendants, and hence often called Scyldings. Other names for them are Victory-Scyldings, Honor-Scyldings, Armor-Danes, Bright-Danes, East-Danes, West-Danes, North-Danes, South-Danes, Ingwins, Hrethmen.—1 1; 2 1; 3 2; 5 14; 7 1, etc.
- Ecglaf.**—Father of Unferth, who taunts Beowulf.—9 1.
- Ecgtheow.**—Father of Beowulf, the hero of the poem. A widely-known Wægmunding warrior. Marries Hrethel's daughter. After slaying Heatholaf, a Wylfing, he flees his country.—7 3; 5 6; 8 4.
- Ecgwela.**—A king of the Danes before Scyld.—25 60.
- Elan.**—Sister of Hrothgar, and probably wife of Ongentheow, king of the Swedes.—2 10.
- Eagle Cape.**—A promontory in Geat-land, under which took place Beowulf's last encounter.—41 87.
- Eadgils.**—Son of Ohthere and brother of Eanmund.—34 2.
- Eanmund.**—Son of Ohthere and brother of Eadgils. The reference to these brothers is vague, and variously understood. Heyne supposes as follows: Raising a revolt against their father, they are obliged to leave Sweden. They go to the land of the Geats; with what intention, is not known, but probably to conquer and plunder. The Geatish king, Heardred, is slain by one of the brothers, probably Eanmund.—36 10; 31 54 to 31 60; 33 66 to 34 6.
- Eofor.**—A Geatish hero who slays Ongentheow in war, and is rewarded by Hygelac with the hand of his only daughter.—41 18; 41 48.
- Eormenric.**—A Gothic king, from whom Hama took away the famous Brosinga mene.—19 9.
- Eomær.**—Son of Offa and Thrytho, king and queen of the Angles.—28 69.

Finn.—King of the North-Frisians and the Jutes. Marries Hildeburg. At his court takes place the horrible slaughter in which the Danish general, Hnæf, fell. Later on, Finn himself is slain by Danish warriors.—17 18; 17 30; 17 44; 18 4; 18 23.

Fin-land.—The country to which Beowulf was driven by the currents in his swimming-match.—10 22.

Fitela.—Son and nephew of King Sigemund, whose praises are sung in XIV.—14 42; 14 53.

Folcwalda.—Father of Finn.—17 38.

Franks.—Introduced occasionally in referring to the death of Higelac.—19 19; 40 21; 40 24.

Frisians.—A part of them are ruled by Finn. Some of them were engaged in the struggle in which Higelac was slain.—17 20; 17 42; 17 52; 40 21.

Freaware.—Daughter of King Hrothgar. Married to Ingeld, a Heathobard prince.—29 60; 30 32.

Froda.—King of the Heathobards, and father of Ingeld.—29 62.

Garmund.—Father of Offa.—28 71.

Geats, Geatmen.—The race to which the hero of the poem belongs. Also called Weder-Geats, or Weders, War-Geats, Sea-Geats. They are ruled by Hrethel, Hæthcyn, Higelac, and Beowulf.—4 7; 7 4; 10 45; 11 8; 27 14; 28 8.

Gepids.—Named in connection with the Danes and Swedes.—35 34.

Grendel.—A monster of the race of Cain. Dwells in the fens and moors. Is furiously envious when he hears sounds of joy in Hrothgar's palace. Causes the king untold agony for years. Is finally conquered by Beowulf, and dies of his wound. His hand and arm are hung up in Hrothgar's hall Heorot. His head is cut off by Beowulf when he goes down to fight with Grendel's mother.—2 50; 3 1; 3 13; 8 19; 11 17; 12 2; 13 27; 15 3.

Guthlaf.—A Dane of Hnæf's party.—18 24.

Half-Danes.—Branch of the Danes to which Hnæf belonged.—17 19.

Halga.—Surnamed the Good. Younger brother of Hrothgar.—2 9.

Hama.—Takes the Brosinga mene from Eormenric.—19 7.

Hæreth.—Father of Higelac's queen, Hygd.—28 39; 29 18.

Hæthcyn.—Son of Hrethel and brother of Higelac. Kills his brother Herebeald accidentally. Is slain at Ravenswood, fighting against Ongentheow.—34 43; 35 23; 40 32.

Helmings.—The race to which Queen Wealhtheow belonged.—10 63.

Heming.—A kinsman of Garmund, perhaps nephew.—28 54; 28 70.

Hengest.—A Danish leader. Takes command on the fall of Hnæf.—17 33; 17 41.

Herebeald.—Eldest son of Hrethel, the Geatish king, and brother of Higelac. Killed by his younger brother Hæthcyn.—34 43; 34 47.

Heremod.—A Danish king of a dynasty before the Scylding line. Was a source of great sorrow to his people.—14 64; 25 59.

Hereric.—Referred to as uncle of Heardred, but otherwise unknown.—31 60.

Hetwars.—Another name for the Franks.—33 51.

Healfdene.—Grandson of Scyld and father of Hrothgar. Ruled the Danes long and well.—2 5; 4 1; 8 14.

Heardred.—Son of Higelac and Hygd, king and queen of the Geats. Succeeds his father, with Beowulf as regent. Is slain by the sons of Ohthere.—31 56; 33 63; 33 75.

Heathobards.—Race of Lombards, of which Froda is king. After Froda falls in battle with the Danes, Ingeld, his son, marries Hrothgar's daughter, Freaware, in order to heal the feud.—30 1; 30 6.

Heatholaf.—A Wylfing warrior slain by Beowulf's father.—8 5.

Heathoremes.—The people on whose shores Breca is cast by the waves during his contest with Beowulf.—9 21.

Heorogar.—Elder brother of Hrothgar, and surnamed 'Weoroda Ræswa,' Prince of the Troopers.—2 9; 8 12.

Hereward.—Son of the above.—31 17.

Heort, Heorot.—The great mead-hall which King Hrothgar builds. It is invaded by Grendel for twelve years. Finally cleansed by Beowulf, the Geat. It is called Heort on account of the hart-antlers which decorate it.—2 25; 3 32; 3 52.

Hildeburg.—Wife of Finn, daughter of Hoce, and related to Hnæf,—probably his sister.—17 21; 18 34.

Hnæf.—Leader of a branch of the Danes called Half-Danes. Killed in the struggle at Finn's castle.—17 19; 17 61.

Hondscio.—One of Beowulf's companions. Killed by Grendel just before Beowulf grappled with that monster.—30 43.

Hoce.—Father of Hildeburg and probably of Hnæf.—17 26.

Hrethel.—King of the Geats, father of Higelac, and grandfather of Beowulf.—7 4; 34 39.

Hrethla.—Once used for Hrethel.—7 82.

Hrethmen.—Another name for the Danes.—7 73.

Hrethric.—Son of Hrothgar.—18 65; 27 19.

Hreosna-beorh.—A promontory in Geat-land, near which Ohthere's sons made plundering raids.—35 18.

Hrothgar.—The Danish king who built the hall Heort, but was long unable to enjoy it on account of Grendel's persecutions. Marries Wealhtheow, a Helming lady. Has two sons and a daughter. Is a typical Teutonic king, lavish of gifts. A devoted liegeland, as his lamentations over slain liegemen prove. Also very appreciative of kindness, as is shown by his loving gratitude to Beowulf.—2 9; 2 12; 4 1; 8 10; 15 1; etc., etc.

Hrothmund.—Son of Hrothgar.—18 65.

Hrothulf.—Probably a son of Halga, younger brother of Hrothgar. Certainly on terms of close intimacy in Hrothgar's palace.—16 26; 18 57.

Hrunting.—Unferth's sword, lent to Beowulf.—22 71; 25 9.

Hugs.—A race in alliance with the Franks and Frisians at the time of Higelac's fall.—35 41.

Hun.—A Frisian warrior, probably general of the Hetwars. Gives Hengest a beautiful sword.—18 19.

Hunferth.—Sometimes used for Unferth.

Higelac, Higelac.—King of the Geats, uncle and liegeland of Beowulf, the hero of the poem.—His second wife is the lovely Hygd, daughter of Hæreth. The son of their union is Heardred. Is slain in a war with the Hugs, Franks, and Frisians combined. Beowulf is regent, and afterwards king of the Geats.—4 6; 5 4; 28 34; 29 9; 29 21; 31 56.

Hygd.—Wife of Higelac, and daughter of Hæreth. There are some indications that she married Beowulf after she became a widow.—28 37.

Ingeld.—Son of the Heathobard king, Froda. Marries Hrothgar's daughter, Freaware, in order to reconcile the two peoples.—29 62; 30 32.

Ingwins.—Another name for the Danes.—16 52; 20 69.

Jutes.—Name sometimes applied to Finn's people.—17 22; 17 38; 18 17.

Lafing.—Name of a famous sword presented to Hengest by Hun.—18 19.

Merewing.—A Frankish king, probably engaged in the war in which Higelac was slain.—40 29.

Nægling.—Beowulf's sword.—36 76.

Offa.—King of the Angles, and son of Garmund. Marries the terrible Thrytho who is so strongly contrasted with Hygd.—28 59; 28 66.

Ohthere.—Son of Ongentheow, king of the Swedes. He is father of Eanmund and Eadgils.—40 35; 40 39.

Onela.—Brother of Ohthere.—36 15; 40 39.

Ongentheow.—King of Sweden, of the Scylding dynasty. Married, perhaps, Elan, daughter of Healfdene.—35 26; 41 16.

Oslaf.—A Dane of Hnæf's party.—18 24.

Ravenswood.—The forest near which Hæthcyn was slain.—40 31; 40 41.

Scefing.—Applied (1 4) to Scyld, and meaning ‘son of Scef.’

Scyld.—Founder of the dynasty to which Hrothgar, his father, and grandfather belonged. He dies, and his body is put on a vessel, and set adrift. He goes from Daneland just as he had come to it—in a bark.—1 4; 1 19; 1 27.

Scyldings.—The descendants of Scyld. They are also called Honor-Scyldings, Victory-Scyldings, War-Scyldings, etc. (See ‘Danes,’ above.)—2 1; 7 1; 8 1.

Scylfings.—A Swedish royal line to which Wiglaf belonged.—36 2.

Sigemund.—Son of Wæls, and uncle and father of Fitela. His struggle with a dragon is related in connection with Beowulf’s deeds of prowess.—14 38; 14 47.

Swerting.—Grandfather of Higelac, and father of Hrethel.—19 11.

Swedes.—People of Sweden, ruled by the Scylfings.—35 13.

Thrytho.—Wife of Offa, king of the Angles. Known for her fierce and unwomanly disposition. She is introduced as a contrast to the gentle Hygd, queen of Higelac.—28 42; 28 56.

Unferth.—Son of Ecglaf, and seemingly a confidential courtier of Hrothgar. Taunts Beowulf for having taken part in the swimming-match. Lends Beowulf his sword when he goes to look for Grendel’s mother. In the MS. sometimes written *Hunferth*. 9 1; 18 41.

Wæls.—Father of Sigemund.—14 60.

Wægmunding.—A name occasionally applied to Wiglaf and Beowulf, and perhaps derived from a common ancestor, Wægmund.—36 6; 38 61.

Weders.—Another name for Geats or Wedergeats.

Wayland.—A fabulous smith mentioned in this poem and in other old Teutonic literature.—7 83.

Wendels.—The people of Wulfgar, Hrothgar’s messenger and retainer. (Perhaps = Vandals.)—6 30.

Wealhtheow.—Wife of Hrothgar. Her queenly courtesy is well shown in the poem.—10 55.

Weohstan, or Wihstan.—A Wægmunding, and father of Wiglaf.—36 1.

Whale’s Ness.—A prominent promontory, on which Beowulf’s mound was built.—38 52; 42 76.

Wiglaf.—Son of Wihstan, and related to Beowulf. He remains faithful to Beowulf in the fatal struggle with the fire-drake. Would rather die than leave his lord in his dire emergency.—36 1; 36 3; 36 28.

Wonred.—Father of Wulf and Eofor.—41 20; 41 26.

Wulf.—Son of Wonred. Engaged in the battle between Higelac’s and Ongentheow’s forces, and had a hand-to-hand fight with Ongentheow himself. Ongentheow disables him, and is thereupon slain by Eofor.—41 19; 41 29.

Wulfgar.—Lord of the Wendels, and retainer of Hrothgar.—6 18; 6 30.

Wylfings.—A people to whom belonged Heatholaf, who was slain by Ecgtheow.—8 6; 8 16.

Yrmenlaf.—Younger brother of Æschere, the hero whose death grieved Hrothgar so deeply.—21 4.

LIST OF WORDS AND PHRASES NOT IN GENERAL USE.

ATHELING.—Prince, nobleman.

BAIRN.—Son, child.

BARROW.—Mound, rounded hill, funeral-mound.

BATTLE-SARK.—Armor.

BEAKER.—Cup, drinking-vessel.

BEGEAR.—Prepare.
BIGHT.—Bay, sea.
BILL.—Sword.
BOSS.—Ornamental projection.
BRACTEATE.—A round ornament on a necklace.
BRAND.—Sword.
BURN.—Stream.
BURNIE.—Armor.
CARLE.—Man, hero.
EARL.—Nobleman, any brave man.
EKE.—Also.
EMPRISE.—Enterprise, undertaking.
ERST.—Formerly.
ERST-WORTHY.—Worthy for a long time past.
FAIN.—Glad.
FERRY.—Bear, carry.
FEY.—Fated, doomed.
FLOAT.—Vessel, ship.
FOIN.—To lunge (Shaks.).
GLORY OF KINGS.—God.
GREWSOME.—Cruel, fierce.
HEFT.—Handle, hilt; used by synecdoche for 'sword.'
HELM.—Helmet, protector.
HENCHMAN.—Retainer, vassal.
HIGHT.—Am (was) named.
HOLM.—Ocean, curved surface of the sea.
HIMSEEMED.—(It) seemed to him.
LIEF.—Dear, valued.
MERE.—Sea; in compounds, 'mere-ways,' 'mere-currents,' etc.
MICKLE.—Much.
NATHLESS.—Nevertheless.
NAZE.—Edge (nose).
NESS.—Edge.
NICKER.—Sea-beast.
QUIT, QUITE.—Requite.
RATHE.—Quickly.
REAVE.—Bereave, deprive.
SAIL-ROAD.—Sea.
SETTLE.—Seat, bench.
SKINKER.—One who pours.
SOOTHLY.—Truly.
SWINGE.—Stroke, blow.
TARGE, TARGET.—Shield.
THROUGHLY.—Thoroughly.
TOLD.—Counted.
UNCANNY.—Ill-featured, grizzly.
UNNETHE.—Difficult.
WAR-SPEED.—Success in war.
WEB.—Tapestry (that which is 'woven').
WEDED.—Clad (cf. widow's weeds).
WEEN.—Suppose, imagine.

WEIRD.—Fate, Providence.

WHILOM.—At times, formerly, often.

WIELDER.—Ruler. Often used of God; also in compounds, as 'Wielder of
Glory,' 'Wielder of Worship.'

WIGHT.—Creature.

WOLD.—Plane, extended surface.

WOT.—Knows.

YOUNKER.—Youth.

BEOWULF.

I.

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF SCYLD.

| | | |
|--------|---|--|
| | Lo! the Spear-Danes' glory through splendid achievements | The famous race of Spear-Danes. |
| | The folk-kings' former fame we have heard of, How princes displayed then their prowess-in-battle. | |
| 5 | Oft Scyld the Scefing from scathers in numbers From many a people their mead-benches tore. Since first he found him friendless and wretched, The earl had had terror: comfort he got for it, Waxed 'neath the welkin, world-honor gained, Till all his neighbors o'er sea were compelled to Bow to his bidding and bring him their tribute: An excellent atheling! After was borne him A son and heir, young in his dwelling, Whom God-Father sent to solace the people. He had marked the misery malice had caused them, | Scyld, their mighty king, in honor of whom they are often called Scyldings. He is the great- grandfather of Hrothgar, so prominent in the poem. |
| 10 | | A son is born to him, who receives the name of Beowulf—a name afterwards made so famous by the hero of the poem. |
| 15 | ¹ That reaved of their rulers they wretched had erstwhile ² Long been afflicted. The Lord, in requital, Wielder of Glory, with world-honor blessed him. Famed was Beowulf, far spread the glory Of Scyld's great son in the lands of the Danemen. | |
| [2] 20 | So the carle that is young, by kindnesses rendered The friends of his father, with fees in abundance Must be able to earn that when age approacheth Eager companions aid him requitingly, When war assaults him serve him as liegemen: | The ideal Teutonic king lavishes gifts on his vassals. |
| 25 | By praise-worthy actions must honor be got 'Mong all of the races. At the hour that was fated Scyld then departed to the All-Father's keeping Warlike to wend him; away then they bare him To the flood of the current, his fond-loving comrades, | Scyld dies at the hour appointed by Fate. |
| 30 | As himself he had bidden, while the friend of the Scyldings Word-sway wielded, and the well-lovèd land-prince Long did rule them. ³ The ring-stemmèd vessel, Bark of the atheling, lay there at anchor, Icy in glimmer and eager for sailing; | |
| 35 | The belovèd leader laid they down there, Giver of rings, on the breast of the vessel, The famed by the mainmast. A many of jewels, Of fretted embossings, from far-lands brought over, Was placed near at hand then; and heard I not ever | By his own request, his body is laid on a vessel and wafted seaward. |
| 40 | That a folk ever furnished a float more superbly With weapons of warfare, weeds for the battle, Bills and burnies; on his bosom sparkled Many a jewel that with him must travel On the flush of the flood afar on the current. | |
| 45 | And favors no fewer they furnished him soothly, Excellent folk-gems, than others had given him Who when first he was born outward did send him Lone on the main, the merest of infants: And a gold-fashioned standard they stretched under heaven | He leaves Daneland on the breast of a bark. |
| [3] 50 | High o'er his head, let the holm-currents bear him, Seaward consigned him: sad was their spirit, | |

Their mood very mournful. Men are not able
 Soothly to tell us, they in halls who reside,⁴
 Heroes under heaven, to what haven he hied.

No one knows
 whither the boat
 drifted.

- [1] For the 'Ðæt' of verse 15, Sievers suggests 'Ðá' (= which). If this be accepted, the sentence 'He had ... afflicted' will read: *He (i.e. God) had perceived the malice-caused sorrow which they, lordless, had formerly long endured.*
- [2] For 'aldor-léase' (15) Gr. suggested 'aldor-ceare': *He perceived their distress, that they formerly had suffered life-sorrow a long while.*
- [3] A very difficult passage. 'Áhte' (31) has no object. H. supplies 'geweald' from the context; and our translation is based upon this assumption, though it is far from satisfactory. Kl. suggests 'lændagas' for 'lange': *And the beloved land-prince enjoyed (had) his transitory days (i.e. lived).* B. suggests a dislocation; but this is a dangerous doctrine, pushed rather far by that eminent scholar.
- [4] The reading of the H.-So. text has been quite closely followed; but some eminent scholars read 'séle-rædenne' for 'sele-rædende.' If that be adopted, the passage will read: *Men cannot tell us, indeed, the order of Fate, etc.* 'Sele-rædende' has two things to support it: (1) v. 1347; (2) it affords a parallel to 'men' in v. 50.

II.

SCYLD'S SUCCESSORS.—HROTHGAR'S GREAT MEAD-HALL.

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>In the boroughs then Beowulf, bairn of the Scyldings, Belovèd land-prince, for long-lasting season Was famed mid the folk (his father departed, The prince from his dwelling), till afterward sprang 5 Great-minded Healfdene; the Danes in his lifetime He graciously governed, grim-mooded, agèd. Four bairns of his body born in succession Woke in the world, war-troopers' leader Heorogar, Hrothgar, and Halga the good; 10 Heard I that Elan was Ongentheow's consort, The well-beloved bedmate of the War-Scylfing leader. Then glory in battle to Hrothgar was given, Waxing of war-fame, that willingly kinsmen Obeyed his bidding, till the boys grew to manhood, 15 A numerous band. It burned in his spirit To urge his folk to found a great building, A mead-hall grander than men of the era Ever had heard of, and in it to share With young and old all of the blessings 20 The Lord had allowed him, save life and retainers. Then the work I find afar was assigned To many races in middle-earth's regions, To adorn the great folk-hall. In due time it happened Early 'mong men, that 'twas finished entirely, 25 The greatest of hall-buildings; Heorot he named it Who wide-reaching word-sway wielded 'mong earlmen. His promise he brake not, rings he lavished, Treasure at banquet. Towered the hall up High and horn-crested, huge between antlers: 30 It battle-waves bided, the blasting fire-demon; Ere long then from hottest hatred must sword-wrath Arise for a woman's husband and father. Then the mighty war-spirit¹ endured for a season, Bore it bitterly, he who bided in darkness, 35 That light-hearted laughter loud in the building Greeted him daily; there was dulcet harp-music, Clear song of the singer. He said that was able</p> | <p>Beowulf succeeds his father Scyld</p> <p>Healfdene's birth.</p> <p>He has three sons —one of them, Hrothgar—and a daughter named Elan. Hrothgar becomes a mighty king.</p> <p>He is eager to build a great hall in which he may feast his retainers</p> <p>The hall is completed, and is called Heort, or Heorot.</p> <p>The Monster Grendel is madly envious of the Danemen's joy.</p> |
|--|--|

[4]

To tell from of old earthmen's beginnings,
 That Father Almighty earth had created,
 40 The winsome wold that the water encircleth,
 Set exultingly the sun's and the moon's beams
 To lavish their lustre on land-folk and races,
 And earth He embellished in all her regions
 With limbs and leaves; life He bestowed too
 45 On all the kindreds that live under heaven.
 So blessed with abundance, brimming with joyance,
 The warriors abided, till a certain one gan to
 Dog them with deeds of direfullest malice,
 A foe in the hall-building: this horrible stranger²
 50 Was Grendel entitled, the march-stepper famous
 Who³ dwelt in the moor-fens, the marsh and the fastness;
 The wan-mooded being abode for a season
 In the land of the giants, when the Lord and Creator
 Had banned him and branded. For that bitter murder,
 55 The killing of Abel, all-ruling Father
 The kindred of Cain crushed with His vengeance;
 In the feud He rejoiced not, but far away drove him
 From kindred and kind, that crime to atone for,
 Meter of Justice. Thence ill-favored creatures,
 60 Elves and giants, monsters of ocean,
 Came into being, and the giants that longtime
 Grappled with God; He gave them requital.

[The course of the story is interrupted by a short reference to some old account of the creation.]

The glee of the warriors is overcast by a horrible dread.

Cain is referred to as a progenitor of Grendel, and of monsters in general.

[1] R. and t. B. prefer 'ellor-gæst' to 'ellen-gæst' (86): *Then the stranger from afar endured, etc.*

[2] Some authorities would translate '*demon*' instead of '*stranger*.'

[3] Some authorities arrange differently, and render: *Who dwelt in the moor-fens, the marsh and the fastness, the land of the giant-race.*

III.

GRENDEL THE MURDERER.

When the sun was sunken, he set out to visit
 The lofty hall-building, how the Ring-Danes had used
 it
 For beds and benches when the banquet was over.
 Then he found there reposing many a noble
 5 Asleep after supper; sorrow the heroes,¹
 Misery knew not. The monster of evil
 Greedy and cruel tarried but little,
 Fell and frantic, and forced from their slumbers
 10 Thirty of thanemen; thence he departed
 Leaping and laughing, his lair to return to,
 With surfeit of slaughter sallying homeward.
 In the dusk of the dawning, as the day was just breaking,
 Was Grendel's prowess revealed to the warriors:
 Then, his meal-taking finished, a moan was uplifted,
 15 Morning-cry mighty. The man-ruler famous,
 The long-worthy atheling, sat very woful,
 Suffered great sorrow, sighed for his liegemen,
 When they had seen the track of the hateful pursuer,
 The spirit accursèd: too crushing that sorrow,
 20 Too loathsome and lasting. Not longer he tarried,
 But one night after continued his slaughter
 Shameless and shocking, shrinking but little
 From malice and murder; they mastered him fully.
 He was easy to find then who otherwhere looked for

Grendel attacks the sleeping heroes

He drags off thirty of them, and devours them

A cry of agony goes up, when Grendel's horrible deed is fully realized.

The monster returns the next night.

[5]

[6]

25 A pleasanter place of repose in the lodges,
 A bed in the bowers. Then was brought to his notice
 Told him truly by token apparent
 The hall-thane's hatred: he held himself after
 Further and faster who the foeman did baffle.

30 ²So ruled he and strongly strove against justice
 Lone against all men, till empty uptowered
 The choicest of houses. Long was the season:
 Twelve-winters' time torture suffered
 The friend of the Scyldings, every affliction,

35 Endless agony; hence it after³ became
 Certainly known to the children of men
 Sadly in measures, that long against Hrothgar
 Grendel struggled:—his grudges he cherished,
 Murderous malice, many a winter,

40 Strife unremitting, and peacefully wished he
⁴Life-woe to lift from no liegeman at all of
 The men of the Dane-folk, for money to settle,
 No counsellor needed count for a moment
 On handsome amends at the hands of the murderer;

45 The monster of evil fiercely did harass,
 The ill-planning death-shade, both elder and younger,
 Trapping and tricking them. He trod every night then
 The mist-covered moor-fens; men do not know where
 Witches and wizards wander and ramble.

50 So the foe of mankind many of evils
 Grievous injuries, often accomplished,
 Horrible hermit; Heort he frequented,
 Gem-bedecked palace, when night-shades had fallen
 (Since God did oppose him, not the throne could he
 touch,⁵

55 The light-flashing jewel, love of Him knew not).
 'Twas a fearful affliction to the friend of the Scyldings
 Soul-crushing sorrow. Not seldom in private
 Sat the king in his council; conference held they
 What the braves should determine 'gainst terrors
 unlooked for.

60 At the shrines of their idols often they promised
 Gifts and offerings, earnestly prayed they
 The devil from hell would help them to lighten
 Their people's oppression. Such practice they used then,
 Hope of the heathen; hell they remembered

65 In innermost spirit, God they knew not,
 Judge of their actions, All-wielding Ruler,
 No praise could they give the Guardian of Heaven,
 The Wielder of Glory. Woe will be his who
 Through furious hatred his spirit shall drive to

70 The clutch of the fire, no comfort shall look for,
 Wax no wiser; well for the man who,
 Living his life-days, his Lord may face
 And find defence in his Father's embrace!

King Hrothgar's
 agony and
 suspense last
 twelve years.

Grendel is
 unremitting in his
 persecutions.

God is against the
 monster.

The king and his
 council deliberate
 in vain.

They invoke the
 aid of their gods.

The true God they
 do not know.

[1] The translation is based on 'weras,' adopted by H.-So.—K. and Th. read 'wera' and, arranging differently, render 119(2)-120: *They knew not sorrow, the wretchedness of man, aught of misfortune.*—For 'unhælo' (120) R. suggests 'unfælo': *The uncanny creature, greedy and cruel, etc.*

[2] S. rearranges and translates: *So he ruled and struggled unjustly, one against all, till the noblest of buildings stood useless (it was a long while) twelve years' time: the friend of the Scyldings suffered distress, every woe, great sorrows, etc.*

[3] For 'syððan,' B. suggests 'sárcwidum': *Hence in mournful words it became well known, etc.* Various other words beginning with 's' have been conjectured.

[4] The H.-So. glossary is very inconsistent in referring to this passage.—'Sibbe' (154), which H.-So. regards as an instr., B. takes as accus., obj. of 'wolde.' Putting a comma after Deniga, he renders: *He did not desire peace with any of the Danes, nor did he wish to remove their life-woe, nor to settle for money.*

[5] Of this difficult passage the following interpretations among others are given: (1) Though Grendel has frequented Heorot as a demon, he could not become ruler of the Danes, on account of his hostility to God. (2) Hrothgar was much grieved that Grendel had not appeared before his throne to receive presents. (3) He was not permitted to devastate the hall, on account of the Creator; *i.e.* God wished to make his visit fatal to him.—Ne ... wisse (169) W. renders: *Nor had he any desire to do so; 'his' being obj. gen. = danach.*

[8]

IV.

BEOWULF GOES TO HROTHGAR'S ASSISTANCE.

So Healfdene's kinsman constantly mused on
 His long-lasting sorrow; the battle-thane clever
 Was not anywise able evils to 'scape from:
 Too crushing the sorrow that came to the people,
 Loathsome and lasting the life-grinding torture,
 5 Greatest of night-woes. So Higelac's liegeman,
 Good amid Geatmen, of Grendel's achievements
 Heard in his home:¹ of heroes then living
 He was stoutest and strongest, sturdy and noble.
 10 He bade them prepare him a bark that was trusty;
 He said he the war-king would seek o'er the ocean,
 The folk-leader noble, since he needed retainers.
 For the perilous project prudent companions
 Chided him little, though loving him dearly;
 15 They egged the brave atheling, augured him glory.
 The excellent knight from the folk of the Geatmen
 Had liegemen selected, likest to prove them
 Trustworthy warriors; with fourteen companions
 The vessel he looked for; a liegeman then showed
 them,
 20 A sea-crafty man, the bounds of the country.
 Fast the days fleeted; the float was a-water,
 The craft by the cliff. Clomb to the prow then
 Well-equipped warriors: the wave-currents twisted
 The sea on the sand; soldiers then carried
 25 On the breast of the vessel bright-shining jewels,
 Handsome war-armor; heroes outshoved then,
 Warmen the wood-ship, on its wished-for adventure.
 The foamy-necked floater fanned by the breeze,
 Likest a bird, glided the waters,
 30 Till twenty and four hours thereafter
 The twist-stemmed vessel had traveled such distance
 That the sailing-men saw the sloping embankments,
 The sea cliffs gleaming, precipitous mountains,
 Nesses enormous: they were nearing the limits
 35 At the end of the ocean.² Up thence quickly
 The men of the Weders clomb to the mainland,
 Fastened their vessel (battle weeds rattled,
 War burnies clattered), the Wielder they thanked
 That the ways o'er the waters had waxen so gentle.
 40 Then well from the cliff edge the guard of the
 Scyldings
 Who the sea-cliffs should see to, saw o'er the gangway
 Brave ones bearing beauteous targets,
 Armor all ready, anxiously thought he,
 Musing and wondering what men were approaching.
 45 High on his horse then Hrothgar's retainer
 Turned him to coastward, mightily brandished
 His lance in his hands, questioned with boldness.
 "Who are ye men here, mail-covered warriors

Hrothgar sees no way of escape from the persecutions of Grendel.

Beowulf, the Geat, hero of the poem, hears of Hrothgar's sorrow, and resolves to go to his assistance.

With fourteen carefully chosen companions, he sets out for Dane-land.

The vessel sails like a bird

In twenty four hours they reach the shores of Hrothgar's dominions

They are hailed by the Danish coast guard

His challenge

[9]

[10]

Clad in your corslets, come thus a-driving
 50 A high riding ship o'er the shoals of the waters,
 3And hither 'neath helmets have hied o'er the ocean?
 I have been strand-guard, standing as warden,
 Lest enemies ever anywise ravage
 Danish dominions with army of war-ships.
 55 More boldly never have warriors ventured
 Hither to come; of kinsmen's approval,
 Word-leave of warriors, I ween that ye surely
 Nothing have known. Never a greater one
 Of earls o'er the earth have I had a sight of
 60 Than is one of your number, a hero in armor;
 No low-ranking fellow⁴ adorned with his weapons,
 But launching them little, unless looks are deceiving,
 And striking appearance. Ere ye pass on your journey
 As treacherous spies to the land of the Scyldings
 65 And farther fare, I fully must know now
 What race ye belong to. Ye far-away dwellers,
 Sea-faring sailors, my simple opinion
 Hear ye and hearken: haste is most fitting
 Plainly to tell me what place ye are come from."

He is struck by
 Beowulf's
 appearance.

[1] 'From hám' (194) is much disputed. One rendering is: *Beowulf, being away from home, heard of Hrothgar's troubles, etc.* Another, that adopted by S. and endorsed in the H.-So. notes, is: *B. heard from his neighborhood (neighbors), i.e. in his home, etc.* A third is: *B., being at home, heard this as occurring away from home.* The H.-So. glossary and notes conflict.

[2] 'Eoletes' (224) is marked with a (?) by H.-So.; our rendering simply follows his conjecture.—Other conjectures as to 'eolet' are: (1) *voyage*, (2) *toil, labor*, (3) *hasty journey*.

[3] The lacuna of the MS at this point has been supplied by various conjectures. The reading adopted by H.-So. has been rendered in the above translation. W., like H.-So., makes 'ic' the beginning of a new sentence, but, for 'helmas bæron,' he reads 'hringed stefnan.' This has the advantage of giving a parallel to 'brontne ceol' instead of a kenning for 'go.'—B puts the (?) after 'holmas', and begins a new sentence at the middle of the line. Translate: *What warriors are ye, clad in armor, who have thus come bringing the foaming vessel over the water way, hither over the seas? For some time on the wall I have been coast guard, etc.* S. endorses most of what B. says, but leaves out 'on the wall' in the last sentence. If W.'s 'hringed stefnan' be accepted, change line 51 above to, *A ring-stemmed vessel hither o'ersea.*

[4] 'Seld-guma' (249) is variously rendered: (1) *housecarle*; (2) *home-stayer*; (3) *common man*. Dr. H. Wood suggests *a man-at-arms in another's house*.

V.

THE GEATS REACH HEOROT.

The chief of the strangers rendered him answer,
 War-troopers' leader, and word-treasure opened:
 "We are sprung from the lineage of the people of
 Geatland,
 And Higelac's hearth-friends. To heroes unnumbered
 5 My father was known, a noble head-warrior
 Ecgtheow titled; many a winter
 He lived with the people, ere he passed on his
 journey,
 Old from his dwelling; each of the counsellors
 Widely mid world-folk well remembers him.
 10 We, kindly of spirit, the lord of thy people,
 The son of King Healfdene, have come here to visit,
 Folk-troop's defender: be free in thy counsels!
 To the noble one bear we a weighty commission,
 The helm of the Danemen; we shall hide, I ween,

Beowulf
 courteously
 replies.
 We are Geats.

My father
 Ecgtheow was
 well-known in his
 day.

Our intentions
 towards King
 Hrothgar are of
 the kindest.

[11]

| | | |
|---------|---|---|
| 15 | Naught of our message. Thou know'st if it happen, As we soothly heard say, that some savage despoiler, Some hidden pursuer, on nights that are murky By deeds very direful 'mid the Danemen exhibits Hatred unheard of, horrid destruction | Is it true that a monster is slaying Danish heroes? |
| 20 | And the falling of dead. From feelings least selfish I am able to render counsel to Hrothgar, How he, wise and worthy, may worst the destroyer, If the anguish of sorrow should ever be lessened, ¹ Comfort come to him, and care-waves grow cooler, | I can help your king to free himself from this horrible creature. |
| 25 | Or ever hereafter he agony suffer And troublous distress, while towereth upward The handsomest of houses high on the summit." Bestriding his stallion, the strand-watchman answered, | The coast-guard reminds Beowulf that it is easier to say than to do. |
| 30 | The doughty retainer: "The difference surely 'Twixt words and works, the warlike shield-bearer Who judgeth wisely well shall determine. This band, I hear, beareth no malice To the prince of the Scyldings. Pass ye then onward With weapons and armor. I shall lead you in person; | I am satisfied of your good intentions, and shall lead you to the palace. |
| 35 | To my war-trusty vassals command I shall issue To keep from all injury your excellent vessel, Your fresh-tarred craft, 'gainst every opposer Close by the sea-shore, till the curved-neckèd bark shall | Your boat shall be well cared for during your stay here. |
| 40 | Waft back again the well-beloved hero O'er the way of the water to Weder dominions. To warrior so great 'twill be granted sure In the storm of strife to stand secure." Onward they fared then (the vessel lay quiet, The broad-bosomed bark was bound by its cable, | He again compliments Beowulf. |
| [12] 45 | Firmly at anchor); the boar-signs glistened ² Bright on the visors vivid with gilding, Blaze-hardened, brilliant; the boar acted warden. The heroes hastened, hurried the liegemen, Descended together, till they saw the great palace, The well-fashioned wassail-hall wondrous and gleaming: | The land is perhaps rolling. |
| 50 | 'Mid world-folk and kindreds that was widest reputed Of halls under heaven which the hero abode in; Its lustre enlightened lands without number. Then the battle-brave hero showed them the glittering | Heorot flashes on their view. |
| 55 | Court of the bold ones, that they easily thither Might fare on their journey; the aforementioned warrior Turning his courser, quoth as he left them: "'Tis time I were faring; Father Almighty Grant you His grace, and give you to journey | The coast-guard, having discharged his duty, bids them God-speed. |
| 60 | Safe on your mission! To the sea I will get me 'Gainst hostile warriors as warden to stand." | |

[1] 'Edwendan' (280) B. takes to be the subs. 'edwenden' (cf. 1775); and 'bisigu' he takes as gen. sing., limiting 'edwenden': *If reparation for sorrows is ever to come*. This is supported by t.B.

[2] Combining the emendations of B. and t.B., we may read: *The boar-images glistened ... brilliant, protected the life of the war-mooded man*. They read 'ferh-wearde' (305) and 'gúðmóðgum men' (306).

VI.

BEOWULF INTRODUCES HIMSELF AT THE PALACE.

The highway glistened with many-hued pebble,
 A by-path led the liegemen together.
¹Firm and hand-locked the war-burnie glistened,
 The ring-sword radiant rang 'mid the armor
 5 As the party was approaching the palace together
 In warlike equipments. 'Gainst the wall of the building
 Their wide-fashioned war-shields they weary did set
 then,

They set their
 arms and armor
 against the wall.

[13] Battle-shields sturdy; benchward they turned then;
 Their battle-sarks rattled, the gear of the heroes;
 10 The lances stood up then, all in a cluster,
 The arms of the seamen, ashen-shafts mounted
 With edges of iron: the armor-clad troopers
 Were decked with weapons. Then a proud-mooded
 hero

A Danish hero
 asks them
 whence and why
 they are come.

15 Asked of the champions questions of lineage:
 "From what borders bear ye your battle-shields
 plated,

Gilded and gleaming, your gray-colored burnies,
 Helmets with visors and heap of war-lances?—
 To Hrothgar the king I am servant and liegeman.
 'Mong folk from far-lands found I have never
 20 Men so many of mien more courageous.
 I ween that from valor, nowise as outlaws,
 But from greatness of soul ye sought for King
 Hrothgar."

He expresses no
 little admiration
 for the strangers.

Then the strength-famous earlman answer rendered,
 The proud-mooded Wederchief replied to his question,
 25 Hardy 'neath helmet: "Higelac's mates are we;
 Beowulf hight I. To the bairn of Healfdene,
 The famous folk-leader, I freely will tell
 To thy prince my commission, if pleasantly hearing
 He'll grant we may greet him so gracious to all men."

Beowulf replies.

30 Wulfgar replied then (he was prince of the Wendels,
 His boldness of spirit was known unto many,
 His prowess and prudence): "The prince of the Scyldings,
 The friend-lord of Danemen, I will ask of thy journey,
 The giver of rings, as thou urgest me do it,
 35 The folk-chief famous, and inform thee early
 What answer the good one mindeth to render me."
 He turned then hurriedly where Hrothgar was sitting,

We are Higelac's
 table-companions,
 and bear an
 important
 commission to
 your prince.

40 ²Old and hoary, his earlmen attending him;
 The strength-famous went till he stood at the shoulder
 Of the lord of the Danemen, of courteous thanemen
 The custom he minded. Wulfgar addressed then
 His friendly liegelord: "Folk of the Geatmen
 O'er the way of the waters are wafted hither,
 45 Faring from far-lands: the foremost in rank
 The battle-champions Beowulf title.
 They make this petition: with thee, O my chieftain,
 To be granted a conference; O gracious King
 Hrothgar,

Wulfgar, the
 thane, says that
 he will go and ask
 Hrothgar whether
 he will see the
 strangers.

[14] Friendly answer refuse not to give them!
 In war-trappings weeded worthy they seem
 50 Of earls to be honored; sure the atheling is doughty
 Who headed the heroes hitherward coming."

He thereupon
 urges his
 liegelord to
 receive the
 visitors
 courteously.

Hrothgar, too, is
 struck with
 Beowulf's
 appearance.

[1] Instead of the punctuation given by H.-So, S. proposed to insert a comma after 'scír' (322), and to take 'hring-iren' as meaning 'ring-mail' and as parallel with 'gúð-byrne.' The passage would then read: *The firm and hand-locked war-burnie shone, bright ring-mail, rang 'mid the armor, etc.*

[2] Gr. and others translate 'unhár' by 'bald'; *old and bald*.

VII.

HROTHGAR AND BEOWULF.

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | Hrothgar answered, helm of the Scyldings: "I remember this man as the merest of striplings. His father long dead now was Ecgtheow titled, Him Hrethel the Geatman granted at home his 5 One only daughter; his battle-brave son Is come but now, sought a trustworthy friend. Seafaring sailors asserted it then, Who valuable gift-gems of the Geatmen ¹ carried 10 As peace-offering thither, that he thirty men's grapple Has in his hand, the hero-in-battle. The holy Creator usward sent him, To West-Dane warriors, I ween, for to render 'Gainst Grendel's grimness gracious assistance: I shall give to the good one gift-gems for courage. 15 Hasten to bid them hither to speed them, ² To see assembled this circle of kinsmen; Tell them expressly they're welcome in sooth to The men of the Danes." To the door of the building [15] Wulfgar went then, this word-message shouted: 20 "My victorious liegeland bade me to tell you, The East-Danes' atheling, that your origin knows he, And o'er wave-billows wafted ye welcome are hither, Valiant of spirit. Ye straightway may enter 25 Clad in corslets, cased in your helmets, To see King Hrothgar. Here let your battle-boards, Wood-spears and war-shafts, await your conferring." The mighty one rose then, with many a liegeman, An excellent thane-group; some there did await them, And as bid of the brave one the battle-gear guarded. 30 Together they hied them, while the hero did guide them, 'Neath Heorot's roof; the high-minded went then Sturdy 'neath helmet till he stood in the building. Beowulf spake (his burnie did glisten, His armor seamed over by the art of the craftsman): 35 "Hail thou, Hrothgar! I am Higelac's kinsman And vassal forsooth; many a wonder I dared as a stripling. The doings of Grendel, In far-off fatherland I fully did know of: 40 Sea-farers tell us, this hall-building standeth, Excellent edifice, empty and useless To all the earlmen after evenlight's glimmer 'Neath heaven's bright hues hath hidden its glory. This my earls then urged me, the most excellent of them, 45 Carles very clever, to come and assist thee, Folk-leader Hrothgar; fully they knew of The strength of my body. Themselves they beheld me When I came from the contest, when covered with gore 50 Foes I escaped from, where five ³ I had bound, The giant-race wasted, in the waters destroying The nickers by night, bore numberless sorrows, The Weders avenged (woes had they suffered) Enemies ravaged; alone now with Grendel I shall manage the matter, with the monster of evil, 55 The giant, decide it. Thee I would therefore Beg of thy bounty, Bright-Danish chieftain, Lord of the Scyldings, this single petition: Not to refuse me, defender of warriors, Friend-lord of folks, so far have I sought thee, | Hrothgar remembers Beowulf as a youth, and also remembers his father. Beowulf is reported to have the strength of thirty men. God hath sent him to our rescue. Wulfgar invites the strangers in. Beowulf salutes Hrothgar, and then proceeds to boast of his youthful achievements. His fight with the nickers. He intends to fight Grendel unaided. |
|--|---|--|

| | | |
|----|---|--|
| 60 | That <i>I</i> may unaided, my earlmen assisting me, This brave-mooded war-band, purify Heorot. I have heard on inquiry, the horrible creature From veriest rashness recks not for weapons; | Since the monster uses no weapons, |
| 65 | I this do scorn then, so be Higelac gracious, My liegelord belovèd, lenient of spirit, To bear a blade or a broad-fashioned target, A shield to the onset; only with hand-grip The foe I must grapple, fight for my life then, Foeman with foeman; he fain must rely on The doom of the Lord whom death layeth hold of. | I, too, shall disdain to use any. |
| 70 | I ween he will wish, if he win in the struggle, To eat in the war-hall earls of the Geat-folk, Boldly to swallow ⁴ them, as of yore he did often The best of the Hrethmen! Thou needest not trouble A head-watch to give me; ⁵ he will have me dripping | Should he crush me, he will eat my companions as he has eaten thy thanes. |
| 75 | And dreary with gore, if death overtake me, ⁶ Will bear me off bleeding, biting and mouthing me, The hermit will eat me, heedless of pity, Marking the moor-fens; no more wilt thou need then Find me my food. ⁷ If I fall in the battle, Send to Higelac the armor that serveth To shield my bosom, the best of equipments, Richest of ring-mails; 'tis the relic of Hrethla, The work of Wayland. Goes Weird as she must go!" | In case of my defeat, thou wilt not have the trouble of burying me. Should I fall, send my armor to my lord, King Higelac. Weird is supreme |

[1] Some render 'gif-sceattas' by 'tribute.'—'Géata' B. and Th. emended to 'Géatum.' If this be accepted, change 'of the Geatmen' to 'to the Geatmen.'

[2] If t.B.'s emendation of vv. 386, 387 be accepted, the two lines, 'Hasten ... kinsmen' will read: *Hasten thou, bid the throng of kinsmen go into the hall together.*

[3] For 420 (*b*) and 421 (*a*), B. suggests: *Ðær ic (on) fifelgeban ýðde eotena cyn = where I in the ocean destroyed the eoten-race.*—t.B. accepts B.'s "brilliant" 'fifelgeban,' omits 'on,' emends 'cyn' to 'hám,' arranging: *Ðær ic fifelgeban ýðde, eotena hám = where I desolated the ocean, the home of the eotens.*—This would be better but for changing 'cyn' to 'hám.'—I suggest: *Ðær ic fifelgeband (cf. nhd. Bande) ýðde, eotena cyn = where I conquered the monster band, the race of the eotens.* This makes no change except to read 'fifel' for 'fife.'

[4] 'Unforhte' (444) is much disputed.—H.-So. wavers between adj. and adv. Gr. and B. take it as an adv. modifying *etan*: *Will eat the Geats fearlessly.*—Kl. considers this reading absurd, and proposes 'anforhte' = timid.—Understanding 'unforhte' as an adj. has this advantage, viz. that it gives a parallel to 'Geátana leóde': but to take it as an adv. is more natural. Furthermore, to call the Geats 'brave' might, at this point, seem like an implied thrust at the Danes, so long helpless; while to call his own men 'timid' would be befouling his own nest.

[5] For 'head-watch,' cf. H.-So. notes and cf. v. 2910.—Th. translates: *Thou wilt not need my head to hide* (i.e., thou wilt have no occasion to bury me, as Grendel will devour me whole).—Simrock imagines a kind of dead-watch.—Dr. H. Wood suggests: *Thou wilt not have to bury so much as my head* (for Grendel will be a thorough undertaker),—grim humor.

[6] S. proposes a colon after 'nimeð' (l. 447). This would make no essential change in the translation.

[7] Owing to the vagueness of 'feorme' (451), this passage is variously translated. In our translation, H.-So.'s glossary has been quite closely followed. This agrees substantially with B.'s translation (P. and B. XII. 87). R. translates: *Thou needst not take care longer as to the consumption of my dead body.* 'Líc' is also a crux here, as it may mean living body or dead body.

VIII.

HROTHGAR AND BEOWULF.—*Continued.*

Hrothgar discoursed, helm of the Scyldings:
 "To defend our folk and to furnish assistance,¹

Hrothgar
 responds.

| | | |
|------|---|--------------------|
| | Thou soughtest us hither, good friend Beowulf. | |
| | The fiercest of feuds thy father engaged in, | Reminiscences of |
| 5 | Heatholaf killed he in hand-to-hand conflict | Beowulf's father, |
| | 'Mid Wilfingish warriors; then the Wederish people | Ecgtheow. |
| | For fear of a feud were forced to disown him. | |
| [18] | Thence flying he fled to the folk of the South-Danes, | |
| | The race of the Scyldings, o'er the roll of the waters; | |
| 10 | I had lately begun then to govern the Danemen, | |
| | The hoard-seat of heroes held in my youth, | |
| | Rich in its jewels: dead was Heregar, | |
| | My kinsman and elder had earth-joys forsaken, | |
| | Healfdene his bairn. He was better than I am! | |
| 15 | That feud thereafter for a fee I compounded; | |
| | O'er the weltering waters to the Wilfings I sent | |
| | Ornaments old; oaths did he swear me. | |
| | It pains me in spirit to any to tell it, | Hrothgar |
| | What grief in Heorot Grendel hath caused me, | recounts to |
| 20 | What horror unlooked-for, by hatred unceasing. | Beowulf the |
| | Waned is my war-band, wasted my hall-troop; | horrors of |
| | Weird hath offcast them to the clutches of Grendel. | Grendel's |
| | God can easily hinder the scather | persecutions. |
| | From deeds so direful. Oft drunken with beer | |
| 25 | O'er the ale-vessel promised warriors in armor | My thanes have |
| | They would willingly wait on the wassailing-benches | made many |
| | A grapple with Grendel, with grimpest of edges. | boasts, but have |
| | Then this mead-hall at morning with murder was | not executed |
| | reeking, | them. |
| | The building was bloody at breaking of daylight, | |
| 30 | The bench-deals all flooded, dripping and bloodied, | |
| | The folk-hall was gory: I had fewer retainers, | |
| | Dear-beloved warriors, whom death had laid hold of. | |
| | Sit at the feast now, thy intents unto heroes, ² | Sit down to the |
| | Thy victor-fame show, as thy spirit doth urge thee!" | feast, and give us |
| 35 | For the men of the Geats then together assembled, | comfort. |
| | In the beer-hall blithesome a bench was made ready; | A bench is made |
| | There warlike in spirit they went to be seated, | ready for Beowulf |
| | Proud and exultant. A liegeman did service, | and his party. |
| [19] | Who a beaker embellished bore with decorum, | |
| | And gleaming-drink poured. The gleeman sang whilom | The gleeman |
| 40 | Hearty in Heorot; there was heroes' rejoicing, | sings |
| | A numerous war-band of Weders and Danemen. | The heroes all |
| | | rejoice together. |

[1] B. and S. reject the reading given in H.-So., and suggested by Grtvg. B. suggests for 457-458:

wáere-ryhtum Ðú, wine mín Béowulf,
and for ár-stafum úsic sóhtest.

This means: *From the obligations of clientage, my friend Beowulf, and for assistance thou hast sought us.*—This gives coherence to Hrothgar's opening remarks in VIII., and also introduces a new motive for Beowulf's coming to Hrothgar's aid.

[2] *Sit now at the feast, and disclose thy purposes to the victorious heroes, as thy spirit urges.*—Kl. reaches the above translation by erasing the comma after 'meoto' and reading 'sige-hrèðsecgum.'—There are other and bolder emendations and suggestions. Of these the boldest is to regard 'meoto' as a verb (imperative), and read 'on sæl': *Think upon gayety, etc.*—All the renderings are unsatisfactory, the one given in our translation involving a zeugma.

IX.

UNFERTH TAUNTS BEOWULF.

| | | |
|----|---|---|
| 5 | Unferth spoke up, Ecglaf his son, Who sat at the feet of the lord of the Scyldings, Opened the jousting (the journey ¹ of Beowulf, Sea-farer doughty, gave sorrow to Unferth And greatest chagrin, too, for granted he never That any man else on earth should attain to, Gain under heaven, more glory than he): "Art thou that Beowulf with Breca did struggle, On the wide sea-currents at swimming contended, Where to humor your pride the ocean ye tried, From vainest vaunting adventured your bodies In care of the waters? And no one was able Nor lief nor loth one, in the least to dissuade you Your difficult voyage; then ye ventured a-swimming, Where your arms outstretching the streams ye did cover, The mere-ways measured, mixing and stirring them, Glided the ocean; angry the waves were, With the weltering of winter. In the water's possession, Ye toiled for a seven-night; he at swimming outdid thee, In strength excelled thee. Then early at morning On the Heathoremes' shore the holm-currents tossed him, Sought he thenceward the home of his fathers, Beloved of his liegemen, the land of the Brondings, The peace-castle pleasant, where a people he wielded, Had borough and jewels. The pledge that he made thee The son of Beanstan hath soothly accomplished. Then I ween thou wilt find thee less fortunate issue, Though ever triumphant in onset of battle, A grim grappling, if Grendel thou darest For the space of a night near-by to wait for!" Beowulf answered, offspring of Ecgtheow: "My good friend Unferth, sure freely and wildly, Thou fuddled with beer of Breca hast spoken, Hast told of his journey! A fact I allege it, That greater strength in the waters I had then, Ills in the ocean, than any man else had. We made agreement as the merest of striplings Promised each other (both of us then were Younkers in years) that we yet would adventure Out on the ocean; it all we accomplished. While swimming the sea-floods, sword-blade uncabbarded Boldly we brandished, our bodies expected To shield from the sharks. He sure was unable To swim on the waters further than I could, More swift on the waves, nor <i>would</i> I from him go. Then we two companions stayed in the ocean Five nights together, till the currents did part us, The weltering waters, weathers the bleakest, And nethermost night, and the north-wind whistled Fierce in our faces; fell were the billows. The mere fishes' mood was mightily ruffled: And there against foemen my firm-knotted corslet, Hand-jointed, hardy, help did afford me; My battle-sark braided, brilliantly gilded, Lay on my bosom. To the bottom then dragged me, A hateful fiend-scather, seized me and held me, Grim in his grapple: 'twas granted me, nathless, To pierce the monster with the point of my weapon, My obedient blade; battle offcarried The mighty mere-creature by means of my hand-blow. | Unferth, a thane of Hrothgar, is jealous of Beowulf, and undertakes to twit him. Did you take part in a swimming- match with Breca? 'Twas mere folly that actuated you both to risk your lives on the ocean. Breca outdid you entirely. Much more will Grendel outdo you, if you vie with him in prowess. Beowulf retaliates. O friend Unferth, you are fuddled with beer, and cannot talk coherently. We simply kept an engagement made in early life. He <i>could</i> not excel me, and I <i>would</i> not excel him. After five days the currents separated us. A horrible sea- beast attacked me, but I slew him. |
| 10 | | |
| 15 | | |
| 20 | | |
| 25 | | |
| 30 | | |
| 35 | | |
| 40 | | |
| 45 | | |
| 50 | | |
| 55 | | |
| 60 | | |

[20]

[1] It has been plausibly suggested that 'sið' (in 501 and in 353) means 'arrival.' If so, translate the bracket: (*the arrival of Beowulf, the brave seafarer, was a*

X.

BEOWULF SILENCES UNFERTH.—GLEE IS HIGH.

| | | |
|----|--|--|
| 5 | <p>“So ill-meaning enemies often did cause me Sorrow the sorest. I served them, in quittance, With my dear-lovèd sword, as in sooth it was fitting; They missed the pleasure of feasting abundantly, Ill-doers evil, of eating my body, Of surrounding the banquet deep in the ocean; But wounded with edges early at morning They were stretched a-high on the strand of the ocean, Put to sleep with the sword, that sea-going travelers No longer thereafter were hindered from sailing The foam-dashing currents. Came a light from the east, God’s beautiful beacon; the billows subsided, That well I could see the nesses projecting, The blustering crags. Weird often saveth The doomed hero if doughty his valor!</p> | <p>My dear sword always served me faithfully.</p> |
| 10 | <p>But me did it fortune¹ to fell with my weapon Nine of the nickers. Of night-struggle harder ’Neath dome of the heaven heard I but rarely, Nor of wight more woful in the waves of the ocean; Yet I ’scaped with my life the grip of the monsters, Weary from travel. Then the waters bare me To the land of the Finns, the flood with the current, The weltering waves. Not a word hath been told me Of deeds so daring done by thee, Unferth, And of sword-terror none; never hath Breca At the play of the battle, nor either of you two, Feat so fearless performèd with weapons Glinting and gleaming I utter no boasting;</p> | <p>I put a stop to the outrages of the sea-monsters.</p> |
| 15 | <p>Though with cold-blooded cruelty thou killedst thy brothers, Thy nearest of kin; thou needs must in hell get Direful damnation, though doughty thy wisdom. I tell thee in earnest, offspring of Ecglaf, Never had Grendel such numberless horrors, The direful demon, done to thy liegelord, Harrying in Heorot, if thy heart were as sturdy, Thy mood as ferocious as thou dost describe them. He hath found out fully that the fierce-burning hatred, The edge-battle eager, of all of your kindred, Of the Victory-Scyldings, need little dismay him: Oaths he exacteth, not any he spares Of the folk of the Danemen, but fighteth with pleasure, Killeth and feasteth, no contest expecteth From Spear-Danish people. But the prowess and valor Of the earls of the Geatmen early shall venture To give him a grapple. He shall go who is able Bravely to banquet, when the bright-light of morning Which the second day bringeth, the sun in its ether- robes, O’er children of men shines from the southward!”</p> | <p>Fortune helps the brave earl.</p> |
| 20 | <p>Then the gray-haired, war-famed giver of treasure Was blithesome and joyous, the Bright-Danish ruler</p> | <p>After that escape I drifted to Finland. I have never heard of your doing any such bold deeds.</p> |
| 25 | <p>On the second day, any warrior may go unmolested to the mead-banquet.</p> | <p>You are a slayer of brothers, and will suffer damnation, wise as you may be.</p> |
| 30 | <p>On the second day, any warrior may go unmolested to the mead-banquet.</p> | <p>Had your acts been as brave as your words, Grendel had not ravaged your land so long.</p> |
| 35 | <p>The monster is not afraid of the Danes, but he will soon learn to dread the Geats.</p> | <p>The monster is not afraid of the Danes, but he will soon learn to dread the Geats.</p> |
| 40 | <p>On the second day, any warrior may go unmolested to the mead-banquet.</p> | <p>On the second day, any warrior may go unmolested to the mead-banquet.</p> |
| 45 | <p>On the second day, any warrior may go unmolested to the mead-banquet.</p> | <p>On the second day, any warrior may go unmolested to the mead-banquet.</p> |
| 50 | <p>On the second day, any warrior may go unmolested to the mead-banquet.</p> | <p>On the second day, any warrior may go unmolested to the mead-banquet. Hrothgar’s spirits</p> |

| | | |
|---------|--|---|
| | Expected assistance; the people's protector | are revived. |
| | Heard from Beowulf his bold resolution. | The old king trusts Beowulf. |
| | There was laughter of heroes; loud was the clatter, | The heroes are joyful. |
| 55 | The words were winsome. Wealhtheow advanced then, | |
| | Consort of Hrothgar, of courtesy mindful, | Queen Wealhtheow plays the hostess. |
| | Gold-decked saluted the men in the building, | |
| | And the freeborn woman the beaker presented | |
| | To the lord of the kingdom, first of the East-Danes, | She offers the cup to her husband first. |
| 60 | Bade him be blithesome when beer was a-flowing, | |
| | Lief to his liegemen; he lustily tasted | |
| | Of banquet and beaker, battle-famed ruler. | |
| | The Helmingish lady then graciously circled | |
| | 'Mid all the liegemen lesser and greater: | |
| [23] 65 | Treasure-cups tendered, till time was afforded | She gives presents to the heroes. |
| | That the decorous-mooded, diademed folk-queen | |
| | Might bear to Beowulf the bumper o'errunning; | |
| | She greeted the Geat-prince, God she did thank, | Then she offers the cup to Beowulf, thanking God that aid has come. |
| | Most wise in her words, that her wish was accomplished, | |
| 70 | That in any of earlmen she ever should look for | |
| | Solace in sorrow. He accepted the beaker, | |
| | Battle-bold warrior, at Wealhtheow's giving, | |
| | Then equipped for combat quoth he in measures, | Beowulf states to the queen the object of his visit. |
| | Beowulf spake, offspring of Ecgtheow: | |
| 75 | "I purposed in spirit when I mounted the ocean, | I determined to do or die. |
| | When I boarded my boat with a band of my liegemen, | |
| | I would work to the fullest the will of your people | |
| | Or in foe's-clutches fastened fall in the battle. | |
| | Deeds I shall do of daring and prowess, | |
| 80 | Or the last of my life-days live in this mead-hall." | |
| | These words to the lady were welcome and pleasing, | |
| | The boast of the Geatman; with gold trappings broidered | |
| | Went the freeborn folk-queen her fond-lord to sit by. | |
| | Then again as of yore was heard in the building | Glee is high. |
| 85 | Courtly discussion, conquerors' shouting, | |
| | Heroes were happy, till Healfdene's son would | |
| | Go to his slumber to seek for refreshing; | |
| | For the horrid hell-monster in the hall-building knew he | |
| | A fight was determined, ² since the light of the sun they | |
| 90 | No longer could see, and lowering darkness | |
| | O'er all had descended, and dark under heaven | |
| | Shadowy shapes came shying around them. | |
| | The liegemen all rose then. One saluted the other, | Hrothgar retires, leaving Beowulf in charge of the hall. |
| | Hrothgar Beowulf, in rhythmical measures, | |
| 95 | Wishing him well, and, the wassail-hall giving | |
| | To his care and keeping, quoth he departing: | |
| [24] | "Not to any one else have I ever entrusted, | |
| | But thee and thee only, the hall of the Danemen, | |
| | Since high I could heave my hand and my buckler. | |
| 100 | Take thou in charge now the noblest of houses; | |
| | Be mindful of honor, exhibiting prowess, | |
| | Watch 'gainst the foeman! Thou shalt want no enjoyments, | |
| | Survive thou safely adventure so glorious!" | |

[1] The repetition of 'hwæðere' (574 and 578) is regarded by some scholars as a defect. B. suggests 'swá ðær' for the first: *So there it befell me, etc.* Another suggestion is to change the second 'hwæðere' into 'swá ðær': *So there I escaped with my life, etc.*

[2] Kl. suggests a period after 'determined.' This would give the passage as follows: *Since they no longer could see the light of the sun, and lowering darkness was down over all, dire under the heavens shadowy beings came going around them.*

XI.

ALL SLEEP SAVE ONE.

| | | |
|------|--|---|
| | Then Hrothgar departed, his earl-throng attending him, | Hrothgar retires. |
| | Folk-lord of Scyldings, forth from the building; The war-chieftain wished then Wealhtheow to look for, The queen for a bedmate. To keep away Grendel | |
| 5 | The Glory of Kings had given a hall-watch, As men heard recounted: for the king of the Danemen He did special service, gave the giant a watcher: And the prince of the Geatmen implicitly trusted | God has provided a watch for the hall. |
| 10 | His warlike strength and the Wielder's protection. His armor of iron off him he did then, His helmet from his head, to his henchman committed His chased-handled chain-sword, choicest of weapons, And bade him bide with his battle-equipments. | Beowulf is self- confident He prepares for rest. |
| 15 | The good one then uttered words of defiance, Beowulf Geatman, ere his bed he upmounted: "I hold me no meaner in matters of prowess, In warlike achievements, than Grendel does himself; Hence I seek not with sword-edge to sooth him to slumber, | Beowulf boasts of his ability to cope with Grendel. |
| 20 | Of life to bereave him, though well I am able. No battle-skill ¹ has he, that blows he should strike me, | We will fight with nature's weapons only. |
| [25] | To shatter my shield, though sure he is mighty In strife and destruction; but struggling by night we Shall do without edges, dare he to look for Weaponless warfare, and wise-mooded Father | |
| 25 | The glory apportion, God ever-holy, On which hand soever to him seemeth proper." Then the brave-mooded hero bent to his slumber, The pillow received the cheek of the noble; And many a martial mere-thane attending | God may decide who shall conquer |
| 30 | Sank to his slumber. Seemed it unlikely That ever thereafter any should hope to Be happy at home, hero-friends visit Or the lordly troop-castle where he lived from his childhood; | The Geatish warriors lie down. They thought it very unlikely that they should ever see their homes again. |
| 35 | They had heard how slaughter had snatched from the wine-hall, Had recently ravished, of the race of the Scyldings Too many by far. But the Lord to them granted The weaving of war-speed, to Wederish heroes Aid and comfort, that every opponent | But God raised up a deliverer. |
| 40 | By one man's war-might they worsted and vanquished, By the might of himself; the truth is established That God Almighty hath governed for ages Kindreds and nations. A night very lurid The trav'ler-at-twilight came tramping and striding. | God rules the world. |
| 45 | The warriors were sleeping who should watch the horned-building, One only excepted. 'Mid earthmen 'twas 'stablished, Th' implacable foeman was powerless to hurl them To the land of shadows, if the Lord were unwilling; But serving as warder, in terror to foemen, He angrily bided the issue of battle. ² | Grendel comes to Heorot. Only one warrior is awake. |

[1] Gr. understood 'gódra' as meaning 'advantages in battle.' This rendering H.-So. rejects. The latter takes the passage as meaning that Grendel, though mighty and formidable, has no skill in the art of war.

[2] B. in his masterly articles on Beowulf (P. and B. XII.) rejects the division

usually made at this point, 'Pá.' (711), usually rendered 'then,' he translates 'when,' and connects its clause with the foregoing sentence. These changes he makes to reduce the number of 'cóm's' as principal verbs. (Cf. 703, 711, 721.) With all deference to this acute scholar, I must say that it seems to me that the poet is exhausting his resources to bring out clearly the supreme event on which the whole subsequent action turns. First, he (Grendel) came *in the wan night*; second, he came *from the moor*; third, he came *to the hall*. Time, place from which, place to which, are all given.

[26]

XII.

GRENDL AND BEOWULF.

| | | |
|------------|---|---|
| | 'Neath the cloudy cliffs came from the moor then Grendel going, God's anger bare he. | Grendel comes from the fens. |
| | The monster intended some one of earthmen In the hall-building grand to entrap and make way with: | |
| 5 | He went under welkin where well he knew of The wine-joyous building, brilliant with plating, Gold-hall of earthmen. Not the earliest occasion He the home and manor of Hrothgar had sought: Ne'er found he in life-days later nor earlier | He goes towards the joyous building. This was not his first visit there. |
| 10 | Hardier hero, hall-thanen ¹ more sturdy! Then came to the building the warrior marching, Bereft of his joyance. The door quickly opened On fire-hinges fastened, when his fingers had touched it; | His horrid fingers tear the door open. |
| 15 | The fell one had flung then—his fury so bitter— Open the entrance. Early thereafter The foeman trod the shining hall-pavement, Strode he angrily; from the eyes of him glimmered A lustre unlovely likest to fire. | He strides furiously into the hall. |
| 20 | He beheld in the hall the heroes in numbers, A circle of kinsmen sleeping together, A throng of thanemen: then his thoughts were exultant, He minded to sunder from each of the thanemen The life from his body, horrible demon, Ere morning came, since fate had allowed him | He exults over his supposed prey. |
| 25 | The prospect of plenty. Providence willed not To permit him any more of men under heaven To eat in the night-time. Higelac's kinsman Great sorrow endured how the dire-mooded creature In unlooked-for assaults were likely to bear him. | Fate has decreed that he shall devour no more heroes. Beowulf suffers from suspense. |
| [27] 30 | No thought had the monster of deferring the matter, But on earliest occasion he quickly laid hold of A soldier asleep, suddenly tore him, Bit his bone-prison, the blood drank in currents, Swallowed in mouthfuls: he soon had the dead man's Feet and hands, too, eaten entirely. | Grendel immediately seizes a sleeping warrior, and devours him. |
| 35 | Nearer he strode then, the stout-hearted warrior Snatched as he slumbered, seizing with hand-grip, Forward the foeman foined with his hand; Caught he quickly the cunning deviser, | Beowulf and Grendel grapple. |
| 40 | On his elbow he rested. This early discovered The master of malice, that in middle-earth's regions, 'Neath the whole of the heavens, no hand-grapple greater In any man else had he ever encountered: | The monster is amazed at Beowulf's strength. |
| 45 | Fearful in spirit, faint-mooded waxed he, Not off could betake him; death he was pondering, Would fly to his covert, seek the devils' assembly: His calling no more was the same he had followed Long in his lifetime. The liege-kinsman worthy Of Higelac minded his speech of the evening, | He is anxious to flee. Beowulf recalls |

50 Stood he up straight and stoutly did seize him. his boast of the evening, and determines to fulfil it.
His fingers crackled; the giant was outward,
The earl stepped farther. The famous one minded
To flee away farther, if he found an occasion,
And off and away, avoiding delay,
55 To fly to the fen-moors; he fully was ware of
The strength of his grapple in the grip of the foeman.
'Twas an ill-taken journey that the injury-bringing,
Harrying harmer to Heorot wandered: 'Twas a luckless day for Grendel.
The palace re-echoed; to all of the Danemen, The hall groans.
60 Dwellers in castles, to each of the bold ones,
Earlmen, was terror. Angry they both were,
Archwarders raging.² Rattled the building;
'Twas a marvellous wonder that the wine-hall withstood then
The bold-in-battle, bent not to earthward,
65 Excellent earth-hall; but within and without it
Was fastened so firmly in fetters of iron,
By the art of the armorer. Off from the sill there
Bent mead-benches many, as men have informed me,
Adorned with gold-work, where the grim ones did struggle.
70 The Scylding wise men weened ne'er before
That by might and main-strength a man under heaven
Might break it in pieces, bone-decked, resplendent,
Crush it by cunning, unless clutch of the fire
In smoke should consume it. The sound mounted upward
75 Novel enough; on the North Danes fastened Grendel's cries
A terror of anguish, on all of the men there terrify the Danes.
Who heard from the wall the weeping and plaining,
The song of defeat from the foeman of heaven,
Heard him hymns of horror howl, and his sorrow
80 Hell-bound bewailing. He held him too firmly
Who was strongest of main-strength of men of that era.

[28]

[1] B. and t.B. emend so as to make lines 9 and 10 read: *Never in his life, earlier or later, had he, the hell-thane, found a braver hero.*—They argue that Beowulf's companions had done nothing to merit such encomiums as the usual readings allow them.

[2] For 'réðe rén-weardas' (771), t.B. suggests 'réðe, rénhearde.' Translate: *They were both angry, raging and mighty.*

XIII.

GRENDL IS VANQUISHED.

For no cause whatever would the earlmen's defender
Leave in life-joys the loathsome newcomer,
He deemed his existence utterly useless
To men under heaven. Many a noble
5 Of Beowulf brandished his battle-sword old,
Would guard the life of his lord and protector,
The far-famous chieftain, if able to do so;
While waging the warfare, this wist they but little,
Brave battle-thanes, while his body intending
10 To slit into slivers, and seeking his spirit:
That the relentless foeman nor finest of weapons
Of all on the earth, nor any of war-bills
Was willing to injure; but weapons of victory
Swords and suchlike he had sworn to dispense with.
15 His death at that time must prove to be wretched,
And the far-away spirit widely should journey
Into enemies' power. This plainly he saw then

[29]

Beowulf has no idea of letting Grendel live.

No weapon would harm Grendel; he bore a charmed life.

| | | |
|----|---|---|
| 20 | Who with mirth ¹ of mood malice no little Had wrought in the past on the race of the earthmen (To God he was hostile), that his body would fail him, But Higelac's hardy henchman and kinsman Held him by the hand; hateful to other Was each one if living. A body-wound suffered | Grendel is sorely wounded. |
| 25 | The direful demon, damage incurable Was seen on his shoulder, his sinews were shivered, His body did burst. To Beowulf was given Glory in battle; Grendel from thenceward Must flee and hide him in the fen-cliffs and marshes, Sick unto death, his dwelling must look for | His body bursts. |
| 30 | Unwinsome and woful; he wist the more fully The end of his earthly existence was nearing, His life-days' limits. At last for the Danemen, When the slaughter was over, their wish was accomplished. | The monster flees away to hide in the moors. |
| 35 | The comer-from-far-land had cleansed then of evil, Wise and valiant, the war-hall of Hrothgar, Saved it from violence. He joyed in the night-work, In repute for prowess; the prince of the Geatmen For the East-Danish people his boast had accomplished, Bettered their burdensome bale-sorrows fully, | |
| 40 | The craft-begot evil they erstwhile had suffered And were forced to endure from crushing oppression, Their manifold misery. 'Twas a manifest token, When the hero-in-battle the hand suspended, | Beowulf suspends Grendel's hand and arm in Heorot. |
| 45 | The arm and the shoulder (there was all of the claw Of Grendel together) 'neath great-stretching hall-roof. | |

[1] It has been proposed to translate 'myrðe' by *with sorrow*; but there seems no authority for such a rendering. To the present translator, the phrase 'módes myrðe' seems a mere padding for *gladly*; i.e., *he who gladly harassed mankind*.

[30]

XIV.

REJOICING OF THE DANES.

| | | |
|----|--|---|
| 5 | In the mist of the morning many a warrior Stood round the gift-hall, as the story is told me: Folk-princes fared then from far and from near Through long-stretching journeys to look at the wonder, | At early dawn, warriors from far and near come together to hear of the night's adventures. |
| 10 | The footprints of the foeman. Few of the warriors Who gazed on the foot-tracks of the inglorious creature His parting from life pained very deeply, How, weary in spirit, off from those regions In combats conquered he carried his traces, Fated and flying, to the flood of the nickers. | Few warriors lamented Grendel's destruction. |
| 15 | There in bloody billows bubbled the currents, The angry eddy was everywhere mingled And seething with gore, welling with sword-blood; ¹ He death-doomed had hid him, when reaved of his joyance He laid down his life in the lair he had fled to, His heathenish spirit, where hell did receive him. | Grendel's blood dyes the waters. |
| 20 | Thence the friends from of old backward turned them, And many a younker from merry adventure, Striding their stallions, stout from the seaward, Heroes on horses. There were heard very often Beowulf's praises; many often asserted That neither south nor north, in the circuit of waters, | Beowulf is the hero of the hour. |

| | | |
|------|--|--------------------|
| | O'er outstretching earth-plain, none other was better | He is regarded as |
| | 'Mid bearers of war-shields, more worthy to govern, | a probable |
| 25 | 'Neath the arch of the ether. Not any, however, | successor to |
| | 'Gainst the friend-lord muttered, mocking-words | Hrothgar. |
| | uttered | |
| | Of Hrothgar the gracious (a good king he). | But no word is |
| | Oft the famed ones permitted their fallow-skinned | uttered to |
| | horses | derogate from the |
| [31] | To run in rivalry, racing and chasing, | old king |
| 30 | Where the fieldways appeared to them fair and inviting, | |
| | Known for their excellence; oft a thane of the folk-lord, ² | |
| | ³ A man of celebrity, mindful of rhythms, | The gleeman |
| | Who ancient traditions treasured in memory, | sings the deeds of |
| | New word-groups found properly bound: | heroes. |
| 35 | The bard after 'gan then Beowulf's venture | |
| | Wisely to tell of, and words that were clever | He sings in |
| | To utter skilfully, earnestly speaking, | alliterative |
| | Everything told he that he heard as to Sigmund's | measures of |
| | Mighty achievements, many things hidden, | Beowulf's |
| 40 | The strife of the Wælsing, the wide-going ventures | prohess. |
| | The children of men knew of but little, | Also of Sigemund, |
| | The feud and the fury, but Fitela with him, | who has slain a |
| | When suchlike matters he minded to speak of, | great fire-dragon. |
| | Uncle to nephew, as in every contention | |
| 45 | Each to other was ever devoted: | |
| | A numerous host of the race of the scathers | |
| | They had slain with the sword-edge. To Sigmund accrued then | |
| | No little of glory, when his life-days were over, | |
| | Since he sturdy in struggle had destroyed the great dragon, | |
| 50 | The hoard-treasure's keeper; 'neath the hoar-grayish stone he, | |
| | The son of the atheling, unaided adventured | |
| | The perilous project; not present was Fitela, | |
| | Yet the fortune befell him of forcing his weapon | |
| | Through the marvellous dragon, that it stood in the wall, | |
| 55 | Well-honored weapon; the worm was <u>slaughtered</u> . | |
| | The great one had gained then by his glorious achievement | |
| | To reap from the ring-hoard richest enjoyment, | |
| | As best it did please him: his vessel he loaded, | |
| | Shining ornaments on the ship's bosom carried, | |
| 60 | Kinsman of Wæls: the drake in heat melted. | |
| | He was farthest famed of fugitive pilgrims, | Sigemund was |
| | Mid wide-scattered world-folk, for works of great | widely famed. |
| | prohess, | |
| | War-troopers' shelter: hence waxed he in honor. ⁴ | |
| | Afterward Heremod's hero-strength failed him, | Heremod, an |
| 65 | His vigor and valor. 'Mid venomous haters | unfortunate |
| | To the hands of foemen he was foully delivered, | Danish king, is |
| | Offdriven early. Agony-billows | introduced by |
| | Oppressed him too long, to his people he became | way of contrast. |
| | then, | Unlike Sigemund |
| | To all the athelings, an ever-great burden; | and Beowulf, |
| 70 | And the daring one's journey in days of yore | Heremod was a |
| | Many wise men were wont to deplore, | burden to his |
| | Such as hoped he would bring them help in their sorrow, | people. |
| | That the son of their ruler should rise into power, | |
| | Holding the headship held by his fathers, | |
| 75 | Should govern the people, the gold-hoard and borough, | |
| | The kingdom of heroes, the realm of the Scyldings. | |
| | He to all men became then far more beloved, | Beowulf is an |
| | Higelac's kinsman, to kindreds and races, | honor to his race. |
| | To his friends much dearer; him malice assaulted.— | |
| 80 | Oft running and racing on roadsters they measured | The story is |
| | The dun-colored highways. Then the light of the | resumed. |
| | morning | |
| | Was hurried and hastened. Went henchmen in numbers | |

To the beautiful building, bold ones in spirit,
 To look at the wonder; the liegeland himself then
 From his wife-bower wending, warden of treasures,
 Glorious trod with troopers unnumbered,
 Famed for his virtues, and with him the queen-wife
 Measured the mead-ways, with maidens attending.

[1] S. emends, suggesting 'déop' for 'déog,' and removing semicolon after 'wéol.' The two half-lines 'welling ... hid him' would then read: *The bloody deep welléd with sword-gore*. B. accepts 'déop' for 'déog,' but reads 'déað-fæges': *The deep boiled with the sword-gore of the death-doomed one*.

[2] Another and quite different rendering of this passage is as follows: *Oft a liegeman of the king, a fame-covered man mindful of songs, who very many ancient traditions remembered (he found other word-groups accurately bound together) began afterward to tell of Beowulf's adventure, skilfully to narrate it, etc.*

[3] Might 'guma gilp-hladen' mean 'a man laden with boasts of the deeds of others'?

[4] t.B. accepts B.'s 'hé þæs áron þáh' as given by H.-So., but puts a comma after 'þáh,' and takes 'siððan' as introducing a dependent clause: *He throve in honor since Heremod's strength ... had decreased*.

[33]

XV.

HROTHGAR'S GRATITUDE.

| | | |
|----|---|---|
| 5 | Hrothgar discoursed (to the hall-building went he, He stood by the pillar, ¹ saw the steep-rising hall-roof Gleaming with gold-gems, and Grendel his hand there): "For the sight we behold now, thanks to the Wielder Early be offered! Much evil I bided, Snaring from Grendel: ² God can e'er 'compish Wonder on wonder, Wielder of Glory! But lately I reckoned ne'er under heaven Comfort to gain me for any of sorrows, While the handsomest of houses horrid with bloodstain | Hrothgar gives thanks for the overthrow of the monster. I had given up all hope, when this brave liegeman came to our aid. |
| 10 | Gory uptowered; grief had offfrightened ³ Each of the wise ones who weened not that ever The folk-troop's defences 'gainst foes they should strengthen, 'Gainst sprites and monsters. Through the might of the Wielder A doughty retainer hath a deed now accomplished Which erstwhile we all with our excellent wisdom Failed to perform. May affirm very truly What woman soever in all of the nations Gave birth to the child, if yet she surviveth, That the long-ruling Lord was lavish to herward In the birth of the bairn. Now, Beowulf dear, Most excellent hero, I'll love thee in spirit As bairn of my body; bear well henceforward The relationship new. No lack shall befall thee | If his mother yet liveth, well may she thank God for this son. Hereafter, Beowulf, thou shalt be my son. |
| 15 | Of earth-joys any I ever can give thee. Full often for lesser service I've given Hero less hardy hoard-treasure precious, To a weaker in war-strife. By works of distinction Thou hast gained for thyself now that thy glory shall flourish | Thou hast won immortal distinction. |
| 20 | Forever and ever. The All-Ruler quite thee With good from His hand as He hitherto did thee!" Beowulf answered, Ecgtheow's offspring: "That labor of glory most gladly achieved we, The combat accomplished, unquailing we ventured The enemy's grapple; I would grant it much rather | Beowulf replies: I was most happy to render thee this service. |
| 25 | Full often for lesser service I've given Hero less hardy hoard-treasure precious, To a weaker in war-strife. By works of distinction Thou hast gained for thyself now that thy glory shall flourish | Thou hast won immortal distinction. |
| 30 | Forever and ever. The All-Ruler quite thee With good from His hand as He hitherto did thee!" Beowulf answered, Ecgtheow's offspring: "That labor of glory most gladly achieved we, The combat accomplished, unquailing we ventured The enemy's grapple; I would grant it much rather | Beowulf replies: I was most happy to render thee this service. |
| 35 | Full often for lesser service I've given Hero less hardy hoard-treasure precious, To a weaker in war-strife. By works of distinction Thou hast gained for thyself now that thy glory shall flourish | Thou hast won immortal distinction. |

[34]

| | | |
|------|--|---|
| | Thou wert able to look at the creature in person, Faint unto falling, the foe in his trappings! On murder-bed quickly I minded to bind him, With firm-holding fetters, that forced by my grapple | |
| 40 | Low he should lie in life-and-death struggle 'Less his body escape; I was wholly unable, Since God did not will it, to keep him from going, Not held him that firmly, hated opposer; | I could not keep the monster from escaping, as God did not will that I should. |
| 45 | Too swift was the foeman. Yet safety regarding He suffered his hand behind him to linger, His arm and shoulder, to act as watcher; No shadow of solace the woe-begone creature Found him there nathless: the hated destroyer | He left his hand and arm behind. |
| 50 | Liveth no longer, lashed for his evils, But sorrow hath seized him, in snare-meshes hath him Close in its clutches, keepeth him writhing In baleful bonds: there banished for evil The man shall wait for the mighty tribunal, How the God of glory shall give him his earnings." | |
| 55 | Then the soldier kept silent, son of old Ecglaf, From boasting and bragging of battle-achievements, Since the princes beheld there the hand that depended 'Neath the lofty hall-timbers by the might of the nobleman, | God will give him his deserts. Unferth has nothing more to say, for Beowulf's actions speak louder than words. |
| 60 | Each one before him, the enemy's fingers; Each finger-nail strong steel most resembled, The heathen one's hand-spur, the hero-in-battle's Claw most uncanny; quoth they agreeing, That not any excellent edges of brave ones Was willing to touch him, the terrible creature's | |
| [35] | Battle-hand bloody to bear away from him. | No sword will harm the monster. |
| 65 | | |

[1] B. and t.B. read 'stapole,' and translate *stood on the floor*.

[2] For 'snaring from Grendel,' 'sorrows at Grendel's hands' has been suggested. This gives a parallel to 'láðes.' 'Grynna' may well be gen. pl. of 'gyrn,' by a scribal slip.

[3] The H.-So punctuation has been followed; but B. has been followed in understanding 'gehwylcne' as object of 'wid-scofen (hæfde).' Gr. construes 'wéa' as nom abs.

XVI.

HROTHGAR LAVISHES GIFTS UPON HIS DELIVERER.

| | | |
|----|---|--------------------------------------|
| | Then straight was ordered that Heorot inside ¹ With hands be embellished: a host of them gathered, Of men and women, who the wassailing-building The guest-hall begeared. Gold-flashing sparkled | Heorot is adorned with hands. |
| 5 | Webs on the walls then, of wonders a many To each of the heroes that look on such objects. The beautiful building was broken to pieces Which all within with irons was fastened, Its hinges torn off: only the roof was | The hall is defaced, however. |
| 10 | Whole and uninjured when the horrible creature Outlawed for evil off had betaken him, Hopeless of living. 'Tis hard to avoid it (Whoever will do it!); but he doubtless must come to ² | [A vague passage of five verses.] |
| 15 | The place awaiting, as Wyrð hath appointed, Soul-bearers, earth-dwellers, earls under heaven, | |

[36]

20

25

30

35

40

45

50

[37]

55

Where bound on its bed his body shall slumber
 When feasting is finished. Full was the time then
 That the son of Healfdene went to the building;
 The excellent atheling would eat of the banquet.
 Ne'er heard I that people with hero-band larger
 Bare them better tow'rds their bracelet-bestower.
 The laden-with-glory stooped to the bench then
 (Their kinsmen-companions in plenty were joyful,
 Many a cupful quaffing complaisantly),
 Doughty of spirit in the high-tow'ring palace,
 Hrothgar and Hrothulf. Heorot then inside
 Was filled with friendly ones; falsehood and treachery
 The Folk-Scyldings now nowise did practise.
 Then the offspring of Healfdene offered to Beowulf
 A golden standard, as reward for the victory,
 A banner embossed, burnie and helmet;
 Many men saw then a song-famous weapon
 Borne 'fore the hero. Beowulf drank of
 The cup in the building; that treasure-bestowing
 He needed not blush for in battle-men's presence.
 Ne'er heard I that many men on the ale-bench
 In friendlier fashion to their fellows presented
 Four bright jewels with gold-work embellished.
 'Round the roof of the helmet a head-guarder outside
 Braided with wires, with bosses was furnished,
 That swords-for-the-battle fight-hardened might fail
 Boldly to harm him, when the hero proceeded
 Forth against foemen. The defender of earls then
 Commanded that eight steeds with bridles
 Gold-plated, gleaming, be guided to hallward,
 Inside the building; on one of them stood then
 An art-broidered saddle embellished with jewels;
 'Twas the sovereign's seat, when the son of King Healfdene
 Was pleased to take part in the play of the edges;
 The famous one's valor ne'er failed at the front when
 Slain ones were bowing. And to Beowulf granted
 The prince of the Ingwins, power over both,
 O'er war-steeds and weapons; bade him well to enjoy them.
 In so manly a manner the mighty-famed chieftain,
 Hoard-ward of heroes, with horses and jewels
 War-storms requited, that none e'er condemneth
 Who willeth to tell truth with full justice.

Hrothgar goes to
 the banquet.

Hrothgar's
 nephew, Hrothulf,
 is present.

Hrothgar lavishes
 gifts upon
 Beowulf.

Four handsomer
 gifts were never
 presented.

Hrothgar
 commands that
 eight finely
 caparisoned
 steeds be brought
 to Beowulf.

[1] Kl. suggests 'hroden' for 'háten,' and renders: *Then quickly was Heorot adorned within, with hands bedecked.*—B. suggests 'gefrætwon' instead of 'gefrætwod,' and renders: *Then was it commanded to adorn Heorot within quickly with hands.*—The former has the advantage of affording a parallel to 'gefrætwod': both have the disadvantage of altering the text.

[2] The passage 1005-1009 seems to be hopeless. One difficult point is to find a subject for 'gesacan.' Some say 'he'; others supply 'each,' *i.e., every soul-bearer ... must gain the inevitable place.* The genitives in this case are partitive.—If 'he' be subj., the genitives are dependent on 'gearwe' (= prepared).—The 'he' itself is disputed, some referring it to Grendel; but B. takes it as involved in the parenthesis.

XVII.

BANQUET (*continued*).—THE SCOP'S SONG OF FINN AND HNÆF.

And the atheling of earlmen to each of the heroes
 Who the ways of the waters went with Beowulf,
 A costly gift-token gave on the mead-bench,

Each of Beowulf's
 companions
 receives a costly

| | | |
|------|---|--|
| | Offered an heirloom, and ordered that that man | gift. |
| 5 | With gold should be paid for, whom Grendel had erstwhile | The warrior killed by Grendel is to be paid for in gold. |
| | Wickedly slaughtered, as he more of them had done | |
| | Had far-seeing God and the mood of the hero | |
| | The fate not averted: the Father then governed | |
| 10 | All of the earth-dwellers, as He ever is doing; | |
| | Hence insight for all men is everywhere fittest, | |
| | Forethought of spirit! much he shall suffer | |
| | Of lief and of loathsome who long in this present | |
| | Use the world in this woful existence. | |
| | There was music and merriment mingling together | |
| 15 | Touching Healfdene's leader; the joy-wood was fingered, | Hrothgar's scop recalls events in the reign of his lord's father. |
| | Measures recited, when the singer of Hrothgar | |
| | On mead-bench should mention the merry hall-joyance | |
| | Of the kinsmen of Finn, when onset surprised them: | |
| 20 | "The Half-Danish hero, Hnæf of the Scyldings, | Hnæf, the Danish general, is treacherously attacked while staying at Finn's castle. |
| | On the field of the Frisians was fated to perish. | |
| | Sure Hildeburg needed not mention approving | |
| | The faith of the Jutemen: though blameless entirely, | |
| | When shields were shivered she was shorn of her darlings, | Queen Hildeburg is not only wife of Finn, but a kinswoman of the murdered Hnæf. |
| 25 | Of bairns and brothers: they bent to their fate | |
| | With war-spear wounded; woe was that woman. | |
| | Not causeless lamented the daughter of Hoce | |
| | The decree of the Wielder when morning-light came and | |
| [38] | She was able 'neath heaven to behold the destruction | |
| | Of brothers and bairns, where the brightest of earth-joys | |
| 30 | She had hitherto had: all the henchmen of Finn | Finn's force is almost exterminated. |
| | War had oftaken, save a handful remaining, | |
| | That he nowise was able to offer resistance ¹ | |
| | To the onset of Hengest in the parley of battle, | Hengest succeeds Hnæf as Danish general. |
| 35 | Nor the wretched remnant to rescue in war from | |
| | The earl of the atheling; but they offered conditions, | |
| | Another great building to fully make ready, | Compact between the Frisians and the Danes. |
| | A hall and a high-seat, that half they might rule with | |
| | The sons of the Jutemen, and that Folcwalda's son would | |
| | Day after day the Danemen honor | |
| 40 | When gifts were giving, and grant of his ring-store | |
| | To Hengest's earl-troop ever so freely, | |
| | Of his gold-plated jewels, as he encouraged the Frisians | |
| | On the bench of the beer-hall. On both sides they swore then | Equality of gifts agreed on. |
| | A fast-binding compact; Finn unto Hengest | |
| 45 | With no thought of revoking vowed then most solemnly | |
| | The woe-begone remnant well to take charge of, | |
| | His Witan advising; the agreement should no one | |
| | By words or works weaken and shatter, | |
| 50 | By artifice ever injure its value, | |
| | Though reaved of their ruler their ring-giver's slayer | |
| | They followed as vassals, Fate so requiring: | |
| | Then if one of the Frisians the quarrel should speak of | No one shall refer to old grudges. |
| | In tones that were taunting, terrible edges | |
| 55 | Should cut in requital. Accomplished the oath was, | |
| | And treasure of gold from the hoard was uplifted. | |
| | The best of the Scylding braves was then fully | Danish warriors are burned on a funeral-pyre. |
| | Prepared for the pile; at the pyre was seen clearly | |
| | The blood-gory burnie, the boar with his gilding, | |
| | The iron-hard swine, athelings many | |
| 60 | Fatally wounded; no few had been slaughtered. | |
| | Hildeburg bade then, at the burning of Hnæf, | |
| | The bairn of her bosom to bear to the fire, | Queen Hildeburg has her son burnt |
| | That his body be burned and borne to the pyre. | |
| [39] | | |

65 The woe-stricken woman wept on his shoulder,² along with Hnæf.
 In measures lamented; upmounted the hero.³
 The greatest of dead-fires curled to the welkin,
 On the hill's-front crackled; heads were a-melting,
 Wound-doors bursting, while the blood was a-coursing
 From body-bite fierce. The fire devoured them,
 70 Greediest of spirits, whom war had offcarried
 From both of the peoples; their bravest were fallen.

[1] For 1084, R. suggests 'wiht Hengeste wið gefeohtan.'—K. suggests 'wið Hengeste wiht gefeohtan.' Neither emendation would make any essential change in the translation.

[2] The separation of adjective and noun by a phrase (cf. v. 1118) being very unusual, some scholars have put 'earme on eaxle' with the foregoing lines, inserting a semicolon after 'eaxle.' In this case 'on eaxe' (*i.e.*, on the ashes, cinders) is sometimes read, and this affords a parallel to 'on bæl.' Let us hope that a satisfactory rendering shall yet be reached without resorting to any tampering with the text, such as Lichtenheld proposed: 'earme ides on eaxle gnornode.'

[3] For 'gúð-rinc,' 'gúð-réc,' *battle-smoke*, has been suggested.

XVIII.

THE FINN EPISODE (*continued*).—THE BANQUET CONTINUES.

| | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| | | <p>"Then the warriors departed to go to their dwellings, Reaved of their friends, Friesland to visit, Their homes and high-city. Hengest continued Biding with Finn the blood-tainted winter, 5 Wholly unsundered;¹ of fatherland thought he Though unable to drive the ring-stemmèd vessel O'er the ways of the waters; the wave-deeps were tossing, Fought with the wind; winter in ice-bonds Closed up the currents, till there came to the dwelling 10 A year in its course, as yet it revolveth, If season propitious one alway regardeth, World-cheering weathers. Then winter was gone, Earth's bosom was lovely; the exile would get him, The guest from the palace; on grewsomest vengeance 15 He brooded more eager than on oversea journeys, Whe'r onset-of-anger he were able to 'complish, The bairns of the Jutemen therein to remember. Nowise refused he the duties of liegeman When Hun of the Frisians the battle-sword Láfing, 20 Fairest of falchions, friendly did give him: Its edges were famous in folk-talk of Jutland. And savage sword-fury seized in its clutches Bold-mooded Finn where he bode in his palace, When the grewsome grapple Guthlaf and Oslaf 25 Had mournfully mentioned, the mere-journey over, For sorrows half-blamed him; the flickering spirit Could not bide in his bosom. Then the building was covered² With corpses of foemen, and Finn too was slaughtered, The king with his comrades, and the queen made a prisoner. 30 The troops of the Scyldings bore to their vessels All that the land-king had in his palace, Such trinkets and treasures they took as, on searching, At Finn's they could find. They ferried to Daneland</p> | <p>The survivors go to Friesland, the home of Finn.</p> <p>Hengest remains there all winter, unable to get away.</p> <p>He devises schemes of vengeance.</p> <p>Guthlaf and Oslaf revenge Hnæf's slaughter.</p> <p>Finn is slain.</p> <p>The jewels of Finn, and his queen are carried away by the Danes.</p> |
|--|--|---|---|

| | | |
|------|---|--|
| | The excellent woman on oversea journey, Lid her to their land-folk." The lay was concluded, The gleeman's recital. Shouts again rose then, Bench-gee resounded, bearers then offered Wine from wonder-vats. Wealththeo advanced then Going 'neath gold-crown, where the good ones were seated | The lay is concluded, and the main story is resumed. Skinkers carry round the beaker. |
| [41] | 40 Uncle and nephew; their peace was yet mutual, True each to the other. And Unferth the spokesman Sat at the feet of the lord of the Scyldings: Each trusted his spirit that his mood was courageous, Though at fight he had failed in faith to his kinsmen. | Queen Wealththeow greet's Hrothgar, as he sits beside Hrothulf, his nephew. |
| | 45 Said the queen of the Scyldings: "My lord and protector, Treasure-bestower, take thou this beaker; Joyance attend thee, gold-friend of heroes, And greet thou the Geatmen with gracious responses! So ought one to do. Be kind to the Geatmen, | Be generous to the Geats. |
| | 50 In gifts not niggardly; anear and afar now Peace thou enjoyest. Report hath informed me Thou'lt have for a bairn the battle-brave hero. Now is Heorot cleansed, ring-palace gleaming; Give while thou mayest many rewards, | Have as much joy as possible in thy hall, once more purified. |
| | 55 And bequeath to thy kinsmen kingdom and people, On wending thy way to the Wielder's splendor. I know good Hrothulf, that the noble young troopers He'll care for and honor, lord of the Scyldings, If earth-joys thou endest earlier than he doth; | I know that Hrothulf will prove faithful if he survive thee. |
| | 60 I reckon that recompense he'll render with kindness Our offspring and issue, if that all he remember, What favors of yore, when he yet was an infant, We awarded to him for his worship and pleasure." Then she turned by the bench where her sons were carousing, | |
| | 65 Hrethric and Hrothmund, and the heroes' offspring, The war-youth together; there the good one was sitting 'Twixt the brothers twain, Beowulf Geatman. | Beowulf is sitting by the two royal sons. |

[1] For 1130 (1) R. and Gr. suggest 'elne unflitme' as 1098 (1) reads. The latter verse is undisputed; and, for the former, 'elne' would be as possible as 'ealles,' and 'unflitme' is well supported. Accepting 'elne unflitme' for both, I would suggest 'very peaceably' for both places: (1) *Finn to Hengest very peaceably vowed with oaths*, etc. (2) *Hengest then still the slaughter-stained winter remained there with Finn very peaceably*. The two passages become thus correlatives, the second a sequel of the first. 'Elne,' in the sense of very (swiðe), needs no argument; and 'unflitme' (from 'flitan') can, it seems to me, be more plausibly rendered 'peaceful,' 'peaceable,' than 'contestable,' or 'conquerable.'

[2] Some scholars have proposed 'roden'; the line would then read: *Then the building was reddened, etc.*, instead of 'covered.' The 'h' may have been carried over from the three alliterating 'h's.'

XIX.

BEOWULF RECEIVES FURTHER HONOR.

| | | |
|------|--|--|
| | A beaker was borne him, and bidding to quaff it Graciously given, and gold that was twisted Pleasantly proffered, a pair of arm-jewels, Rings and corslet, of collars the greatest I've heard of 'neath heaven. Of heroes not any More splendid from jewels have I heard 'neath the welkin, Since Hama off bore the Brosingmen's necklace, The bracteates and jewels, from the bright-shining city, ¹ | More gifts are offered Beowulf. A famous necklace is referred to, in |
| [42] | 5 | |

| | | |
|----|---|--|
| 10 | Eormenric's cunning craftiness fled from, Chose gain everlasting. Geatish Higelac, Grandson of Swerting, last had this jewel When tramping 'neath banner the treasure he guarded, The field-spoil defended; Fate offcarried him When for deeds of daring he endured tribulation, | comparison with the gems presented to Beowulf. |
| 15 | Hate from the Frisians; the ornaments bare he O'er the cup of the currents, costly gem-treasures, Mighty folk-leader, he fell 'neath his target; The ² corpse of the king then came into charge of The race of the Frankmen, the mail-shirt and collar: Warmen less noble plundered the fallen, When the fight was finished; the folk of the Geatmen The field of the dead held in possession. | |
| 20 | The choicest of mead-halls with cheering resounded. Wealhtheo discoursed, the war-troop addressed she: "This collar enjoy thou, Beowulf worthy, Young man, in safety, and use thou this armor, Gems of the people, and prosper thou fully, Show thyself sturdy and be to these liegemen Mild with instruction! I'll mind thy requital. | Queen Wealhtheow magnifies Beowulf's achievements. |
| 25 | Thou hast brought it to pass that far and near Forever and ever earthmen shall honor thee, Even so widely as ocean surroundeth The blustering bluffs. Be, while thou livest, A wealth-blessèd atheling. I wish thee most truly Jewels and treasure. Be kind to my son, thou Living in joyance! Here each of the nobles Is true unto other, gentle in spirit, Loyal to leader. The liegemen are peaceful, The war-troops ready: well-drunken heroes, ³ | May gifts never fail thee. |
| 30 | Do as I bid ye." Then she went to the settle. There was choicest of banquets, wine drank the heroes: Weird they knew not, destiny cruel, As to many an earlman early it happened, When evening had come and Hrothgar had parted Off to his manor, the mighty to slumber. | |
| 35 | Warriors unnumbered warded the building As erst they did often: the ale-settle bared they, 'Twas covered all over with beds and pillows. Doomed unto death, down to his slumber Bowed then a beer-thane. Their battle-shields placed they, Bright-shining targets, up by their heads then; O'er the atheling on ale-bench 'twas easy to see there Battle-high helmet, burnie of ring-mail, And mighty war-spear. 'Twas the wont of that people | They little know of the sorrow in store for them. |
| 40 | To constantly keep them equipped for the battle, ⁴ At home or marching—in either condition— At seasons just such as necessity ordered As best for their ruler; that people was worthy. | A doomed thane is there with them. |
| 45 | To constantly keep them equipped for the battle, ⁴ At home or marching—in either condition— At seasons just such as necessity ordered As best for their ruler; that people was worthy. | They were always ready for battle. |
| 50 | To constantly keep them equipped for the battle, ⁴ At home or marching—in either condition— At seasons just such as necessity ordered As best for their ruler; that people was worthy. | |
| 55 | To constantly keep them equipped for the battle, ⁴ At home or marching—in either condition— At seasons just such as necessity ordered As best for their ruler; that people was worthy. | |

[43]

[1] C. suggests a semicolon after 'city,' with 'he' as supplied subject of 'fled' and 'chose.'

[2] For 'feorh' S. suggests 'feoh': 'corpse' in the translation would then be changed to '*possessions,*' '*belongings.*' This is a better reading than one joining, in such intimate syntactical relations, things so unlike as 'corpse' and 'jewels.'

[3] S. suggests '*wine-joyous heroes,*' '*warriors elated with wine.*'

[4] I believe this translation brings out the meaning of the poet, without departing seriously from the H.-So. text. 'Oft' frequently means 'constantly,' 'continually,' not always 'often.'—Why 'an (on) wig gearwe' should be written 'ánwig-gearwe' (= ready for single combat), I cannot see. 'Gearwe' occurs quite frequently with 'on'; cf. B. 1110 (*ready for the pyre*), El. 222 (*ready for the glad journey*). Moreover, what has the idea of single combat to do with B. 1247 ff.? The poet

is giving an inventory of the arms and armor which they lay aside on retiring, and he closes his narration by saying that they were *always prepared for battle both at home and on the march.*

[44]

XX.

THE MOTHER OF GRENDEL.

They sank then to slumber. With sorrow one paid for
His evening repose, as often betid them

While Grendel was holding¹ the gold-bedecked palace,
Ill-deeds performing, till his end overtook him,

5 Death for his sins. 'Twas seen very clearly,
Known unto earth-folk, that still an avenger
Outlived the loathed one, long since the sorrow
Caused by the struggle; the mother of Grendel,
Devil-shaped woman, her woe ever minded,

Grendel's mother
is known to be
thirsting for
revenge.

10 Who was held to inhabit the horrible waters,
The cold-flowing currents, after Cain had become a
Slayer-with-edges to his one only brother,
The son of his sire; he set out then banished,
Marked as a murderer, man-joys avoiding,

[Grendel's
progenitor, Cain,
is again referred
to.]

15 Lived in the desert. Thence demons unnumbered
Fate-sent awoke; one of them Grendel,
Sword-cursèd, hateful, who at Heorot met with
A man that was watching, waiting the struggle,
Where a horrid one held him with hand-grapple sturdy;

The poet again
magnifies
Beowulf's valor.

20 Nathless he minded the might of his body,
The glorious gift God had allowed him,
And folk-ruling Father's favor relied on,
His help and His comfort: so he conquered the foeman,
The hell-spirit humbled: he unhappy departed then,
25 Reaved of his joyance, journeying to death-haunts,
Foeman of man. His mother moreover

Eager and gloomy was anxious to go on
Her mournful mission, mindful of vengeance
For the death of her son. She came then to Heorot

Grendel's mother
comes to avenge
her son.

[45] 30 Where the Armor-Dane earlmen all through the building
Were lying in slumber. Soon there became then

Return² to the nobles, when the mother of Grendel
Entered the folk-hall; the fear was less grievous
By even so much as the vigor of maidens,

35 War-strength of women, by warrior is reckoned,
When well-carved weapon, worked with the hammer,
Blade very bloody, brave with its edges,
Strikes down the boar-sign that stands on the helmet.

Then the hard-edgèd weapon was heaved in the building,³

40 The brand o'er the benches, broad-lindens many
Hand-fast were lifted; for helmet he recked not,
For armor-net broad, whom terror laid hold of.

She went then hastily, outward would get her
Her life for to save, when some one did spy her;

45 Soon she had grappled one of the athelings
Fast and firmly, when fenward she hied her;
That one to Hrothgar was liefest of heroes
In rank of retainer where waters encircle,

She seizes a
favorite liegemen
of Hrothgar's.

50 A mighty shield-warrior, whom she murdered at slumber,
A broadly-famed battle-knight. Beowulf was absent,
But another apartment was erstwhile devoted
To the glory-decked Geatman when gold was
distributed.

Beowulf was
asleep in another
part of the
palace.

There was hubbub in Heorot. The hand that was

famous

[46]

55

She grasped in its gore;⁴ grief was renewed then
In homes and houses: 'twas no happy arrangement
In both of the quarters to barter and purchase
With lives of their friends. Then the well-agèd ruler,
The gray-headed war-thane, was woful in spirit,
When his long-trusted liegeman lifeless he knew of,

60

His dearest one gone. Quick from a room was
Beowulf brought, brave and triumphant.

Beowulf is sent
for.

65

As day was dawning in the dusk of the morning,
Went then that earlman, champion noble,
Came with comrades, where the clever one bided
Whether God all gracious would grant him a respite
After the woe he had suffered. The war-worthy hero

He comes at
Hrothgar's
summons.

70

With a troop of retainers trod then the pavement
(The hall-building groaned), till he greeted the wise one,
The earl of the Ingwines;⁵ asked if the night had
Fully refreshed him, as fain he would have it.

Beowulf inquires
how Hrothgar
had enjoyed his
night's rest.

[1] Several eminent authorities either read or emend the MS. so as to make this verse read, *While Grendel was wasting the gold-bedecked palace*. So 20 15 below: *ravaged the desert*.

[2] For 'sóna' (1281), t.B. suggests 'sára,' limiting 'edhwyrft.' Read then: *Return of sorrows to the nobles, etc.* This emendation supplies the syntactical gap after 'edhwyrft.'

[3] Some authorities follow Grein's lexicon in treating 'heard ecg' as an adj. limiting 'sweord': H.-So. renders it as a subst. (So v. 1491.) The sense of the translation would be the same.

[4] B. suggests 'under hróf genam' (v. 1303). This emendation, as well as an emendation with (?) to v. 739, he offers, because 'under' baffles him in both passages. All we need is to take 'under' in its secondary meaning of 'in,' which, though not given by Grein, occurs in the literature. Cf. Chron. 876 (March's A.-S. Gram. § 355) and Oro. Amaz. I. 10, where 'under' = *in the midst of*. Cf. modern Eng. 'in such circumstances,' which interchanges in good usage with 'under such circumstances.'

[5] For 'néod-laðu' (1321) C. suggests 'néad-láðum,' and translates: *asked whether the night had been pleasant to him after crushing-hostility*.

XXI.

HROTHGAR'S ACCOUNT OF THE MONSTERS.

Hrothgar rejoined, helm of the Scyldings:
"Ask not of joyance! Grief is renewed to
The folk of the Danemen. Dead is Æschere,
Yrmenlaf's brother, older than he,
5 My true-hearted counsellor, trusty adviser,
Shoulder-companion, when fighting in battle
Our heads we protected, when troopers were clashing,

Hrothgar laments
the death of
Æschere, his
shoulder-
companion.

5

And heroes were dashing; such an earl should be ever,
An erst-worthy atheling, as Æschere proved him.

He was my ideal
hero.

10

The flickering death-spirit became in Heorot
His hand-to-hand murderer; I can not tell whither
The cruel one turned in the carcass exulting,

[47]

15

By cramming discovered.¹ The quarrel she wreaked
then,
That last night igone Grendel thou killedst
In grewsomest manner, with grim-holding clutches,
Since too long he had lessened my liege-troop and wasted
My folk-men so foully. He fell in the battle
With forfeit of life, and another has followed,
A mighty crime-worker, her kinsman avenging,

This horrible
creature came to
avenge Grendel's
death.

20 And henceforth hath 'stablished her hatred unyielding,²
 As it well may appear to many a liegeman,
 Who mourneth in spirit the treasure-bestower,
 Her heavy heart-sorrow; the hand is now lifeless
 Which³ availed you in every wish that you cherished.
 25 Land-people heard I, liegemen, this saying,
 Dwellers in halls, they had seen very often
 A pair of such mighty march-striding creatures,
 Far-dwelling spirits, holding the moorlands:
 One of them wore, as well they might notice,
 30 The image of woman, the other one wretched
 In guise of a man wandered in exile,
 Except he was huger than any of earthmen;
 Earth-dwelling people entitled him Grendel
 In days of yore: they know not their father,
 35 Whe'r ill-going spirits any were borne him
 Ever before. They guard the wolf-coverts,
 Lands inaccessible, wind-beaten nesses,
 Fearfullest fen-deeps, where a flood from the
 mountains
 'Neath mists of the nesses netherward rattles,
 40 The stream under earth: not far is it henceward
 Measured by mile-lengths that the mere-water standeth,
 Which forests hang over, with frost-whiting covered,⁴
 A firm-rooted forest, the floods overshadow.
 There ever at night one an ill-meaning portent
 45 A fire-flood may see; 'mong children of men
 None liveth so wise that wot of the bottom;
 Though harassed by hounds the heath-stepper seek for,
 Fly to the forest, firm-antlered he-deer,
 Spurred from afar, his spirit he yieldeth,
 50 His life on the shore, ere in he will venture
 To cover his head. Uncanny the place is:
 Thence upward ascendeth the surging of waters,
 Wan to the welkin, when the wind is stirring
 The weathers unpleasing, till the air groweth gloomy,
 55 And the heavens lower. Now is help to be gotten
 From thee and thee only! The abode thou know'st not,
 The dangerous place where thou'rt able to meet with
 The sin-laden hero: seek if thou darest!
 For the feud I will fully fee thee with money,
 60 With old-time treasure, as erstwhile I did thee,
 With well-twisted jewels, if away thou shalt get thee."

I have heard my
vassals speak of
these two
uncanny
monsters who
lived in the
moors.

The inhabit the
most desolate and
horrible places.

Even the hounded
deer will not seek
refuge in these
uncanny regions.

To thee only can I
look for
assistance.

[1] For 'gefægnod' (1334), K. and t.B. suggest 'gefægnod,' rendering '*rejoicing in her fill*.' This gives a parallel to 'æse wlanc' (1333).

[2] The line 'And ... yielding,' B. renders: *And she has performed a deed of blood-vengeance whose effect is far-reaching.*

[3] 'Sé ðe' (1345) is an instance of masc. rel. with fem. antecedent. So v. 1888, where 'sé ðe' refers to 'yldo.'

[4] For 'hrimge' in the H.-So. edition, Gr. and others read 'hrinde' (=hrinende), and translate: *which rustling forests overhang.*

XXII.

BEOWULF SEEKS GRENDEL'S MOTHER.

Beowulf answered, Ecgtheow's son:
 "Grieve not, O wise one! for each it is better,
 His friend to avenge than with vehemence wail him;
 Each of us must the end-day abide of

Beowulf exhorts
the old king to
arouse himself for
action.

| | | |
|------|---|--|
| 5 | His earthly existence; who is able accomplish Glory ere death! To battle-thane noble Lifeless lying, 'tis at last most fitting. Arise, O king, quick let us hasten To look at the footprint of the kinsman of Grendel! | |
| 10 | I promise thee this now: to his place he'll escape not, To embrace of the earth, nor to mountainous forest, Nor to depths of the ocean, wherever he wanders. Practice thou now patient endurance Of each of thy sorrows, as I hope for thee soothly!" | |
| [49] | Then up sprang the old one, the All-Wielder thanked he, Ruler Almighty, that the man had outspoken. Then for Hrothgar a war-horse was decked with a bridle, Curly-maned courser. The clever folk-leader Stately proceeded: stepped then an earl-troop Of linden-wood bearers. Her footprints were seen then Widely in wood-paths, her way o'er the bottoms, Where she faraway fared o'er fen-country murky, Bore away breathless the best of retainers Who pondered with Hrothgar the welfare of country. | Hrothgar rouses himself. His horse is brought. |
| 20 | The son of the athelings then went o'er the stony, Declivitous cliffs, the close-covered passes, Narrow passages, paths unfrequented, Nesses abrupt, nicker-haunts many; One of a few of wise-mooded heroes, He onward advanced to view the surroundings, Till he found unawares woods of the mountain O'er hoar-stones hanging, holt-wood unjoyful; The water stood under, welling and gory. 'Twas irksome in spirit to all of the Danemen, Friends of the Scyldings, to many a liegeman Sad to be suffered, a sorrow unlittle To each of the earlmen, when to Æschere's head they Came on the cliff. The current was seething With blood and with gore (the troopers gazed on it). | They start on the track of the female monster. |
| 25 | The horn anon sang the battle-song ready. The troop were all seated; they saw 'long the water then Many a serpent, mere-dragons wondrous Trying the waters, nickers a-lying On the cliffs of the nesses, which at noonday full often Go on the sea-deeps their sorrowful journey, Wild-beasts and wormkind; away then they hastened Hot-mooded, hateful, they heard the great clamor, The war-trumpet winding. One did the Geat-prince Sunder from earth-joys, with arrow from bowstring, From his sea-struggle tore him, that the trusty war-missile Pierced to his vitals; he proved in the currents Less doughty at swimming whom death had offcarried. | The sight of Æschere's head causes them great sorrow. |
| 30 | Soon in the waters the wonderful swimmer Was straitened most sorely with sword-pointed boar-spears, Pressed in the battle and pulled to the cliff-edge; The liegemen then looked on the loath-fashioned stranger. Beowulf donned then his battle-equipments, Cared little for life; inlaid and most ample, The hand-woven corslet which could cover his body, Must the wave-deeps explore, that war might be powerless To harm the great hero, and the hating one's grasp might Not peril his safety; his head was protected By the light-flashing helmet that should mix with the bottoms, Trying the eddies, treasure-emblazoned, Encircled with jewels, as in seasons long past The weapon-smith worked it, wondrously made it, With swine-bodies fashioned it, that thenceforward no longer Brand might bite it, and battle-sword hurt it. | The water is filled with serpents and sea-dragons. |
| 35 | | One of them is killed by Beowulf. |
| 40 | | The dead beast is a poor swimmer |
| 45 | | |
| 50 | | |
| 55 | | |
| 60 | | |
| 65 | | |
| [50] | | |

[51]

| | | |
|----|--|---|
| 70 | And that was not least of helpers in prowess That Hrothgar's spokesman had lent him when straitened; | He has Unferth's sword in his hand. |
| 75 | And the hilted hand-sword was Hrunting entitled, Old and most excellent 'mong all of the treasures; Its blade was of iron, blotted with poison, Hardened with gore; it failed not in battle Any hero under heaven in hand who it brandished, Who ventured to take the terrible journeys, The battle-field sought; not the earliest occasion That deeds of daring 'twas destined to 'complish. Ecglaf's kinsman minded not soothly, | Unferth has little use for swords. |
| 80 | Exulting in strength, what erst he had spoken Drunken with wine, when the weapon he lent to A sword-hero bolder; himself did not venture 'Neath the strife of the currents his life to endanger, To fame-deeds perform; there he forfeited glory, | |
| 85 | Repute for his strength. Not so with the other When he clad in his corslet had equipped him for battle. | |

XXIII.

BEOWULF'S FIGHT WITH GREDEL'S MOTHER.

[52]

| | | |
|----|--|---|
| 5 | Beowulf spake, Ecgtheow's son: "Recall now, oh, famous kinsman of Healfdene, Prince very prudent, now to part I am ready, Gold-friend of earlmen, what erst we agreed on, Should I lay down my life in lending thee assistance, When my earth-joys were over, thou wouldst evermore serve me In stead of a father; my faithful thanemen, My trusty retainers, protect thou and care for, Fall I in battle: and, Hrothgar beloved, Send unto Higelac the high-valued jewels Thou to me hast allotted. The lord of the Geatmen May perceive from the gold, the Hrethling may see it When he looks on the jewels, that a gem-giver found I Good over-measure, enjoyed him while able. And the ancient heirloom Unferth permit thou, The famed one to have, the heavy-sword splendid ¹ The hard-edged weapon; with Hrunting to aid me, I shall gain me glory, or grim-death shall take me." The atheling of Geatmen uttered these words and Heroic did hasten, not any rejoinder Was willing to wait for; the wave-current swallowed The doughty-in-battle. Then a day's-length elapsed ere He was able to see the sea at its bottom. Early she found then who fifty of winters The course of the currents kept in her fury, Grisly and greedy, that the grim one's dominion Some one of men from above was exploring. Forth did she grab them, grappled the warrior With horrible clutches; yet no sooner she injured His body unscathed: the burnie out-guarded, That she proved but powerless to pierce through the armor, The limb-mail locked, with loath-grabbing fingers. The sea-wolf bare then, when bottomward came she, The ring-prince homeward, that he after was powerless (He had daring to do it) to deal with his weapons, | Beowulf makes a parting speech to Hrothgar. If I fail, act as a kind liegeland to my thanes, and send Higelac the jewels thou hast given me I should like my king to know how generous a lord I found thee to be. Beowulf is eager for the fray. He is a whole day reaching the bottom of the sea. Grendel's mother knows that some one has reached her domains. She grabs him, and bears him to her den. |
| 10 | | |
| 15 | | |
| 20 | | |
| 25 | | |
| 30 | | |
| 35 | | |

| | | |
|----|--|--|
| | But many a mere-beast tormented him swimming, Flood-beasts no few with fierce-biting tusks did Break through his burnie, the brave one pursued they. The earl then discovered he was down in some cavern | Sea-monsters bite and strike him. |
| 40 | Where no water whatever anywise harmed him, And the clutch of the current could come not anear him, Since the roofed-hall prevented; brightness a-gleaming Fire-light he saw, flashing resplendent. | |
| 45 | The good one saw then the sea-bottom's monster, The mighty mere-woman; he made a great onset With weapon-of-battle, his hand not desisted From striking, that war-blade struck on her head then A battle-song greedy. The stranger perceived then | Beowulf attacks the mother of Grendel. |
| 50 | The sword would not bite, her life would not injure, But the falchion failed the folk-prince when straitened: | The sword will not bite. |
| | Erst had it often onsets encountered, Oft cloven the helmet, the fated one's armor: 'Twas the first time that ever the excellent jewel Had failed of its fame. Firm-mooded after, | |
| 55 | Not heedless of valor, but mindful of glory, Was Higelac's kinsman; the hero-chief angry Cast then his carved-sword covered with jewels That it lay on the earth, hard and steel-pointed; | |
| 60 | He hoped in his strength, his hand-grapple sturdy. So any must act whenever he thinketh To gain him in battle glory unending, And is reckless of living. The lord of the War-Geats (He shrank not from battle) seized by the shoulder ² | The hero throws down all weapons, and again trusts to his hand-grip. |
| 65 | The mother of Grendel; then mighty in struggle Swung he his enemy, since his anger was kindled, That she fell to the floor. With furious grapple She gave him requital ³ early thereafter, | Beowulf falls. |
| | And stretched out to grab him; the strongest of warriors Faint-mooded stumbled, till he fell in his traces, | |
| 70 | Foot-going champion. Then she sat on the hall-guest And wielded her war-knife wide-bladed, flashing, For her son would take vengeance, her one only bairn. His breast-armor woven bode on his shoulder; | The monster sits on him with drawn sword. |
| | It guarded his life, the entrance defended | His armor saves his life. |
| 75 | 'Gainst sword-point and edges. Ecgtheow's son there Had fatally journeyed, champion of Geatmen, In the arms of the ocean, had the armor not given, Close-woven corslet, comfort and succor, | |
| | And had God most holy not awarded the victory, All-knowing Lord; easily did heaven's | God arranged for his escape. |
| 80 | Ruler most righteous arrange it with justice; ⁴ Uprose he erect ready for battle. | |

[1] Kl. emends 'wæl-sweord.' The half-line would then read, '*the battle-sword splendid.*'—For 'heard-ecg' in next half-verse, see note to 20 39 above.

[2] Sw., R., and t.B. suggest 'feaxe' for 'eaxle' (1538) and render: *Seized by the hair.*

[3] If 'hand-léan' be accepted (as the MS. has it), the line will read: *She hand-reward gave him early thereafter.*

[4] Sw. and S. change H.-So.'s semicolon (v. 1557) to a comma, and translate: *The Ruler of Heaven arranged it in justice easily, after he arose again.*

XXIV.

BEOWULF IS DOUBLE-CONQUEROR.

| | | | |
|------|----|--|---|
| | | Then he saw mid the war-gems a weapon of victory, An ancient giant-sword, of edges a-doughty, Glory of warriors: of weapons 'twas choicest, Only 'twas larger than any man else was | Beowulf grasps a giant-sword, |
| [54] | 5 | Able to bear to the battle-encounter, The good and splendid work of the giants. He grasped then the sword-hilt, knight of the Scyldings, Bold and battle-grim, brandished his ring-sword, Hopeless of living, hotly he smote her, | |
| | 10 | That the fiend-woman's neck firmly it grappled, Broke through her bone-joints, the bill fully pierced her | and fells the female monster. |
| | 15 | Fate-cursèd body, she fell to the ground then: The hand-sword was bloody, the hero exulted. The brand was brilliant, brightly it glimmered, Just as from heaven gemlike shineth | |
| | 20 | The torch of the firmament. He glanced 'long the building, And turned by the wall then, Higelac's vassal Raging and wrathful raised his battle-sword Strong by the handle. The edge was not useless | |
| | 25 | To the hero-in-battle, but he speedily wished to Give Grendel requital for the many assaults he Had worked on the West-Danes not once, but often, When he slew in slumber the subjects of Hrothgar, Swallowed down fifteen sleeping retainers | |
| | 30 | Of the folk of the Danemen, and fully as many Carried away, a horrible prey. He gave him requital, grim-raging champion, When he saw on his rest-place weary of conflict Grendel lying, of life-joys bereavèd, | Beowulf sees the body of Grendel, and cuts off his head. |
| | 35 | As the battle at Heorot erstwhile had scathed him; His body far bounded, a blow when he suffered, Death having seized him, sword-smiting heavy, And he cut off his head then. Early this noticed The clever carles who as comrades of Hrothgar Gazed on the sea-deeps, that the surging wave- currents | The waters are gory. |
| | 40 | Were mightily mingled, the mere-flood was gory: Of the good one the gray-haired together held converse, The hoary of head, that they hoped not to see again The atheling ever, that exulting in victory He'd return there to visit the distinguished folk-ruler: | Beowulf is given up for dead. |
| [55] | | Then many concluded the mere-wolf had killed him. ¹ The ninth hour came then. From the ness-edge departed The bold-mooded Scyldings; the gold-friend of heroes Homeward betook him. The strangers sat down then | |
| | 45 | Soul-sick, sorrowful, the sea-waves regarding: They wished and yet weened not their well-loved friend-lord To see any more. The sword-blade began then, The blood having touched it, contracting and shriveling | The giant-sword melts. |
| | 50 | With battle-icicles; 'twas a wonderful marvel That it melted entirely, likest to ice when The Father unbindeth the bond of the frost and Unwindeth the wave-bands, He who wieldeth dominion Of times and of tides: a truth-firm Creator. | |
| | 55 | Nor took he of jewels more in the dwelling, Lord of the Weders, though they lay all around him, Than the head and the handle handsome with jewels; | |
| [56] | | The brand early melted, burnt was the weapon: ² So hot was the blood, the strange-spirit poisonous That in it did perish. He early swam off then | |
| | 60 | Who had bided in combat the carnage of haters, Went up through the ocean; the eddies were cleansèd, The spacious expanses, when the spirit from farland | The hero swims back to the realms of day. |

His life put aside and this short-lived existence.
 The seamen's defender came swimming to land then
 65 Doughty of spirit, rejoiced in his sea-gift,
 The bulky burden which he bore in his keeping.
 The excellent vassals advanced then to meet him,
 To God they were grateful, were glad in their chieftain,
 That to see him safe and sound was granted them.
 70 From the high-minded hero, then, helmet and burnie
 Were speedily loosened: the ocean was putrid,
 The water 'neath welkin weltered with gore.
 Forth did they fare, then, their footsteps retracing,
 Merry and mirthful, measured the earth-way,
 75 The highway familiar: men very daring³
 Bare then the head from the sea-cliff, burdening
 Each of the earlmen, excellent-valiant.
 Four of them had to carry with labor
 The head of Grendel to the high towering gold-hall
 80 Upstuck on the spear, till fourteen most-valiant
 And battle-brave Geatmen came there going
 Straight to the palace: the prince of the people
 Measured the mead-ways, their mood-brave companion.
 The atheling of earlmen entered the building,
 85 Deed-valiant man, adorned with distinction,
 Doughty shield-warrior, to address King Hrothgar:
 Then hung by the hair, the head of Grendel
 Was borne to the building, where beer-thanes were drinking,
 Loth before earlmen and eke 'fore the lady:
 90 The warriors beheld then a wonderful sight.

It takes four men
to carry Grendel's
head on a spear.

[57]

[1] 'Pæs monige gewearð' (1599) and 'hafað pæs geworden' (2027).—In a paper published some years ago in one of the Johns Hopkins University circulars, I tried to throw upon these two long-doubtful passages some light derived from a study of like passages in Alfred's prose.—The impersonal verb 'geweorðan,' with an accus. of the person, and a þæt-clause is used several times with the meaning 'agree.' See Orosius (Sweet's ed.) 178₇; 204₃₄; 208₂₈; 210₁₅; 280₂₀. In the two Beowulf passages, the þæt-clause is anticipated by 'pæs,' which is clearly a gen. of the thing agreed on.

The first passage (v. 1599 (b)-1600) I translate literally: *Then many agreed upon this (namely), that the sea-wolf had killed him.*

The second passage (v. 2025 (b)-2027): *She is promised ...; to this the friend of the Scyldings has agreed, etc.* By emending 'is' instead of 'wæs' (2025), the tenses will be brought into perfect harmony.

In v. 1997 ff. this same idiom occurs, and was noticed in B.'s great article on Beowulf, which appeared about the time I published my reading of 1599 and 2027. Translate 1997 then: *Wouldst let the South-Danes themselves decide about their struggle with Grendel.* Here 'Súð-Dene' is accus. of person, and 'gúðe' is gen. of thing agreed on.

With such collateral support as that afforded by B. (P. and B. XII. 97), I have no hesitation in departing from H.-So., my usual guide.

The idiom above treated runs through A.-S., Old Saxon, and other Teutonic languages, and should be noticed in the lexicons.

[2] 'Bróden-mæl' is regarded by most scholars as meaning a damaskened sword. Translate: *The damaskened sword burned up.* Cf. 25 16 and note.

[3] 'Cynning-balde' (1635) is the much-disputed reading of K. and Th. To render this, "*nobly bold*," "*excellently bold*," have been suggested. B. would read 'cynning-holde' (cf. 290), and render: *Men well-disposed towards the king carried the head, etc.* 'Cynebealde,' says t.B., endorsing Gr.

XXV.

BEOWULF BRINGS HIS TROPHIES.— HROTHGAR'S GRATITUDE.

"Lo! we blithely have brought thee, bairn of
Healfdene, his last exploit.

Prince of the Scyldings, these presents from ocean
Which thine eye looketh on, for an emblem of glory.

5 I came off alive from this, narrowly 'scaping:
In war 'neath the water the work with great pains I
Performed, and the fight had been finished quite nearly,
Had God not defended me. I failed in the battle
Aught to accomplish, aided by Hrunting,

10 Though that weapon was worthy, but the Wielder of earth-folk
Gave me willingly to see on the wall a God was fighting
Heavy old hand-sword hanging in splendor with me.
(He guided most often the lorn and the friendless),
That I swung as a weapon. The wards of the house then
15 I killed in the conflict (when occasion was given me).

Then the battle-sword burned, the brand that was lifted,¹
As the blood-current sprang, hottest of war-sweats;
Seizing the hilt, from my foes I offbore it;

20 I avenged as I ought to their acts of malignity,
The murder of Danemen. I then make thee this promise,
Thou'lt be able in Heorot careless to slumber Heorot is freed
With thy throng of heroes and the thanes of thy people from monsters.
Every and each, of greater and lesser,
And thou needest not fear for them from the selfsame direction

25 As thou formerly fearest, oh, folk-lord of Scyldings,
End-day for earlmen." To the age-hoary man then,
The gray-haired chieftain, the gold-fashioned sword-
hilt,

Old-work of giants, was thereupon given;
Since the fall of the fiends, it fell to the keeping

30 Of the wielder of Danemen, the wonder-smith's labor,
And the bad-mooded being abandoned this world then,
Opponent of God, victim of murder,
And also his mother; it went to the keeping
Of the best of the world-kings, where waters encircle,
35 Who the scot divided in Scylding dominion.

Hrothgar discoursed, the hilt he regarded,
The ancient heirloom where an old-time contention's
Beginning was graven: the gurgling currents,
The flood slew thereafter the race of the giants,

40 They had proved themselves daring: that people was loth to
The Lord everlasting, through lash of the billows
The Father gave them final requital. It had belonged
So in letters of rune on the clasp of the handle to God.

Gleaming and golden, 'twas graven exactly,
45 Set forth and said, whom that sword had been made for,
Finest of irons, who first it was wrought for,
Wreathed at its handle and gleaming with serpents.

The wise one then said (silent they all were)
Son of old Healfdene: "He may say unrefuted
50 Who performs 'mid the folk-men fairness and truth
(The hoary old ruler remembers the past),
That better by birth is this bairn of the nobles!

Thy fame is extended through far-away countries,
Good friend Beowulf, o'er all of the races,
55 Thou holdest all firmly, hero-like strength with
Prudence of spirit. I'll prove myself grateful
As before we agreed on; thou granted for long shalt
Become a great comfort to kinsmen and comrades,
A help unto heroes. Heremod became not

60 Such to the Scyldings, successors of Ecgwela;
He grew not to please them, but grievous destruction,
And dire death-woes to Danemen attracted;
He slew in anger his table-companions,
Trustworthy counsellors, till he turned off lonely
[59] Heremod's career
is again
contrasted with
Beowulf's.

65 From world-joys away, wide-famous ruler:
 Though high-ruling heaven in hero-strength raised him,
 In might exalted him, o'er men of all nations
 Made him supreme, yet a murderous spirit
 Grew in his bosom: he gave then no ring-gems
 70 To the Danes after custom; endured he unjoyful
 Standing the straits from strife that was raging,
 Longsome folk-sorrow. Learn then from this,
 Lay hold of virtue! Though laden with winters,
 I have sung thee these measures. 'Tis a marvel to tell it,
 75 How all-ruling God from greatness of spirit
 Giveth wisdom to children of men,
 Manor and earlship: all things He ruleth.
 He often permitteth the mood-thought of man of
 The illustrious lineage to lean to possessions,
 80 Allows him earthly delights at his manor,
 A high-burg of heroes to hold in his keeping,
 Maketh portions of earth-folk hear him,
 And a wide-reaching kingdom so that, wisdom failing him,
 He himself is unable to reckon its boundaries;
 85 He liveth in luxury, little debars him,
 Nor sickness nor age, no treachery-sorrow
 Becloudeth his spirit, conflict nowhere,
 No sword-hate, appeareth, but all of the world doth
 Wend as he wisheth; the worse he knoweth not,
 90 Till arrant arrogance inward pervading,
 Waxeth and springeth, when the warder is sleeping,
 The guard of the soul: with sorrows encompassed,
 Too sound is his slumber, the slayer is near him,
 Who with bow and arrow aimeth in malice.

A wretched
 failure of a king,
 to give no jewels
 to his retainers.

Hrothgar
 moralizes.

[60]

[1] Or rather, perhaps, '*the inlaid, or damaskeened weapon.*' Cf. 24 57 and note.

XXVI.

HROTHGAR MORALIZES.—REST AFTER LABOR.

"Then bruised in his bosom he with bitter-toothed
 missile
 Is hurt 'neath his helmet: from harmful pollution
 He is powerless to shield him by the wonderful mandates
 Of the loath-cursèd spirit; what too long he hath holden
 5 Him seemeth too small, savage he hoardeth,
 Nor boastfully giveth gold-plated rings,¹
 The fate of the future flouts and forgetteth
 Since God had erst given him greatness no little,
 Wielder of Glory. His end-day anear,
 10 It afterward happens that the bodily-dwelling
 Fleetingly fadeth, falls into ruins;
 Another lays hold who doleth the ornaments,
 The nobleman's jewels, nothing lamenting,
 Heedeth no terror. Oh, Beowulf dear,
 15 Best of the heroes, from bale-strife defend thee,
 And choose thee the better, counsels eternal;
 Beware of arrogance, world-famous champion!
 But a little-while lasts thy life-vigor's fulness;
 'Twill after hap early, that illness or sword-edge
 20 Shall part thee from strength, or the grasp of the fire,
 Or the wave of the current, or clutch of the edges,
 Or flight of the war-spear, or age with its horrors,

A wounded spirit.

Be not over
 proud: life is
 fleeting, and its
 strength soon
 wasteth away.

| | | |
|---------|---|--|
| | Or thine eyes' bright flashing shall fade into darkness: 'Twill happen full early, excellent hero, | |
| 25 | That death shall subdue thee. So the Danes a half- century | Hrothgar gives an account of his reign. |
| | I held under heaven, helped them in struggles 'Gainst many a race in middle-earth's regions, With ash-wood and edges, that enemies none On earth molested me. Lo! offsetting change, now, | |
| [61] 30 | Came to my manor, grief after joyance, When Grendel became my constant visitor, Inveterate hater: I from that malice Continually travailed with trouble no little. | Sorrow after joy. |
| | Thanks be to God that I gained in my lifetime, To the Lord everlasting, to look on the gory Head with mine eyes, after long-lasting sorrow! Go to the bench now, battle-adornèd Joy in the feasting: of jewels in common We'll meet with many when morning appeareth." | |
| 35 | | |
| 40 | The Geatman was gladsome, ganged he immediately To go to the bench, as the clever one bade him. Then again as before were the famous-for-prowess, Hall-inhabiters, handsomely banqueted, Feasted anew. The night-veil fell then | |
| 45 | Dark o'er the warriors. The courtiers rose then; The gray-haired was anxious to go to his slumbers, The hoary old Scylding. Hankered the Geatman, The champion doughty, greatly, to rest him: | Beowulf is fagged, and seeks rest. |
| | An earlman early outward did lead him, Fagged from his faring, from far-country springing, Who for etiquette's sake all of a liegeman's Needs regarded, such as seamen at that time Were bounden to feel. The big-hearted rested; The building uptowered, spacious and gilded, | |
| 50 | | |
| 55 | The guest within slumbered, till the sable-clad raven Blithely foreboded the beacon of heaven. Then the bright-shining sun o'er the bottoms came going; ² The warriors hastened, the heads of the peoples Were ready to go again to their peoples, | |
| 60 | The high-mooded farer would faraway thenceward Look for his vessel. The valiant one bade then, ³ Offspring of Ecglaf, off to bear Hrunting, To take his weapon, his well-beloved iron; He him thanked for the gift, saying good he accounted | The Geats prepare to leave Dane-land. Unferth asks Beowulf to accept his sword as a gift. Beowulf thanks him. |
| [62] 65 | The war-friend and mighty, nor chid he with words then | |
| | The blade of the brand: 'twas a brave-mooded hero. When the warriors were ready, arrayed in their trappings, The atheling dear to the Danemen advanced then On to the dais, where the other was sitting, | |
| 70 | Grim-mooded hero, greeted King Hrothgar. | |

[1] K. says '*proudly giveth.*'—Gr. says, '*And gives no gold-plated rings, in order to incite the recipient to boastfulness.*'—B. suggests 'gyld' for 'gylp,' and renders: *And gives no beaten rings for reward.*

[2] If S.'s emendation be accepted, v. 57 will read: *Then came the light, going bright after darkness: the warriors, etc.*

[3] As the passage stands in H.-So., Unferth presents Beowulf with the sword Hrunting, and B. thanks him for the gift. If, however, the suggestions of Grdtvg. and M. be accepted, the passage will read: *Then the brave one (i.e. Beowulf) commanded that Hrunting be borne to the son of Ecglaf (Unferth), bade him take his sword, his dear weapon; he (B.) thanked him (U.) for the loan, etc.*

| | | |
|----|--|---------------------|
| | Deep in his spirit for the dear-beloved man | deeply grieved to |
| | Though not a blood-kinsman. Beowulf thenceward, | part with his |
| | Gold-splendid warrior, walked o'er the meadows | benefactor. |
| 65 | Exulting in treasure: the sea-going vessel | |
| | Riding at anchor awaited its owner. | |
| | As they pressed on their way then, the present of Hrothgar | |
| | Was frequently referred to: a folk-king indeed that | Giving liberally is |
| | Everyway blameless, till age did debar him | the true proof of |
| 70 | The joys of his might, which hath many oft injured. | kingship. |

[1] For 'geworhte,' the crux of this passage, B. proposes 'geþóhte,' rendering: *I know this people with firm thought every way blameless towards foe and friends.*

[2] S. and B. emend so as to negative the verb 'meet.' "Why should Hrothgar weep if he expects to meet Beowulf again?" both these scholars ask. But the weeping is mentioned before the 'expectations': the tears may have been due to many emotions, especially gratitude, struggling for expression.

XXVIII.

THE HOMEWARD JOURNEY.—THE TWO QUEENS.

| | | |
|------|---|-------------------|
| | Then the band of very valiant retainers | |
| | Came to the current; they were clad all in armor, | |
| | In link-woven burnies. The land-warder noticed | The coast-guard |
| | The return of the earlmen, as he erstwhile had seen | again. |
| | them; | |
| 5 | Nowise with insult he greeted the strangers | |
| | From the naze of the cliff, but rode on to meet them; | |
| [65] | Said the bright-armored visitors ¹ vesselward traveled | |
| | Welcome to Weders. The wide-bosomed craft then | |
| | Lay on the sand, laden with armor, | |
| 10 | With horses and jewels, the ring-stemmèd sailer: | |
| | The mast uptowered o'er the treasure of Hrothgar. | |
| | To the boat-ward a gold-bound brand he presented, | Beowulf gives the |
| | That he was afterwards honored on the ale-bench | guard a |
| | more highly | handsome sword. |
| | As the heirloom's owner. ² Set he out on his vessel, | |
| 15 | To drive on the deep, Dane-country left he. | |
| | Along by the mast then a sea-garment fluttered, | |
| | A rope-fastened sail. The sea-boat resounded, | |
| | The wind o'er the waters the wave-floater nowise | |
| 20 | Kept from its journey; the sea-goer traveled, | |
| | The foamy-necked floated forth o'er the currents, | |
| | The well-fashioned vessel o'er the ways of the ocean, | |
| | Till they came within sight of the cliffs of the | |
| | Geatmen, | The Geats see |
| | The well-known headlands. The wave-goer hastened | their own land |
| | Driven by breezes, stood on the shore. | again. |
| 25 | Prompt at the ocean, the port-ward was ready, | |
| | Who long in the past outlooked in the distance, ³ | The port-warden |
| | At water's-edge waiting well-lovèd heroes; | is anxiously |
| | He bound to the bank then the broad-bosomed vessel | looking for them. |
| 30 | Fast in its fetters, lest the force of the waters | |
| | Should be able to injure the ocean-wood winsome. | |
| | Bade he up then take the treasure of princes, | |
| | Plate-gold and fretwork; not far was it thence | |
| | To go off in search of the giver of jewels: | |
| [66] | Hrethel's son Higelac at home there remaineth, ⁴ | |
| 35 | Himself with his comrades close to the sea-coast. | |

Her faith has been plighted; the friend of the
Scyldings,
The guard of the kingdom, hath given his sanction,⁴
And counts it a vantage, for a part of the quarrels,
A portion of hatred, to pay with the woman.

to Ingeld, in order
to unite the
Danes and
Heathobards.

65

⁵Somewhere not rarely, when the ruler has fallen,
The life-taking lance relaxeth its fury
For a brief breathing-spell, though the bride be charming!

[1] 'Meodu-scencum' (1981) some would render 'with mead-pourers.' Translate then: *The daughter of Hæreth went through the building accompanied by mead-pourers.*

[2] See my note to 1599, supra, and B. in P. and B. XII. 97.

[3] For 'fenne,' supplied by Grdtvg., B. suggests 'fácne' (cf. Jul. 350). Accepting this, translate: *Who longest lives of the hated race, steeped in treachery.*

[4] See note to v. 1599 above.

[5] This is perhaps the least understood sentence in the poem, almost every word being open to dispute. (1) The 'nó' of our text is an emendation, and is rejected by many scholars. (2) 'Seldan' is by some taken as an adv. (= *seldom*), and by others as a noun (= *page, companion*). (3) 'Léod-hryre,' some render 'fall of the people'; others, 'fall of the prince.' (4) 'Búgeð,' most scholars regard as the intrans. verb meaning 'bend,' 'rest'; but one great scholar has translated it 'shall kill.' (5) 'Hwær,' Very recently, has been attacked, 'wære' being suggested. (6) As a corollary to the above, the same critic proposes to drop 'oft' out of the text.—t.B. suggests: *Oft seldan wære after léodhryre: lýtle hwíle bongár búgeð, þeah séo brýd duge = often has a treaty been (thus) struck, after a prince had fallen: (but only) a short time is the spear (then) wont to rest, however excellent the bride may be.*

XXX.

BEOWULF NARRATES HIS ADVENTURES TO HIGELAC.

"It well may discomfit the prince of the Heathobards
And each of the thanemen of earls that attend him,
When he goes to the building escorting the woman,
That a noble-born Daneman the knights should be feasting:
There gleam on his person the leavings of elders
Hard and ring-bright, Heathobards' treasure,
While they wielded their arms, till they misled to the battle
Their own dear lives and beloved companions.
He saith at the banquet who the collar beholdeth,
An ancient ash-warrior who earlmen's destruction
Clearly recalleth (cruel his spirit),
Sadly beginneth sounding the youthful
Thane-champion's spirit through the thoughts of his bosom,
War-grief to waken, and this word-answer speaketh:
'Art thou able, my friend, to know when thou seest it
The brand which thy father bare to the conflict
In his latest adventure, 'neath visor of helmet,
The dearly-loved iron, where Danemen did slay him,
And brave-mooded Scyldings, on the fall of the heroes,
(When vengeance was sleeping) the slaughter-place wielded?
E'en now some man of the murderer's progeny
Exulting in ornaments enters the building,
Boasts of his blood-shedding, offbearth the jewel
Which thou shouldst wholly hold in possession!'
So he urgeth and mindeth on every occasion
With woe-bringing words, till waxeth the season
When the woman's thane for the works of his father,
The bill having bitten, blood-gory sleepeth,
Fated to perish; the other one thenceward

Ingeld is stirred
up to break the
truce.

[70]

5

10

15

20

25

| | | |
|------|--|---|
| 30 | 'Scapeth alive, the land knoweth thoroughly. ¹ | |
| | Then the oaths of the earlmen on each side are broken, When rancors unresting are raging in Ingeld And his wife-love waxeth less warm after sorrow. | |
| 35 | So the Heathobards' favor not faithful I reckon, Their part in the treaty not true to the Danemen, Their friendship not fast. I further shall tell thee | |
| [71] | More about Grendel, that thou fully mayst hear, Ornament-giver, what afterward came from The hand-rush of heroes. When heaven's bright jewel | Having made these preliminary statements, I will now tell thee of Grendel, the monster. |
| 40 | O'er earthfields had glided, the stranger came raging, The horrible night-fiend, us for to visit, Where wholly unharmed the hall we were guarding. | |
| | To Hondscio happened a hopeless contention, Death to the doomed one, dead he fell foremost, | Hondscio fell first |
| 45 | Girded war-champion; to him Grendel became then, To the vassal distinguished, a tooth-weaponed murderer, The well-beloved henchman's body all swallowed. | |
| | Not the earlier off empty of hand did The bloody-toothed murderer, mindful of evils, | |
| 50 | Wish to escape from the gold-giver's palace, But sturdy of strength he strove to outdo me, Hand-ready grappled. A glove was suspended | |
| | Spacious and wondrous, in art-fetters fastened, Which was fashioned entirely by touch of the craftman | |
| 55 | From the dragon's skin by the devil's devices: He down in its depths would do me unsadly One among many, deed-doer raging, | |
| | Though sinless he saw me; not so could it happen When I in my anger upright did stand. | |
| 60 | 'Tis too long to recount how requital I furnished For every evil to the earlmen's destroyer; 'Twas there, my prince, that I proudly distinguished | I reflected honor upon my people. |
| | Thy land with my labors. He left and retreated, He lived his life a little while longer: | |
| 65 | Yet his right-hand guarded his footstep in Heorot, And sad-mooded thence to the sea-bottom fell he, Mournful in mind. For the might-rush of battle | |
| | The friend of the Scyldings, with gold that was plated, With ornaments many, much requited me, | King Hrothgar lavished gifts upon me. |
| 70 | When daylight had dawned, and down to the banquet We had sat us together. There was chanting and joyance: The age-stricken Scylding asked many questions | |
| [72] | And of old-times related; oft light-ringing harp-strings, Joy-telling wood, were touched by the brave one; | |
| 75 | Now he uttered measures, mourning and truthful, Then the large-hearted land-king a legend of wonder Truthfully told us. Now troubled with years | |
| | The age-hoary warrior afterward began to Mourn for the might that marked him in youth-days; | The old king is sad over the loss of his youthful vigor. |
| 80 | His breast within boiled, when burdened with winters Much he remembered. From morning till night then We joyed us therein as etiquette suffered, | |
| | Till the second night season came unto earth-folk. Then early thereafter, the mother of Grendel | |
| 85 | Was ready for vengeance, wretched she journeyed; Her son had death ravished, the wrath of the Geatmen. The horrible woman avenged her offspring, | Grendel's mother. |
| | And with mighty mainstrength murdered a hero. There the spirit of Æschere, aged adviser, | |
| 90 | Was ready to vanish; nor when morn had lightened Were they anywise suffered to consume him with fire, Folk of the Danemen, the death-weakened hero, | Æschere falls a prey to her vengeance. |
| | Nor the beloved liegeman to lay on the pyre; She the corpse had offcarried in the clutch of the | She suffered not |

| | | |
|------|--|--|
| | foeman ² | his body to be burned, but ate it. |
| 95 | 'Neath mountain-brook's flood. To Hrothgar 'twas saddest | |
| | Of pains that ever had preyed on the chieftain; By the life of thee the land-prince then me ³ Besought very sadly, in sea-currents' eddies To display my prowess, to peril my safety, | |
| 100 | Might-deeds accomplish; much did he promise. I found then the famous flood-current's cruel, Horrible depth-warder. A while unto us two Hand was in common; the currents were seething | I sought the creature in her den, |
| [73] | With gore that was clotted, and Grendel's fierce mother's | |
| 105 | Head I offhacked in the hall at the bottom With huge-reaching sword-edge, hardly I wrested My life from her clutches; not doomed was I then, But the warden of earlmen afterward gave me Jewels in quantity, kinsman of Healfdene. | and hewed her head off. Jewels were freely bestowed upon me. |

[1] For 'lifigende' (2063), a mere conjecture, 'wigende' has been suggested. The line would then read: *Escapeth by fighting, knows the land thoroughly.*

[2] For 'fæðmum,' Gr.'s conjecture, B. proposes 'færunga.' These three half-verses would then read: *She bore off the corpse of her foe suddenly under the mountain-torrent.*

[3] The phrase 'þíne lýfe' (2132) was long rendered '*with thy (presupposed) permission.*' The verse would read: *The land-prince then sadly besought me, with thy (presupposed) permission, etc.*

XXXI.

GIFT-GIVING IS MUTUAL.

| | | |
|------|--|--|
| | "So the beloved land-prince lived in decorum; I had missed no rewards, no meeds of my prowess, But he gave me jewels, regarding my wishes, Healfdene his bairn; I'll bring them to thee, then, | |
| 5 | Atheling of earlmen, offer them gladly. And still unto thee is all my affection: ¹ But few of my folk-kin find I surviving But thee, dear Higelac!" Bade he in then to carry ² | All my gifts I lay at thy feet. |
| 10 | The boar-image, banner, battle-high helmet, Iron-gray armor, the excellent weapon, In song-measures said: "This suit-for-the-battle Hrothgar presented me, bade me expressly, Wise-mooded atheling, thereafter to tell thee ³ | This armor I have belonged of yore to Heregar. |
| 15 | The whole of its history, said King Heregar owned it, Dane-prince for long: yet he wished not to give then The mail to his son, though dearly he loved him, Hereward the hardy. Hold all in joyance!" I heard that there followed hard on the jewels Two braces of stallions of striking resemblance, | |
| [74] | Dappled and yellow; he granted him usance Of horses and treasures. So a kinsman should bear him, No web of treachery weave for another, Nor by cunning craftiness cause the destruction Of trusty companion. Most precious to Higelac, | |
| 20 | The bold one in battle, was the bairn of his sister, And each unto other mindful of favors. I am told that to Hygd he proffered the necklace, Wonder-gem rare that Wealhtheow gave him, The troop-leader's daughter, a trio of horses Slender and saddle-bright; soon did the jewel | Higelac loves his nephew Beowulf. Beowulf gives Hygd the necklace that Wealhtheow had given him. |
| 25 | | |
| 30 | | |

Embellish her bosom, when the beer-feast was over.

So Ecgtheow's bairn brave did prove him,
War-famous man, by deeds that were valiant,
He lived in honor, beloved companions

Beowulf is famous.

35 Slew not carousing; his mood was not cruel,
But by hand-strength hugest of heroes then living
The brave one retained the bountiful gift that
The Lord had allowed him. Long was he wretched,

40 So that sons of the Geatmen accounted him worthless,
And the lord of the liegemen loth was to do him
Mickle of honor, when mead-cups were passing;
They fully believed him idle and sluggish,
An indolent atheling: to the honor-blest man there
Came requital for the cuts he had suffered.

He is requited for the slights suffered in earlier days.

45 The folk-troop's defender bade fetch to the building
The heirloom of Hrethel, embellished with gold,
So the brave one enjoined it; there was jewel no richer
In the form of a weapon 'mong Geats of that era;
In Beowulf's keeping he placed it and gave him
50 Seven of thousands, manor and lordship.

Higelac overwhelms the conqueror with gifts.

Common to both was land 'mong the people,
Estate and inherited rights and possessions,
To the second one specially spacious dominions,
To the one who was better. It afterward happened

55 In days that followed, befell the battle-thanes,
After Higelac's death, and when Heardred was
murdered

After Heardred's death, Beowulf becomes king.

With weapons of warfare 'neath well-covered targets,
When valiant battlemen in victor-band sought him,
War-Scylfing heroes harassed the nephew

60 Of Hereric in battle. To Beowulf's keeping
Turned there in time extensive dominions:
He fittingly ruled them a fifty of winters

He rules the Geats fifty years.

(He a man-ruler wise was, manor-ward old) till
A certain one 'gan, on gloom-darkening nights, a
65 Dragon, to govern, who guarded a treasure,
A high-rising stone-cliff, on heath that was grayish:
A path 'neath it lay, unknown unto mortals.

The fire-drake.

Some one of earthmen entered the mountain,
The heathenish hoard laid hold of with ardor;

70 * * * * *
* * * * *
* * * * *
* * * * *
* * * * *

[1] This verse B. renders, 'Now serve I again thee alone as my gracious king.'

[2] For 'eafor' (2153), Kl. suggests 'ealdor.' Translate then: *Bade the prince then to bear in the banner, battle-high helmet, etc.* On the other hand, W. takes 'eaforhéafodsegn' as a compound, meaning 'helmet': *He bade them bear in the helmet, battle-high helm, gray armor, etc.*

[3] The H.-So. rendering (ærest = *history, origin*; 'eft' for 'est'), though liable to objection, is perhaps the best offered. 'That I should very early tell thee of his favor, kindness' sounds well; but 'his' is badly placed to limit 'ést.'—Perhaps, 'eft' with verbs of saying may have the force of Lat. prefix 're,' and the H.-So. reading mean, 'that I should its origin rehearse to thee.'

XXXII.

THE HOARD AND THE DRAGON.

* * * * *

He sought of himself who sorely did harm him,

[75]

But, for need very pressing, the servant of one of

The sons of the heroes hate-blows evaded,

5

Seeking for shelter and the sin-driven warrior

Took refuge within there. He early looked in it,

* * * * *

* * * * *

* * * * * when the onset surprised him,

[76]

10

He a gem-vessel saw there: many of suchlike

The hoard.

Ancient ornaments in the earth-cave were lying,

As in days of yore some one of men of

Illustrious lineage, as a legacy monstrous,

15

There had secreted them, careful and thoughtful,

Dear-valued jewels. Death had offsnatched them,

In the days of the past, and the one man moreover

Of the flower of the folk who fared there the longest,

Was fain to defer it, friend-mourning warder,

A little longer to be left in enjoyment

20

Of long-lasting treasure.¹ A barrow all-ready

Stood on the plain the stream-currents nigh to,

New by the ness-edge, unnethe of approaching:

The keeper of rings carried within a

²Ponderous deal of the treasure of nobles,

25

Of gold that was beaten, briefly he spake then:³

“Hold thou, O Earth, now heroes no more may,

The earnings of earlmen. Lo! erst in thy bosom

Worthy men won them; war-death hath ravished,

Perilous life-bale, all my warriors,

30

Liegemen belovèd, who this life have forsaken,

Who hall-pleasures saw. No sword-bearer have I,

And no one to burnish the gold-plated vessel,

The high-valued beaker: my heroes are vanished.

The hardy helmet behung with gilding

35

Shall be reaved of its riches: the ring-cleansers slumber

Who were charged to have ready visors-for-battle,

And the burnie that bided in battle-encounter

O'er breaking of war-shields the bite of the edges

Moulds with the hero. The ring-twisted armor,

40

Its lord being lifeless, no longer may journey

Hanging by heroes; harp-joy is vanished,

The rapture of glee-wood, no excellent falcon

Swoops through the building, no swift-footed charger

Grindeth the gravel. A grievous destruction

45

No few of the world-folk widely hath scattered!”

So, woful of spirit one after all

Lamented mournfully, moaning in sadness

By day and by night, till death with its billows

Dashed on his spirit. Then the ancient dusk-scather

50

Found the great treasure standing all open,

He who flaming and fiery flies to the barrows,

Naked war-dragon, nightly escapeth

Encompassed with fire; men under heaven

Widely beheld him. 'Tis said that he looks for⁴

55

The hoard in the earth, where old he is guarding

The heathenish treasure; he'll be nowise the better.

So three-hundred winters the waster of peoples

Held upon earth that excellent hoard-hall,

Till the forementioned earlman angered him bitterly:

60

The beat-plated beaker he bare to his chieftain

And fullest remission for all his remissness

Begged of his liegeland. Then the hoard⁵ was discovered,

The treasure was taken, his petition was granted

The lorn-mooded liegeman. His lord regarded

65

The old-work of earth-folk—'twas the earliest

occasion.

When the dragon awoke, the strife was renewed there;

The ring-giver
bewails the loss
of retainers.

The fire-dragon

The dragon meets
his match.

The hero
plunders the
dragon's den

[77]

He snuffed 'long the stone then, stout-hearted found he
 The footprint of foeman; too far had he gone
 With cunning craftiness close to the head of
 70 The fire-spewing dragon. So undoomed he may 'scape from
 Anguish and exile with ease who possesseth
 The favor of Heaven. The hoard-warden eagerly
 Searched o'er the ground then, would meet with the person
 That caused him sorrow while in slumber reclining:
 75 Gleaming and wild he oft went round the cavern,
 All of it outward; not any of earthmen
 Was seen in that desert.⁶ Yet he joyed in the battle,
 Rejoiced in the conflict: oft he turned to the barrow,
 Sought for the gem-cup;⁷ this he soon perceived then
 80 That some man or other had discovered the gold,
 The famous folk-treasure. Not fain did the hoard-ward
 Wait until evening; then the ward of the barrow
 Was angry in spirit, the loathèd one wished to
 Pay for the dear-valued drink-cup with fire.
 85 Then the day was done as the dragon would have it,
 He no longer would wait on the wall, but departed
 Fire-impelled, flaming. Fearful the start was
 To earls in the land, as it early thereafter
 To their giver-of-gold was grievously ended.

The dragon perceives that some one has disturbed his treasure.

The dragon is infuriated.

[1] For 'long-gestréona,' B. suggests 'láengestréona,' and renders, *Of fleeting treasures*. S. accepts H.'s 'long-gestréona,' but renders, *The treasure long in accumulating*.

[2] For 'hard-fyrdne' (2246), B. first suggested 'hard-fyndne,' rendering: *A heap of treasures ... so great that its equal would be hard to find*. The same scholar suggests later 'hord-wynne dæl' = *A deal of treasure-joy*.

[3] Some read 'fec-word' (2247), and render: *Banning words uttered*.

[4] An earlier reading of H.'s gave the following meaning to this passage: *He is said to inhabit a mound under the earth, where he, etc.* The translation in the text is more authentic.

[5] The repetition of 'hord' in this passage has led some scholars to suggest new readings to avoid the second 'hord.' This, however, is not under the main stress, and, it seems to me, might easily be accepted.

[6] The reading of H.-So. is well defended in the notes to that volume. B. emends and renders: *Nor was there any man in that desert who rejoiced in conflict, in battle-work*. That is, the hoard-ward could not find any one who had disturbed his slumbers, for no warrior was there, t.B.'s emendation would give substantially the same translation.

[7] 'Sinc-fæt' (2301): this word both here and in v. 2232, t.B. renders 'treasure.'

XXXIII.

BRAVE THOUGH AGED.— REMINISCENCES.

The stranger began then to vomit forth fire,
 To burn the great manor; the blaze then glimmered
 For anguish to earlmen, not anything living
 Was the hateful air-goer willing to leave there.
 5 The war of the worm widely was noticed,
 The feud of the foeman afar and anear,
 How the enemy injured the earls of the Geatmen,
 Harried with hatred: back he hied to the treasure,
 To the well-hidden cavern ere the coming of daylight.
 10 He had circled with fire the folk of those regions,
 With brand and burning; in the barrow he trusted,
 In the wall and his war-might: the weening deceived him.
 Then straight was the horror to Beowulf published,

The dragon spits fire.

Beowulf hears of

[83]

To the eldest unjustly by acts of a kinsman
 45 Was murder-bed strewn, since him Hæthcyn from horn-bow
 His sheltering chieftain shot with an arrow, One of the
 Erred in his aim and injured his kinsman, brothers
 One brother the other, with blood-sprinkled spear: accidentally kills
 'Twas a feeless fight, finished in malice, another.
 50 Sad to his spirit; the folk-prince however No fee could
 Had to part from existence with vengeance untaken. compound for
 So to hoar-headed hero 'tis heavily crushing¹ such a calamity.
 To live to see his son as he rideth [A parallel case is
 Young on the gallows: then measures he chanteth, supposed.]
 55 A song of sorrow, when his son is hanging
 For the raven's delight, and aged and hoary
 He is unable to offer any assistance.
 Every morning his offspring's departure
 Is constant recalled: he cares not to wait for
 60 The birth of an heir in his borough-enclosures,
 Since that one through death-pain the deeds hath experienced.
 He heart-grieved beholds in the house of his son the
 Wine-building wasted, the wind-lodging places
 Reaved of their roaring; the riders are sleeping,
 65 The knights in the grave; there's no sound of the harp-wood,
 Joy in the yards, as of yore were familiar.

[1] 'Gomelum ceorle' (2445).—H. takes these words as referring to Hrethel; but the translator here departs from his editor by understanding the poet to refer to a hypothetical old man, introduced as an illustration of a father's sorrow.

Hrethrel had certainly never seen a son of his ride on the gallows to feed the crows.

The passage beginning 'swá bið géomorlic' seems to be an effort to reach a full simile, 'as ... so.' 'As it is mournful for an old man, etc. ... so the defence of the Weders (2463) bore heart-sorrow, etc.' The verses 2451 to 2463½ would be parenthetical, the poet's feelings being so strong as to interrupt the simile. The punctuation of the fourth edition would be better—a comma after 'galgan' (2447). The translation may be indicated as follows: *(Just) as it is sad for an old man to see his son ride young on the gallows when he himself is uttering mournful measures, a sorrowful song, while his son hangs for a comfort to the raven, and he, old and infirm, cannot render him any kelp—(he is constantly reminded, etc., 2451-2463)—so the defence of the Weders, etc.*

XXXV.

REMINISCENCES (*continued*).— BEOWULF'S LAST BATTLE.

[84]

"He seeks then his chamber, singeth a woe-song
 One for the other; all too extensive
 Seemed homesteads and plains. So the helm of the Weders
 Mindful of Herebald heart-sorrow carried, Hrethel grieves
 5 Stirred with emotion, nowise was able for Herebald.
 To wreak his ruin on the ruthless destroyer:
 He was unable to follow the warrior with hatred,
 With deeds that were direful, though dear he not held him.
 Then pressed by the pang this pain occasioned him,
 10 He gave up glee, God-light elected;
 He left to his sons, as the man that is rich does,
 His land and fortress, when from life he departed.
 Then was crime and hostility 'twixt Swedes and
 Geatmen, Strife between
 O'er wide-stretching water warring was mutual, Swedes and
 15 Burdensome hatred, when Hrethel had perished, Geats.
 And Ongentheow's offspring were active and valiant,
 Wished not to hold to peace oversea, but

| | | |
|------|--|---|
| | Round Hreosna-beorh often accomplished Cruellest massacre. This my kinsman avengèd, 20 The feud and fury, as 'tis found on inquiry, Though one of them paid it with forfeit of life-joys, With price that was hard: the struggle became then Fatal to Hæthcyn, lord of the Geatmen. | Hæthcyn's fall at Ravenswood. |
| | 25 Then I heard that at morning one brother the other With edges of irons egged on to murder, Where Ongentheow maketh onset on Eofor: The helmet crashed, the hoary-haired Scylfing Sword-smitten fell, his hand then remembered Feud-hate sufficient, refused not the death-blow. | |
| | 30 The gems that he gave me, with jewel-bright sword I 'Quited in contest, as occasion was offered: Land he allowed me, life-joy at homestead, Manor to live on. Little he needed From Gepids or Danes or in Sweden to look for 35 Trooper less true, with treasure to buy him; 'Mong foot-soldiers ever in front I would hie me, Alone in the vanguard, and evermore gladly Warfare shall wage, while this weapon endureth That late and early often did serve me | I requited him for the jewels he gave me. |
| | 40 When I proved before heroes the slayer of Dæghrefn, Knight of the Hugmen: he by no means was suffered To the king of the Frisians to carry the jewels, The breast-decoration; but the banner-possessor Bowed in the battle, brave-mooded atheling. | Beowulf refers to his having slain Dæghrefn. |
| [85] | 45 No weapon was slayer, but war-grapple broke then The surge of his spirit, his body destroying. Now shall weapon's edge make war for the treasure, And hand and firm-sword." Beowulf spake then, Boast-words uttered—the latest occasion: | |
| | 50 "I braved in my youth-days battles unnumbered; Still am I willing the struggle to look for, Fame-deeds perform, folk-warden prudent, If the hateful despoiler forth from his cavern Seeketh me out!" Each of the heroes, 55 Helm-bearers sturdy, he thereupon greeted Belovèd co-liegemen—his last salutation: "No brand would I bear, no blade for the dragon, Wist I a way my word-boast to 'complish ¹ Else with the monster, as with Grendel I did it; 60 But fire in the battle hot I expect there, Furious flame-burning: so I fixed on my body Target and war-mail. The ward of the barrow ² I'll not flee from a foot-length, the foeman uncanny. At the wall 'twill befall us as Fate decreeth, 65 Each one's Creator. I am eager in spirit, With the wingèd war-hero to away with all boasting. Bide on the barrow with burnies protected, Earls in armor, which of <i>us</i> two may better Bear his disaster, when the battle is over. | He boasts of his youthful prowess, and declares himself still fearless. |
| | 70 'Tis no matter of yours, and man cannot do it, But me and me only, to measure his strength with The monster of malice, might-deeds to 'complish. I with prowess shall gain the gold, or the battle, Direful death-woe will drag off your ruler!" | His last salutations. |
| | 75 The mighty champion rose by his shield then, Brave under helmet, in battle-mail went he 'Neath steep-rising stone-cliffs, the strength he relied on Of one man alone: no work for a coward. Then he saw by the wall who a great many battles 80 Had lived through, most worthy, when foot-troops collided, Stone-arches standing, stout-hearted champion, Saw a brook from the barrow bubbling out | Let Fate decide between us. Wait ye here till the battle is over. |
| [86] | | The place of strife is described. |

thenceward:

The flood of the fountain was fuming with war-flame:

Not nigh to the hoard, for season the briefest

85 Could he brave, without burning, the abyss that was yawning,

The drake was so fiery. The prince of the Weders

Caused then that words came from his bosom,

So fierce was his fury; the firm-hearted shouted:

His battle-clear voice came in resounding

90 'Neath the gray-colored stone. Stirred was his hatred,

The hoard-ward distinguished the speech of a man;

Time was no longer to look out for friendship.

The breath of the monster issued forth first,

Vapory war-sweat, out of the stone-cave:

95 The earth re-echoed. The earl 'neath the barrow

Lifted his shield, lord of the Geatmen,

Tow'rd the terrible stranger: the ring-twisted creature's

Heart was then ready to seek for a struggle.

The excellent battle-king first brandished his weapon,

100 The ancient heirloom, of edges unblunted,³

To the death-planners twain was terror from other.

The lord of the troopers intrepidly stood then

'Gainst his high-rising shield, when the dragon coiled
him

Quickly together: in corslet he bided.

[87] 105 He went then in blazes, bended and striding,

Hasting him forward. His life and body

The targe well protected, for time-period shorter

Than wish demanded for the well-renowned leader,

Where he then for the first day was forced to be victor,

110 Famous in battle, as Fate had not willed it.

The lord of the Geatmen uplifted his hand then,

Smiting the fire-drake with sword that was precious,

That bright on the bone the blade-edge did weaken,

Bit more feebly than his folk-leader needed,

115 Burdened with bale-griefs. Then the barrow-protector,

When the sword-blow had fallen, was fierce in his
spirit,

Flinging his fires, flamings of battle

Gleamed then afar: the gold-friend of Weders

Boasted no conquests, his battle-sword failed him

120 Naked in conflict, as by no means it ought to,

Long-trusty weapon. 'Twas no slight undertaking

That Ecgtheow's famous offspring would leave

The drake-cavern's bottom; he must live in some region

Other than this, by the will of the dragon,

125 As each one of earthmen existence must forfeit.

'Twas early thereafter the excellent warriors

Met with each other. Anew and afresh

The hoard-ward took heart (gasps heaved then his
bosom):

Sorrow he suffered encircled with fire

130 Who the people erst governed. His companions by no
means

Were banded about him, bairns of the princes,

With valorous spirit, but they sped to the forest,

Seeking for safety. The soul-deeps of one were

Ruffled by care: kin-love can never

135 Aught in him waver who well doth consider.

Beowulf calls out
under the stone
arches.

The terrible
encounter.

Beowulf
brandishes his
sword,

and stands
against his shield.

The dragon coils
himself.

The dragon rages

Beowulf's sword
fails him.

The combat is
renewed.

The great hero is
reduced to
extremities.

His comrades
flee!

Blood is thicker
than water.

[1] The clause 2520(2)-2522(1), rendered by 'Wist I ... monster,' Gr., followed by S., translates substantially as follows: *If I knew how else I might combat the boastful defiance of the monster.*—The translation turns upon 'wiðgripan,' a word not understood.

[2] B. emends and translates: *I will not flee the space of a foot from the guard of the barrow, but there shall be to us a fight at the wall, as fate decrees, each one's Creator.*

[3] The translation of this passage is based on 'unslaw' (2565), accepted by H.-So., in lieu of the long-standing 'ungléaw.' The former is taken as an adj. limiting 'sweord'; the latter as an adj. c. 'gúð-cyning': *The good war-king, rash with edges, brandished his sword, his old relic.* The latter gives a more rhetorical Anglo-Saxon (poetical) sentence.

XXXVI.

WIGLAF THE TRUSTY.—BEOWULF IS DESERTED BY FRIENDS AND BY SWORD.

| | | |
|----|---|--|
| 5 | <p>The son of Weohstan was Wiglaf entitled, Shield-warrior precious, prince of the Scylfings, Ælfhere's kinsman: he saw his dear liegeland Enduring the heat 'neath helmet and visor.</p> | <p>Wiglaf remains true—the ideal Teutonic liegeman.</p> |
| 10 | <p>Then he minded the holding that erst he had given him, The Wægmunding warriors' wealth-blessèd homestead, Each of the folk-rights his father had wielded; He was hot for the battle, his hand seized the target, The yellow-bark shield, he unsheathed his old weapon, Which was known among earthmen as the relic of Eanmund, Ohthere's offspring, whom, exiled and friendless, Weohstan did slay with sword-edge in battle, And carried his kinsman the clear-shining helmet, The ring-made burnie, the old giant-weapon</p> | <p>Wiglaf recalls Beowulf's generosity.</p> |
| 15 | <p>That Onela gave him, his boon-fellow's armor, Ready war-trappings: he the feud did not mention, Though he'd fatally smitten the son of his brother. Many a half-year held he the treasures, The bill and the burnie, till his bairn became able,</p> | |
| 20 | <p>Like his father before him, fame-deeds to 'complish; Then he gave him 'mong Geatmen a goodly array of Weeds for his warfare; he went from life then Old on his journey. 'Twas the earliest time then That the youthful champion might charge in the battle</p> | <p>This is Wiglaf's first battle as liegeman of Beowulf.</p> |
| 25 | <p>Aiding his liegeland; his spirit was dauntless. Nor did kinsman's bequest quail at the battle: This the dragon discovered on their coming together. Wiglaf uttered many a right-saying, Said to his fellows, sad was his spirit:</p> | |
| 30 | <p>"I remember the time when, tasting the mead-cup, We promised in the hall the lord of us all Who gave us these ring-treasures, that this battle- equipment, Swords and helmets, we'd certainly quite him, Should need of such aid ever befall him:</p> | <p>Wiglaf appeals to the pride of the cowards.</p> |
| 35 | <p>In the war-band he chose us for this journey spontaneously, Stirred us to glory and gave me these jewels, Since he held and esteemed us trust-worthy spearmen, Hardy helm-bearers, though this hero-achievement Our lord intended alone to accomplish,</p> | <p>How we have forfeited our liegeland's confidence!</p> |
| 40 | <p>Ward of his people, for most of achievements, Doings audacious, he did among earth-folk. The day is now come when the ruler of earthmen Needeth the vigor of valiant heroes:</p> | <p>Our lord is in sore need of us.</p> |
| 45 | <p>Let us wend us towards him, the war-prince to succor, While the heat yet rageth, horrible fire-fight. God wot in me, 'tis mickle the liefer The blaze should embrace my body and eat it With my treasure-bestower. Meseemeth not proper</p> | <p>I would rather die than go home with out my suzerain.</p> |

[90]

50

To bear our battle-shields back to our country,
'Less first we are able to fell and destroy the
Long-hating foeman, to defend the life of
The prince of the Weders. Well do I know 't isn't
Earned by his exploits, he only of Geatmen
Sorrow should suffer, sink in the battle:

Surely he does
not deserve to die
alone.

55

Brand and helmet to us both shall be common,
¹Shield-cover, burnie." Through the bale-smoke he stalked then,
Went under helmet to the help of his chieftain,

60

Briefly discoursing: "Beowulf dear,
Perform thou all fully, as thou formerly saidst,
In thy youthful years, that while yet thou livedst
Thou wouldst let thine honor not ever be lessened.

Wiglaf reminds
Beowulf of his
youthful boasts.

65

Thy life thou shalt save, mighty in actions,
Atheling undaunted, with all of thy vigor;
I'll give thee assistance." The dragon came raging,
Wild-mooded stranger, when these words had been
uttered

The monster
advances on
them.

70

('Twas the second occasion), seeking his enemies,
Men that were hated, with hot-gleaming fire-waves;
With blaze-billows burned the board to its edges:
The fight-armor failed then to furnish assistance
To the youthful spear-hero: but the young-aged stripling
Quickly advanced 'neath his kinsman's war-target,
Since his own had been ground in the grip of the fire.

75

Then the warrior-king was careful of glory,
He soundly smote with sword-for-the-battle,
That it stood in the head by hatred driven;
Nægling was shivered, the old and iron-made
Brand of Beowulf in battle deceived him.

Beowulf strikes at
the dragon.

80

'Twas denied him that edges of irons were able
To help in the battle; the hand was too mighty
²Which every weapon, as I heard on inquiry,
Outstruck in its stroke, when to struggle he carried
The wonderful war-sword: it waxed him no better.

His sword fails
him.

85

Then the people-despoiler—third of his onsets—
Fierce-raging fire-drake, of feud-hate was mindful,
Charged on the strong one, when chance was
afforded,
Heated and war-grim, seized on his neck
With teeth that were bitter; he bloody did wax with
Soul-gore seething; sword-blood in waves boiled.

The dragon
advances on
Beowulf again.

[1] The passage '*Brand ... burnie*,' is much disputed. In the first place, some eminent critics assume a gap of at least two half-verses.—'Úrum' (2660), being a peculiar form, has been much discussed. 'Byrdu-scrúd' is also a crux. B. suggests 'býwdu-scrúd' = *splendid vestments*. Nor is 'bám' accepted by all, 'béon' being suggested. Whatever the individual words, the passage must mean, "*I intend to share with him my equipments of defence.*"

[2] B. would render: *Which, as I heard, excelled in stroke every sword that he carried to the strife, even the strongest (sword).* For 'Ponne' he reads 'Pone,' rel. pr.

[91]

XXXVII.

THE FATAL STRUGGLE.—BEOWULF'S LAST MOMENTS.

Then I heard that at need of the king of the people
The upstanding earlman exhibited prowess,
Vigor and courage, as suited his nature;

Wiglaf defends
Beowulf.

¹He his head did not guard, but the high-minded liegeman's

| | | |
|------|--|--|
| 5 | Hand was consumed, when he succored his kinsman, So he struck the strife-bringing strange-comer lower, Earl-thane in armor, that <i>in</i> went the weapon Gleaming and plated, that 'gan then the fire ² | |
| 10 | Later to lessen. The liegeland himself then Retained his consciousness, brandished his war-knife, Battle-sharp, bitter, that he bare on his armor: The Weder-lord cut the worm in the middle. | Beowulf draws his knife, and cuts the dragon. |
| 15 | They had felled the enemy (life drove out then ³ Puissant prowess), the pair had destroyed him, Land-chiefs related: so a liegeman should prove him, A thaneman when needed. To the prince 'twas the last of His era of conquest by his own great achievements, | |
| [92] | The latest of world-deeds. The wound then began Which the earth-dwelling dragon erstwhile had wrought him | Beowulf's wound swells and burns. |
| 20 | To burn and to swell. He soon then discovered That bitterest bale-woe in his bosom was raging, Poison within. The atheling advanced then, That along by the wall, he prudent of spirit | He sits down exhausted. |
| 25 | Might sit on a settle; he saw the giant-work, How arches of stone strengthened with pillars The earth-hall eternal inward supported. Then the long-worthy liegeman laved with his hand the | |
| 30 | Far-famous chieftain, gory from sword-edge, Refreshing the face of his friend-lord and ruler, Sated with battle, unbinding his helmet. Beowulf answered, of his injury spake he, His wound that was fatal (he was fully aware He had lived his allotted life-days enjoying The pleasures of earth; then past was entirely | Wiglaf bathes his lord's head. |
| 35 | His measure of days, death very near): "My son I would give now my battle-equipments, Had any of heirs been after me granted, Along of my body. This people I governed Fifty of winters: no king 'mong my neighbors Dared to encounter me with comrades-in-battle, Try me with terror. The time to me ordered I bided at home, mine own kept fitly, Sought me no snares, swore me not many Oaths in injustice. Joy over all this | Beowulf regrets that he has no son. |
| 45 | I'm able to have, though ill with my death-wounds; Hence the Ruler of Earthmen need not charge me With the killing of kinsmen, when cometh my life out Forth from my body. Fare thou with haste now To behold the hoard 'neath the hoar-grayish stone, Well-lovèd Wiglaf, now the worm is a-lying, Sore-wounded sleepeth, disseized of his treasure. Go thou in haste that treasures of old I, Gold-wealth may gaze on, together see lying | I can rejoice in a well-spent life. |
| 50 | The ether-bright jewels, be easier able, Having the heap of hoard-gems, to yield my Life and the land-folk whom long I have governed." | Bring me the hoard, Wiglaf, that my dying eyes may be refreshed by a sight of it. |
| [93] | 55 | |

[1] B. renders: *He (W)* did not regard his (*the dragon's head*) (since Beowulf had struck it without effect), *but struck the dragon a little lower down*.—One crux is to find out *whose head* is meant; another is to bring out the antithesis between 'head' and 'hand.'

[2] 'Þæt þæt fýr' (2702), S. emends to 'þá þæt fýr' = *when the fire began to grow less intense afterward*. This emendation relieves the passage of a plethora of conjunctive *þæt*'s.

[3] For 'gefyldan' (2707), S. proposes 'gefyldde.' The passage would read: *He felled the foe (life drove out strength), and they then both had destroyed him, chieftains related*. This gives Beowulf the credit of having felled the dragon; then they combine to annihilate him.—For 'ellen' (2707), Kl. suggests 'e(a)llne.'—The reading '*life drove out strength*' is very unsatisfactory and very

Aloft it shall tower on Whale's-Ness uprising,
 That earls of the ocean hereafter may call it
 Beowulf's barrow, those who barks ever-dashing
 55 From a distance shall drive o'er the darkness of waters."
 The bold-mooded troop-lord took from his neck then The hero's last
 The ring that was golden, gave to his liegeman, gift
 The youthful war-hero, his gold-flashing helmet,
 His collar and war-mail, bade him well to enjoy them:
 60 "Thou art latest left of the line of our kindred, and last words.
 Of Wægmunding people: Weird hath offcarried
 All of my kinsmen to the Creator's glory,
 Earls in their vigor: I shall after them fare."
 'Twas the aged liegeland's last-spoken word in
 65 His musings of spirit, ere he mounted the fire,
 The battle-waves burning: from his bosom departed
 His soul to seek the sainted ones' glory.

[1] The word 'oferhígian' (2767) being vague and little understood, two quite distinct translations of this passage have arisen. One takes 'oferhígian' as meaning 'to exceed,' and, inserting 'hord' after 'gehwone,' renders: *The treasure may easily, the gold in the ground, exceed in value every hoard of man, hide it who will.* The other takes 'oferhígian' as meaning 'to render arrogant,' and, giving the sentence a moralizing tone, renders substantially as in the body of this work. (Cf. 28 13 et seq.)

[2] The passage beginning here is very much disputed. 'The bill of the old lord' is by some regarded as Beowulf's sword; by others, as that of the ancient possessor of the hoard. 'Ær gescód' (2778), translated in this work as verb and adverb, is by some regarded as a compound participial adj. = *sheathed in brass.*

XXXIX.

THE DEAD FOES.—WIGLAF'S BITTER TAUNTS.

It had wofully chanced then the youthful retainer Wiglaf is sorely
 To behold on earth the most ardent-belovèd grieved to see his
 At his life-days' limit, lying there helpless. lord look so un-
 The slayer too lay there, of life all bereavèd, warlike.
 5 Horrible earth-drake, harassed with sorrow:
 The round-twisted monster was permitted no longer The dragon has
 To govern the ring-hoards, but edges of war-swords plundered his last
 Mightily seized him, battle-sharp, sturdy hoard.
 10 Leavings of hammers, that still from his wounds
 The flier-from-farland fell to the earth
 Hard by his hoard-house, hopped he at midnight
 Not e'er through the air, nor exulting in jewels
 Suffered them to see him: but he sank then to earthward
 Through the hero-chief's handwork. I heard sure it throve then
 15 But few in the land of liegemen of valor, Few warriors
 Though of every achievement bold he had proved him, dared to face the
 To run 'gainst the breath of the venomous scather, monster.
 Or the hall of the treasure to trouble with hand-blows,
 If he watching had found the ward of the hoard-hall
 20 On the barrow abiding. Beowulf's part of
 The treasure of jewels was paid for with death;
 Each of the twain had attained to the end of
 Life so unlasting. Not long was the time till
 The tardy-at-battle returned from the thicket, The cowardly
 25 The timid truce-breakers ten all together, thanes come out
 Who durst not before play with the lances of the thicket.
 In the prince of the people's pressing emergency;
 But blushing with shame, with shields they betook They are

| | | |
|------|---|---|
| | them, | ashamed of their desertion. |
| 30 | With arms and armor where the old one was lying: They gazed upon Wiglaf. He was sitting exhausted, Foot-going fighter, not far from the shoulders Of the lord of the people, would rouse him with water; No whit did it help him; though he hoped for it keenly, He was able on earth not at all in the leader | |
| 35 | Life to retain, and nowise to alter The will of the Wielder; the World-Ruler's power ¹ Would govern the actions of each one of heroes, As yet He is doing. From the young one forthwith then | Wiglaf is ready to excortiate them. |
| 40 | Could grim-worded greeting be got for him quickly Whose courage had failed him. Wiglaf discoursed then, Weohstan his son, sad-mooded hero, Looked on the hated: "He who soothness will utter Can say that the liegelord who gave you the jewels, The ornament-armor wherein ye are standing, | He begins to taunt them. |
| 45 | When on ale-bench often he offered to hall-men Helmet and burnie, the prince to his liegemen, As best upon earth he was able to find him,— That he wildly wasted his war-gear undoubtedly | Surely our lord wasted his armor on poltroons. |
| [97] | When battle o'ertook him. ² The troop-king no need had | |
| 50 | To glory in comrades; yet God permitted him, Victory-Wielder, with weapon unaided Himself to avenge, when vigor was needed. I life-protection but little was able To give him in battle, and I 'gan, notwithstanding, | He, however, got along without you |
| 55 | Helping my kinsman (my strength overtaxing): He waxed the weaker when with weapon I smote on My mortal opponent, the fire less strongly Flamed from his bosom. Too few of protectors Came round the king at the critical moment. | With some aid, I could have saved our liegelord |
| 60 | Now must ornament-taking and weapon-bestowing, Home-joyance all, cease for your kindred, Food for the people; each of your warriors Must needs be bereavèd of rights that he holdeth In landed possessions, when faraway nobles | Gift-giving is over with your people: the ring-lord is dead. |
| 65 | Shall learn of your leaving your lord so basely, The dastardly deed. Death is more pleasant To every earlman than infamous life is!" | What is life without honor? |

[1] For 'dædum rædan' (2859) B. suggests 'déað árædan,' and renders: *The might (or judgment) of God would determine death for every man, as he still does.*

[2] Some critics, H. himself in earlier editions, put the clause, 'When ... him' (A.-S. 'þá ... beget') with the following sentence; that is, they make it dependent upon 'þorfte' (2875) instead of upon 'forwurpe' (2873).

XL.

THE MESSENGER OF DEATH.

| | | |
|------|---|--|
| | Then he charged that the battle be announced at the hedge | Wiglaf sends the news of Beowulf's death to liegemen near by. |
| 5 | Up o'er the cliff-edge, where the earl-troopers bided The whole of the morning, mood-wretched sat them, Bearers of battle-shields, both things expecting, The end of his lifetime and the coming again of The liegelord beloved. Little reserved he Of news that was known, who the ness-cliff did travel, But he truly discoursed to all that could hear him: "Now the free-giving friend-lord of the folk of the | The messenger |
| [98] | | |

| | | |
|---------|---|---|
| | Weders, | speaks. |
| 10 | The folk-prince of Geatmen, is fast in his death-bed, By the deeds of the dragon in death-bed abideth; Along with him lieth his life-taking foeman Slain with knife-wounds: he was wholly unable To injure at all the ill-planning monster | |
| 15 | With bite of his sword-edge. Wiglaf is sitting, Offspring of Wihstan, up over Beowulf, Earl o'er another whose end-day hath reached him, Head-watch holdeth o'er heroes unliving, ¹ | Wiglaf sits by our dead lord. |
| 20 | For friend and for foeman. The folk now expecteth A season of strife when the death of the folk-king To Frankmen and Frisians in far-lands is published. The war-hatred waxed warm 'gainst the Hugmen, When Higelac came with an army of vessels Faring to Friesland, where the Frankmen in battle | Our lord's death will lead to attacks from our old foes. |
| 25 | Humbled him and bravely with overnight 'complished That the mail-clad warrior must sink in the battle, Fell 'mid his folk-troop: no fret-gems presented The atheling to earlmen; aye was denied us Merewing's mercy. The men of the Swedelands | Higelac's death recalled. |
| 30 | For truce or for truth trust I but little; But widely 'twas known that near Ravenswood Ongentheow Sundered Hæthcyn the Hrethling from life-joys, When for pride overweening the War-Scylfings first did | Hæthcyn's fall referred to. |
| 35 | Seek the Geatmen with savage intentions. Early did Ohthere's age-laden father, Old and terrible, give blow in requital, Killing the sea-king, the queen-mother rescued, The old one his consort deprived of her gold, Onela's mother and Ohthere's also, | |
| [99] 40 | And then followed the feud-nursing foemen till hardly, Reaved of their ruler, they Ravenswood entered. Then with vast-numbered forces he assaulted the remnant, Weary with wounds, woe often promised The livelong night to the sad-hearted war-troop: | |
| 45 | Said he at morning would kill them with edges of weapons, Some on the gallows for glee to the fowls. Aid came after to the anxious-in-spirit At dawn of the day, after Higelac's bugle And trumpet-sound heard they, when the good one proceeded | |
| 50 | And faring followed the flower of the troopers. | |

[1] 'Hige-méðum' (2910) is glossed by H. as dat. plu. (= for the dead). S. proposes 'hige-méðe,' nom. sing. limiting Wigláf; i.e. *W.*, *mood-weary, holds head-watch o'er friend and foe.*—B. suggests taking the word as dat. inst. plu. of an abstract noun in '-u.' The translation would be substantially the same as S.'s.

XLI.

THE MESSENGER'S RETROSPECT.

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| | "The blood-stained trace of Swedes and Geatmen, The death-rush of warmen, widely was noticed, How the folks with each other feud did awaken. The worthy one went then ¹ with well-beloved comrades, | The messenger continues, and refers to the feuds of Swedes and Geats. |
| 5 | Old and dejected to go to the fastness, Ongentheo earl upward then turned him; Of Higelac's battle he'd heard on inquiry, The exultant one's prowess, despaired of resistance, | |

[100]

10

With earls of the ocean to be able to struggle,
'Gainst sea-going sailors to save the hoard-treasure,
His wife and his children; he fled after thenceward
Old 'neath the earth-wall. Then was offered pursuance

15

To the braves of the Swedemen, the banner² to Higelac.
They fared then forth o'er the field-of-protection,
When the Hrethling heroes hedgeward had thronged them.
Then with edges of irons was Ongentheow driven,
The gray-haired to tarry, that the troop-ruler had to
Suffer the power solely of Eofor:

20

Wulf then wildly with weapon assaulted him,
Wonred his son, that for swinge of the edges
The blood from his body burst out in currents,
Forth 'neath his hair. He feared not however,
Gray-headed Scylfing, but speedily quited

Wulf wounds
Ongentheow.

25

The wasting wound-stroke with worse exchange,
When the king of thethane-troop thither did turn him:
The wise-mooded son of Wonred was powerless
To give a return-blow to the age-hoary man,
But his head-shielding helmet first hewed he to pieces,
That flecked with gore perforce he did totter,

Ongentheow
gives a stout blow
in return.

30

Fell to the earth; not fey was he yet then,
But up did he spring though an edge-wound had reached him.

Then Higelac's vassal, valiant and dauntless,
When his brother lay dead, made his broad-bladed
weapon,

Eofor smites
Ongentheow
fiercely.

35

Giant-sword ancient, defence of the giants,
Bound o'er the shield-wall; the folk-prince succumbed then,
Shepherd of people, was pierced to the vitals.
There were many attendants who bound up his
kinsman,

Ongentheow is
slain.

40

Carried him quickly when occasion was granted
That the place of the slain they were suffered to manage.
This pending, one hero plundered the other,
His armor of iron from Ongentheow ravished,
His hard-sword hilted and helmet together;
The old one's equipments he carried to Higelac.

Eofor takes the
old king's war-
gear to Higelac.

45

He the jewels received, and rewards 'mid the troopers
Graciously promised, and so did accomplish:
The king of the Weders requited the war-rush,
Hrethel's descendant, when home he repaired him,
To Eofor and Wulf with wide-lavished treasures,
To each of them granted a hundred of thousands
In land and rings wrought out of wire:

Higelac rewards
the brothers.

[101]

50

None upon mid-earth needed to twit him³
With the gifts he gave them, when glory they
conquered;

His gifts were
beyond cavil.

55

And to Eofor then gave he his one only daughter,
The honor of home, as an earnest of favor.
That's the feud and hatred—as ween I 'twill happen—
The anger of earthmen, that earls of the Swedemen
Will visit on us, when they hear that our leader

To Eofor he also
gives his only
daughter in
marriage.

60

Lifeless is lying, he who longtime protected
His hoard and kingdom 'gainst hating assailers,
Who on the fall of the heroes defended of yore
The deed-mighty Scyldings,⁴ did for the troopers
What best did avail them, and further moreover
Hero-deeds 'complished. Now is haste most fitting,
That the lord of liegemen we look upon yonder,

It is time for us to
pay the last
marks of respect
to our lord.

65

And *that* one carry on journey to death-pyre
Who ring-presents gave us. Not aught of it all
Shall melt with the brave one—there's a mass of bright jewels,
Gold beyond measure, grewsomely purchased
And ending it all ornament-rings too

70

Bought with his life; these fire shall devour,

| | | |
|-------|---|--------------------|
| | Flame shall cover, no earlman shall wear | |
| | A jewel-memento, nor beautiful virgin | |
| | Have on her neck rings to adorn her, | |
| | But wretched in spirit bereaved of gold-gems | |
| 75 | She shall oft with others be exiled and banished, | |
| [102] | Since the leader of liegemen hath laughter forsaken, | |
| | Mirth and merriment. Hence many a war-spear | |
| | Cold from the morning shall be clutched in the fingers, | |
| | Heaved in the hand, no harp-music's sound shall | |
| 80 | Waken the warriors, but the wan-coated raven | |
| | Fain over fey ones freely shall gabble, | |
| | Shall say to the eagle how he sped in the eating, | |
| | When, the wolf his companion, he plundered the slain." | |
| | So the high-minded hero was rehearsing these stories | |
| 85 | Loathsome to hear; he lied as to few of | |
| | Weirds and of words. All the war-troop arose then, | The warriors go |
| | 'Neath the Eagle's Cape sadly betook them, | sadly to look at |
| | Weeping and woful, the wonder to look at. | Beowulf's lifeless |
| | They saw on the sand then soulless a-lying, | body. |
| 90 | His slaughter-bed holding, him who rings had given them | |
| | In days that were done; then the death-bringing moment | |
| | Was come to the good one, that the king very warlike, | |
| | Wielder of Weders, with wonder-death perished. | |
| | First they beheld there a creature more wondrous, | |
| 95 | The worm on the field, in front of them lying, | They also see the |
| | The foeman before them: the fire-spewing dragon, | dragon. |
| | Ghostly and grisly guest in his terrors, | |
| | Was scorched in the fire; as he lay there he measured | |
| | Fifty of feet; came forth in the night-time ⁵ | |
| 100 | To rejoice in the air, thereafter departing | |
| | To visit his den; he in death was then fastened, | |
| | He would joy in no other earth-hollowed caverns. | |
| | There stood round about him beakers and vessels, | |
| | Dishes were lying and dear-valued weapons, | |
| 105 | With iron-rust eaten, as in earth's mighty bosom | |
| | A thousand of winters there they had rested: | |
| | That mighty bequest then with magic was guarded, | The hoard was |
| | Gold of the ancients, that earlman not any | under a magic |
| | The ring-hall could touch, save Ruling-God only, | spell. |
| [103] | 110 Sooth-king of Vict'ries gave whom He wished to | |
| | ⁶ (He is earth-folk's protector) to open the treasure, | God alone could |
| | E'en to such among mortals as seemed to Him proper. | give access to it. |

[1] For 'góða,' which seems a surprising epithet for a Geat to apply to the "terrible" Ongentheow, B. suggests 'gomela.' The passage would then stand: 'The old one went then,' etc.

[2] For 'segn Higeláce,' K., Th., and B. propose 'segn Higeláces,' meaning: *Higelac's banner followed the Swedes (in pursuit)*.—S. suggests 'sæcc Higeláces,' and renders: *Higelac's pursuit*.—The H.-So. reading, as translated in our text, means that the banner of the enemy was captured and brought to Higelac as a trophy.

[3] The rendering given in this translation represents the king as being generous beyond the possibility of reproach; but some authorities construe 'him' (2996) as plu., and understand the passage to mean that no one reproached the two brothers with having received more reward than they were entitled to.

[4] The name 'Scyldingas' here (3006) has caused much discussion, and given rise to several theories, the most important of which are as follows: (1) After the downfall of Hrothgar's family, Beowulf was king of the Danes, or Scyldings. (2) For 'Scyldingas' read 'Scylfingas'—that is, after killing Eadgils, the Scylfing prince, Beowulf conquered his land, and held it in subjection. (3) M. considers 3006 a thoughtless repetition of 2053. (Cf. H.-So.)

[5] B. takes 'nihtes' and 'hwílum' (3045) as separate adverbial cases, and renders: *Joy in the air had he of yore by night, etc.* He thinks that the idea of vanished time ought to be expressed.

[6] The parenthesis is by some emended so as to read: (1) (*He* (i.e. *God*) *is the hope of men*); (2) (*he is the hope of heroes*). Gr.'s reading has no parenthesis, but says: ... *could touch, unless God himself, true king of victories, gave to whom he would to open the treasure, the secret place of enchanters, etc.* The

10 Mingled with weeping (the wind-roar subsided)
 Till the building of bone it had broken to pieces,
 Hot in the heart. Heavy in spirit
 They mood-sad lamented the men-leader's ruin;
 And mournful measures the much-grieving widow
 15 * * * * *
 * * * * *
 * * * * *
 * * * * *
 * * * * *
 20 * * * * *

The men of the Weders made accordingly
 A hill on the height, high and extensive,
 Of sea-going sailors to be seen from a distance,
 And the brave one's beacon built where the fire was,
 25 In ten-days' space, with a wall surrounded it,
 As wisest of world-folk could most worthily plan it.
 They placed in the barrow rings and jewels,

The Weders carry
 out their lord's
 last request.

[107] All such ornaments as erst in the treasure
 War-mooded men had won in possession:
 30 The earnings of earlmen to earth they entrusted,
 The gold to the dust, where yet it remaineth
 As useless to mortals as in foregoing eras.
 'Round the dead-mound rode then the doughty-in-battle,
 Bairns of all twelve of the chiefs of the people,
 35 More would they mourn, lament for their ruler,
 Speak in measure, mention him with pleasure,
 Weighed his worth, and his warlike achievements
 Mightily commended, as 'tis meet one praise his
 Liegelord in words and love him in spirit,
 40 When forth from his body he fares to destruction.
 So lamented mourning the men of the Geats,
 Fond-loving vassals, the fall of their lord,
 Said he was kindest of kings under heaven,
 Gentlest of men, most winning of manner,
 45 Friendliest to folk-troops and fondest of honor.

Rings and gems
 are laid in the
 barrow.

They mourn for
 their lord, and
 sing his praises.

An ideal king.

[109]

ADDENDA.

SEVERAL discrepancies and other oversights have been noticed in the H.-So. glossary. Of these a good part were avoided by Harrison and Sharp, the American editors of *Beowulf*, in their last edition, 1888. The rest will, I hope, be noticed in their fourth edition. As, however, this book may fall into the hands of some who have no copy of the American edition, it seems best to notice all the principal oversights of the German editors.

From há m (194).—Notes and glossary conflict; the latter not having been altered to suit the conclusions accepted in the former.

Þær gelýfan sceal dryhtnes dóme (440).—Under 'dóm' H. says 'the might of the Lord'; while under 'gelýfan' he says 'the judgment of the Lord.'

Eal bencþelu (486).—Under 'benc-þelu' H. says *nom. plu.*; while under 'eal' he says *nom. sing.*

Heatho-ræmas (519).—Under 'ætberan' H. translates 'to the Heathoremes'; while under 'Heatho-ræmas' he says 'Heathoræmas reaches Breca in the swimming-match with Beowulf.' Harrison and Sharp (3d edition, 1888) avoid the discrepancy.

Fáh féond-scaða (554).—Under 'féond-scaða' H. says 'a gleaming sea-monster'; under 'fáh' he says 'hostile.'

Onfeng hraðe inwit-þancum (749).—Under 'onfón' H. says 'he received the maliciously-disposed one'; under 'inwit-þanc' he says 'he grasped,' etc.

Níð-wundor séon (1366).—Under 'níð-wundor' H. calls this word itself *nom. sing.*; under 'séon' he translates it as *accus. sing.*, understanding 'man' as subject of 'séon.' H. and S. (3d edition) make the correction.

Forgeaf hilde-bille (1521).—H., under the second word, calls it instr. dat.; while under ‘forgifan’ he makes it the dat. of indir. obj. H. and S. (3d edition) make the change.

Brád and brún-ecg (1547).—Under ‘brád’ H. says ‘das breite Hüftmesser mit bronzener Klinge’; under ‘brún-ecg’ he says ‘ihr breites Hüftmesser mit blitzender Klinge.’

[110]

Yðelíce (1557).—Under this word H. makes it modify ‘ástód.’ If this be right, the punctuation of the fifth edition is wrong. See H. and S., appendix.

Sélrán gesóhte (1840).—Under ‘sél’ and ‘gesécan’ H. calls these two words accus. plu.; but this is clearly an error, as both are nom. plu., pred. nom. H. and S. correct under ‘sél.’

Wið sylfne (1978).—Under ‘wið’ and ‘gesittan’ H. says ‘wið = near, by’; under ‘self’ he says ‘opposite.’

þéow (2225) is omitted from the glossary.

For duguðum (2502).—Under ‘duguð’ H. translates this phrase, ‘in Tüchtigkeit’; under ‘for,’ by ‘vor der edlen Kriegerschaar.’

þær (2574).—Under ‘wealdan’ H. translates *þær* by ‘wo’; under ‘mótan,’ by ‘da.’ H. and S. suggest ‘if’ in both passages.

Wunde (2726).—Under ‘wund’ H. says ‘dative,’ and under ‘wæl-bléate’ he says ‘accus.’ It is without doubt accus., parallel with ‘benne.’

Strengum gebæded (3118).—Under ‘strengo’ H. says ‘Strengum’ = mit Macht; under ‘gebæded’ he translates ‘von den Sehnen.’ H. and S. correct this discrepancy by rejecting the second reading.

Bronda be láfe (3162).—A recent emendation. The fourth edition had ‘bronda betost.’ In the fifth edition the editor neglects to change the glossary to suit the new emendation. See ‘bewyrčan.’

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