BEOWULF

BEOWULF THE GOTH.

BEOWULF

AN OLD ENGLISH EPIC

(THE EARLIEST EPIC OF THE GERMANIC RACE)

TRANSLATED INTO MODERN
ENGLISH PROSE

BY

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WITH NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON
GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS, LTD.
NEW YORK: E. P. DUTTON & CO.

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INTRODUCTION

I

THE MANUSCRIPT

IN the Manuscript Saloon of the British Museum, in 'Case E., English Manuscripts', there lies a thick quarto volume, the open pages of which are covered with Anglo-Saxon writing. The printed label describes the volume as follows:—

> '135. BEOWULF: Epic poems in Anglo-Saxon. The unique manuscript of the oldest poem in the English language. Written in England about A.D. 1000. Vellum. [Cotton Vitellius A.XV]'.

The only existing manuscript—written in England—of the oldest poem in the English language!—it is a description that might well arrest the steps of the most indifferent stroller in the Manuscript Saloon and induce him to look for a while at this curious writing (some of which he finds to his surprise he can positively read), at the ink which has turned brown, and the vellum which has turned grey with age.

And, in truth, there is hardly a volume in the whole vast manuscript collection of the Museum that is more interesting to English and English-speaking people than this specimen of the old library formed by Sir Robert Cotton in the days of King Charles I., and quaintly classified under the names of the Roman emperors. This volume, now lying open in 'Case E', once stood in one of the great book-presses in Sir Robert Cotton's house at Westminster over which was a bust of the Emperor Vitellius. Upon other presses were the busts of the other eleven Cæsars; and so the books came to be known, and are still known, by these imperial names. There, for many years, and throughout many vicissitudes in their owner's career, this volume stood

among hundreds of other priceless manuscripts. What Sir Robert thought of this particular manuscript, whether he ever discussed it with his friends, whether he was aware that it was one of his greatest treasures, there is no means of knowing. It was not until the year 1705, when Queen Anne was reigning, that the few cultivated people in England who then cared anything whatever about the ancient language and literature of their own country became aware of its existence.

HUMFREY WANLEY'S COMMISSION

The fact was first made known by the antiquary Humfrey Wanley (1672–1726), who, in the years 1699 and 1700 was commissioned by Dr George Hickes, Dean of Worcester, one of the earliest and greatest students of Anglo-Saxon, to search throughout England for Anglo-Saxon manuscripts. The original letter from Dr Hickes to Humfrey Wanley, giving him instructions to examine the Anglo-Saxon manuscripts which were at Cambridge, is in existence among the Harleian manuscripts of the British Museum. It reads as follows:—

'Mr Wanley,—I pray you, when you are at Cambridge, to let inquirers know that my Book is advanced to the LV. sheet. That its prime cost will at least be a guiney in the lesser paper, that its title will be *Linguarum veterum Septentrionalium Thesaurus Grammatico-Criticus et Archæologicus*, and that you do not doubt but that it will answer the expectation of those learned men who have been pleased to encourage it.

'I hope you'l carry your Book of Specimens with you and shew it to those gentlemen I have written to, about you and your businesse.

'I advise you to keep company with none but men of learning and reputation; to let your conversation be with an air of respect and modesty to them; to behave yourself upon the place with candour, caution, and temperance; to avoid compotations; to go to bed in good time, and rise in good time; to let them see you are a man that observes houres and discipline; to make much of yourself; and want nothing, that is fit for you; and dayly to pray to God, without whome nothing can be successefull and prosperous, to blesse you with health, to prosper your handy-work, and to give you favour and acceptance with worthy men: and I pray you to take care that your Conversation with them

be civill and obliging, both for their satisfaction and your honour.

'In taking the Catalogue pray put the beginning and ending of every Tract and Homily, the first and last entire sentence, and the whole period, when they are not too long.

'I pray God to send you a good journey, and happy return to London, where we shall, God willing, meet; and after you have been sometime at Cambridge, send me a short account how all things succeed with you. Direct for Dr Hickes, at the next house beyond the furthest lamp towards the feilds in King's Street, Bloomsbury [in what is now Southampton Row, beyond Bloomsbury Place].—I am

'Your most affect. humble servt.

'GEO. HICKES.

'Mr Brown, who is a very learned worthy man, will direct you to good lodgeings.'

The results of Wanley's search at Cambridge and elsewhere are contained in a large folio volume, which forms the second volume of the *Linguarum Veterum Septentrionalium Thesaurus*—the *Treasury of Ancient Northern Languages*—which was published by Dr Hickes at the Sheldonian Theatre, Oxford, in 1705. The title of Wanley's volume is: 'A Catalogue of the Books, both written and printed, of the Ancient Northern Nations which exist in the Libraries of England'. The great collection preserved at Cotton House naturally occupies a considerable space in the volume. Wanley, no doubt, spent many an hour turning over the manuscripts there, and, we may hope, conducted his search, avoided 'compotations', and behaved himself generally according to the excellent advice of the worthy Dean.

THE COTTONIAN LIBRARY

The Cottonian manuscripts among which Wanley thus worked were at the time in the possession of Sir John Cotton, grandson of the great national benefactor, Sir Robert Bruce Cotton, to whom English history and English literature owe so deep a debt of gratitude. Sir Robert became interested in the antiquities of England quite early in life, and, as Mr Sims tells us in his Handbook to the Library of the British Museum, 'he neglected no

opportunity to acquire a number of chronicles, chartularies, and other original muniments which, at the late dissolution of the monasteries, had found their way into the hands of private persons. In these endeavours he was surpassed by none, nor was he in fact equalled by any of his emulous contemporaries, most of whom ultimately co-operated to increase the stock he was accumulating for the benefit of his country. The collection consists chiefly of Ancient Chronicles, Biblical MSS., State papers of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, chartularies, early copies of the Scriptures and of other works, transcripts of and extracts from Records, collections relative to various courts, offices, etc. The manuscripts written in the Anglo-Saxon language are very numerous and valuable. The Cottonian manuscripts form one of the chief sources from which historians and writers on constitutional subjects, topographers, antiquaries, biographers, and, in short, all persons interested in the literature or history of past ages, have derived their materials'.

Sir Robert Bruce Cotton died in 1631, heartbroken at the loss of his library, which had been twice seized by Government on the ground that the information which it contained was too dangerous to be disseminated, and that Sir Robert had allowed it to be used by the enemies of his country. 'On the last occasion of its seizure', says Mr Sims, 'the venerable founder declared that "by locking his books up from him they had broken his heart", and he caused it to be signified to the Privy Council that their "detaining his books from him without rendering any reason for the same had been the cause of his mortal malady".' At Sir Robert Bruce Cotton's death the library was delivered up to his only son, Sir Thomas Cotton, from whom it passed to his son, Sir John Cotton.

WANLEY'S DISCOVERY

In 1700, at about the time when Humfrey Wanley was at work among the Cottonian MSS. for Dr Hickes, a statute was passed 'for the better settling and preserving the library kept in the house at Westminster called Cotton House [the site was where the House of Lords now stands],

in the name and family of the Cottons for the benefit of the public'. And thus it came about that, the old suspicion of the dangerous contents of the library having disappeared from the minds of statesmen and ambassadors, its priceless contents, and especially its series of Anglo-Saxon documents, were open to the free inspection, not only of learned men such as Wanley and Dr Hickes, but to the general public, and from that day to this this freedom of access has remained untrammelled.

Wanley's Catalogue is itself one of the monuments of Anglo-Saxon literature, and worthy of the great work of which it forms part. At page 218 is the entry in which Wanley describes the manuscript volume in the Cottonian Library entitled 'Vitellius A.XV.', as 'Codex membraneus ex diversis simul compactis constans'—'a Parchment Codex consisting of several bound together'—and he goes on to enumerate the ten different manuscripts which made up, and still make up, the volume. When he came to No. 9 in the volume, Wanley must have felt something of that thrill which Keats felt when he first came upon Chapman's Homer—

> Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
> When a new planet swims into his ken,

but all he actually says of it in his Catalogue is that it is, 'Tractatus nobilissimus poetice scriptus', and, in accordance with the instructions given by Dr Hickes, he quotes the beginning of the poem (the first nineteen lines), which he calls the preface, and then the first twenty-one lines of the first section. Then he goes on to say: 'In hoc libro qui Poeseos Anglo Saxonicæ egregium est exemplum descripta videntur bella quæ Beowulfus, quidam Danus ex Regio Scyldingorum stirpe Ortus gessit contra Sueciae Regulos'—'In this book, which is a beautiful example of Anglo-Saxon poetry, there seem to be described the wars which Beowulf, a certain Dane, sprung from the royal stock of the Scyldings, waged against chieftains of Sweden!'

Such was the first description, the very first recorded mention of this, the earliest English poem, the earliest epic in any Germanic tongue! Would that Dr Hickes, when he looked over Wanley's Catalogue, as presumably he did,

had been sufficiently attracted by Wanley's description of this manuscript as *tractatus nobilissimus*, to have read it and had it copied out in full for his work! Had he done so what perplexities and controversies would have been spared to future students of the manuscript!

THE FIRE AT ASHBURNHAM HOUSE

The Cottonian collection was moved to Essex House in the Strand (where Essex Street now stands) in 1712 and remained there until 1730. The Government having purchased Ashburnham House, in Little Deans Yard, Westminster, for the housing of the library, the books and manuscripts were moved into it. There, in the next year, a fire broke out in the rooms appropriated to the collection which destroyed or injured about 200 out of the 958 volumes of manuscripts. This disastrous fire is thus briefly described in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, which, it must be remembered, was also a *Monthly Intelligencer*. Under the heading of 'Casualties', in the number for October, 1731, we read:—'23. A Fire broke out in the House of Mr Bently, adjoining to the King's School near Westminster Abbey, which burnt down that part of the House that contained the King's and Cottonian Libraries: almost all the printed Books were consumed, and part of the Manuscripts. Amongst the latter, those which Dr Bently had been collecting for his Greek Testament, for these last ten years, valued at 2000*l*'.

Unhappily, among the injured volumes was 'Vitellius A.XV', which contained *Beowulf*.

In 1753 an Act was passed 'for the purchase of the museum or collection of Sir Hans Sloane and of the Harleian collection of manuscripts and for providing one general repository for the better reception and more convenient use of the said collections and of the Cottonian Library and of the additions thereto'. In 1754 Montague House, Great Russell Street, was purchased by the trustees appointed under the Act, and in 1757 the public were first admitted to the newly-established 'British Museum'. In 1820 application was made to Parliament to erect a new building in place of Montague House, which had become inadequate

and insecure, and by 1850 its last remnant had disappeared and its site occupied by the present vast building, where such a disaster as that of 1731 is not likely to occur. In 1824 and 1845 steps were taken to restore the injured manuscripts of the Cottonian collection. The edges of the volume 'Vitellius A.XV' were scorched and rendered brittle by heat, and the ends of many of the lines of the poem of *Beowulf* were thus rendered illegible. For over fifty years this volume remained, with the other injured volumes, much as it was left by the fire.

THORKELIN'S TRANSCRIPTS

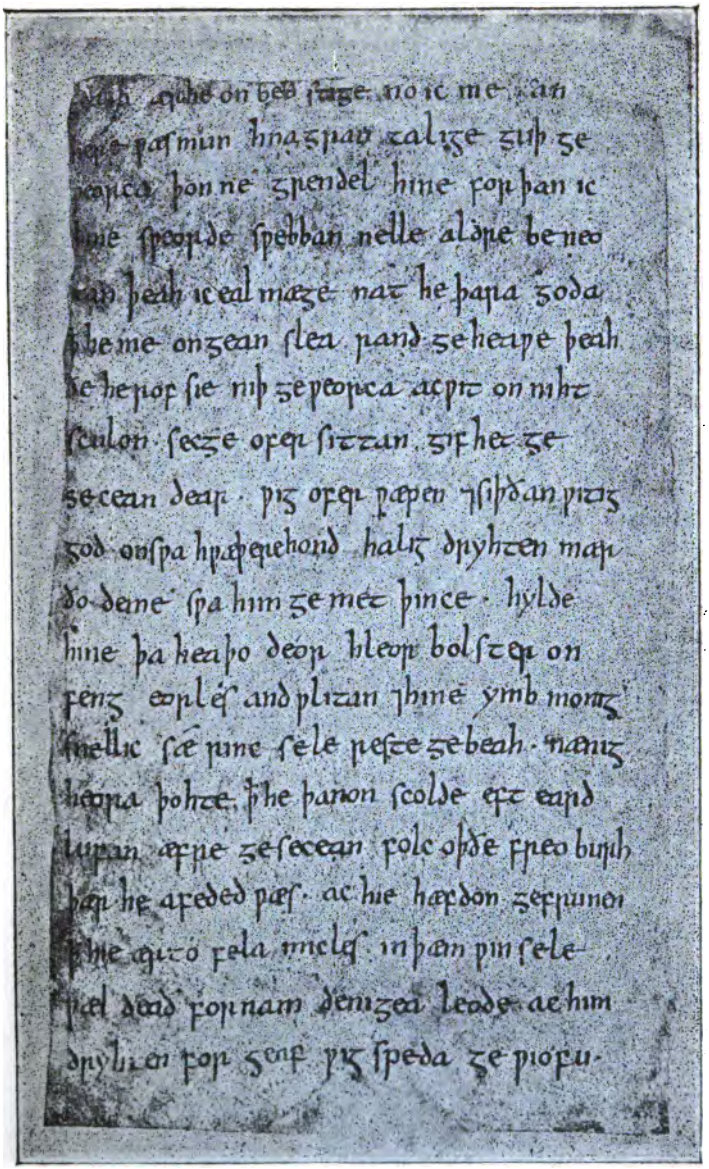
In 1787, Mr G. J. Thorkelin, a learned Icelander resident in Copenhagen, made a transcript of the Manuscript of *Beowulf*, and in the same year had another one made for him. From these transcripts Thorkelin prepared an edition of the poem under the auspices and with the generous assistance and encouragement of the Danish statesman, De Bülow. The whole of the material for the edition perished in the bombardment of Copenhagen by the English fleet in 1807, but the transcripts were saved. In 1815 Mr Thorkelin brought out the first printed edition of *Beowulf*. When, in 1830, Mr Thorpe collated that edition with the original manuscript, he found that the manuscript was evidently much less injured in 1786, when Thorkelin saw and used it, than in 1830, there being many words in Thorkelin's text which had disappeared in 1830. 'His ignorance of Anglo-Saxon', says Mr Thorpe, 'is alone a sufficient guarantee that those words were really found there and were not supplied by him. Very shortly after I had collated it, the Manuscript suffered still further detriment'.

THE FINAL RESTORATION OF THE MANUSCRIPT

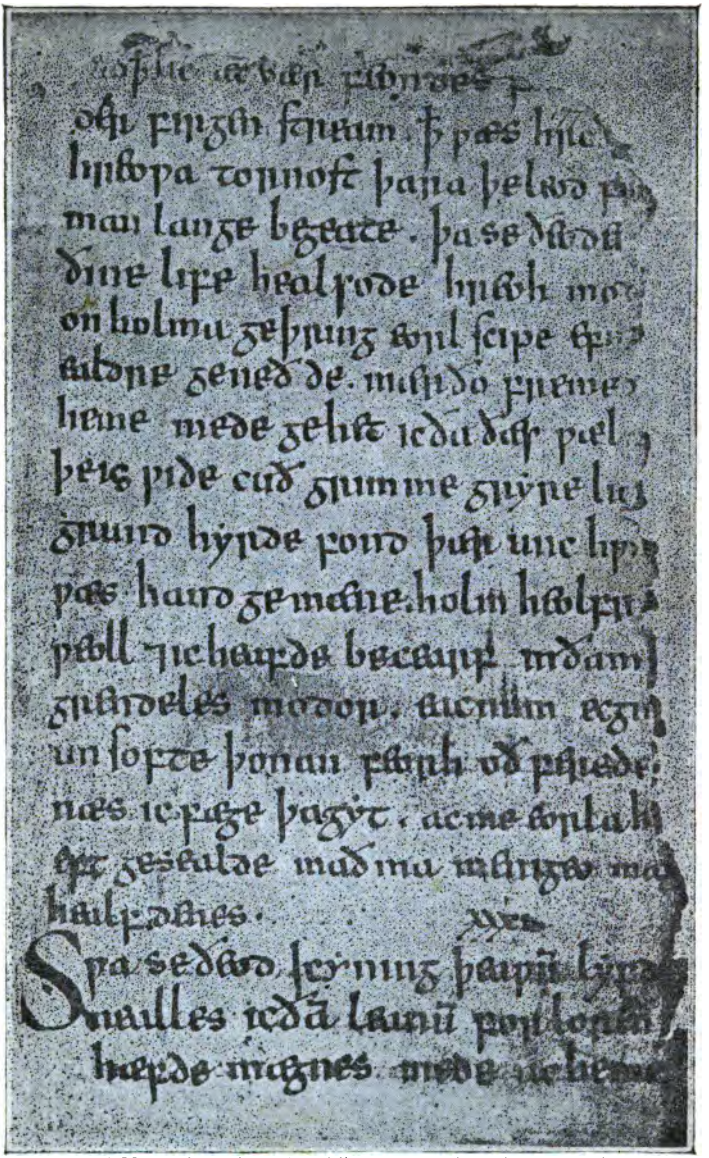
In 1882 the Early English Text Society published autotypes of the entire Manuscript, with a transliteration by Professor Julius Zupitza. The photographs were made by

Mr Praetorius. Professor Zupitza collated the autotypes with the Manuscript as well as with Thorkelin's two transcripts of it, which were sent from Copenhagen to the British Museum for the purpose. In his Preliminary Notice to the Autotype Reproduction Professor Zupitza says: 'The Manuscript did not suffer so much from the fire of 1731 itself as from its consequences, which would without doubt have been avoided if the Manuscript had been at once rebound as carefully as it has been rebound in our days. Even when Thorkelin used it the edges of a few pages only had crumbled off. But much more was gone by Kemble's time (1833–1837), and many letters and words which Kemble still saw are now no longer in existence. Further losses have been put a stop to by the new binding [each leaf is now separately inlaid]; but admirably as this has been done the binder could not help covering some letters or portions of letters in every back page with the edge of the paper which now surrounds every parchment leaf. . . . Both in the front and in the back pages transparent paper was employed by the binder, which, although it does not prevent the reader of the Manuscript from seeing what is under it, was yet very often the cause of some letters or parts of letters being reproduced in the facsimile indistinctly or not at all'. Professor Zupitza's autotyped and transliterated edition of the Manuscript is of almost equal value for the student as the Manuscript itself.

The Palæographical Society, in their *Facsimiles of Ancient Manuscripts and Inscriptions*, published in 1884–1894, give a photograph (in Vol. I, Series II, plate 54) of a page of the *Beowulf* Manuscript. Accompanying it is the following description of the Manuscript itself: 'The Anglo-Saxon Poem of *Beowulf*, written as prose, in a volume containing other works in the same language, in writing of the same and later dates. Vellum. 70 leaves, measuring generally 8 inches by 5 inches, with 20 to 22 lines in a page. The MS. was injured in the fire at Ashburnham House, Westminster, in 1731. Written about A.D. 1000. The leaves are now separately inlaid; the ruling on one side with a hard point. The writing is in two hands, the first in small, weakly-formed characters, the other heavier and bolder and more uniform'.



Beowulf Manuscript, folio 145 (verso) lines 676--697 (four-fifths actual size).
From J. R. Clark Hall's *Beowulf*.



Beowulf Manuscript, folio 177 (recto) lines 2177-2146 (four-fifths actual size).
From J. R. Clark Hall's *Beowulf*

THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT OF BEOWULF: ITS CHARACTERISTICS AND ITS IMPERFECTIONS

The Manuscript of *Beowulf*, written in A.D. 1000, is the work of two copyists, the first of whom wrote out 1939 lines, and the other the remaining 1243 lines, which make a total of 3182, according to the text as printed by Mr A. J. Wyatt in his edition of 1901 (Cambridge University Press). Mr Wyatt has noted the following characteristics of the Manuscript:—

(1) That the lines of the manuscript do not correspond with the verse-lines, if it had been written out in poetic form. (2) That the punctuation of the manuscript is meagre and untrustworthy. (3) That proper names are not written with capital letters, but the first word after a full stop is not infrequently written with a capital. (4) That vowel length is not marked as a rule. (5) That one word is sometimes written as two or even three words, and two words sometimes as one. (6) That hyphens are unknown to the scribes. (7) That the scribes were apparently mere copyists, not writing from memory nor from dictation, and that sometimes at least they did not understand what they were copying.

Besides this heavy bill of grievances against the copyists, Mr Wyatt mentions, among the inconsistencies with which the manuscript teems, its divergences in the method of writing and spelling the same word. Mr Clark Hall, one of the latest translators of the poem, calls the copyists 'unintelligent scribes, the second being inferior to the first'. Mr Thorpe calls their blunders enormous and puerile. 'All manuscripts of Anglo-Saxon poetry', he says, 'are deplorably inaccurate, evincing in almost every page the ignorance of an illiterate scribe, frequently (as was the monastic custom) copying from dictation, but of all Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, that of *Beowulf* may, I believe, be conscientiously pronounced the worst'. Kemble adds his testimony: 'The manuscript of *Beowulf* is unhappily among the most corrupt of all the Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, and corrupt they all are without exception'.

Of the general appearance of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, and of our *Beowulf* manuscript, Professor Ker has observed that 'In their handwriting and their shape they have the

air of libraries and learning about them, of wealth and dignity. The handsome pages of the Junius MS. in the Bodleian (the *Caedmon* Manuscript) belong to a learned world. The Book of *Roland*, lying near it, is different—an unpretending, cheap copy, not meant for patrons of learning to read, but more probably for the minstrel who chanted it. The *Beowulf* MS., though not so fine as the Junius one, is intended as a book to be read, and is got up with some care. From the look of it one places it naturally in the library of a great house or a monastic school; and the contents of it have the same sort of association; they do not belong to the unlearned in their present form'.

Thus, to summarize briefly the facts connected with the Manuscript of *Beowulf*: It is the work of two copyists, copying from an older manuscript in some tenth-century monastery of England; bought by Sir Robert Cotton in the seventeenth century (before 1631) at a time when the contents of monastic libraries which had not already been destroyed were scattered about over the land; brought to light by Wanley in his Catalogue in 1705; injured by fire in 1731; copied by Thorkelin, the Icelandic scholar, in 1786; first printed by Thorkelin in 1815, one hundred and ten years after its existence had been made known by Wanley.

Incredible as it may seem, during the whole of those years there was no scholar found in all England who apparently ever took the trouble to read, much less edit, the poem. Wanley himself could not have done so, or he would not have described it in print in his Catalogue as a poem 'Upon the Wars which a certain Dane named Beowulf waged against the rulers of Sweden'. It would be hard indeed to conceive of a title which should more completely describe what the poem is *not*.

II

THE ARGUMENT OF THE POEM

HAVING thus described the Manuscript of *Beowulf* and given its history, let us see what is the story which it tells; what is the subject of the poem contained in these ancient and rugged alliterative unrhymed lines of West-Saxon dialect.

In the very first line the poet strikes the Danish note which rings through the first two thousand lines of the poem—the glory of the warrior-kings of the 'Spear-Danes' in days of yore, and then immediately goes on to tell of their progenitor, Scyld 'of the Sheaf', after whom the Danes were called Scyldings. He touches upon the legend of Scyld's mysterious arrival from over the sea as a child; of his death; of the sending forth to sea of his corpse in a ship laden with armour and treasures. 'They let the sea bear him', he says, 'gave him to the Ocean over which he had come'. In this striking Prologue to the Epic the poet also mentions that Scyld's son and successor was a king named Beowulf (not the hero of the poem), a generous and liberal king, who was renowned not only in Denmark but in the Scede lands, the southern part of Sweden.

Among the sons of this second Danish king was Hrothgar, who determined to build a great Hall, the Hall 'Heorot', wherein he and his warriors should feast, and where he should bestow treasure upon them. But a monster in human form, a giant, one of the outcast race of Cain, who dwelt in the fens, irritated by the sounds of mirth and revelry which he heard as he stalked abroad at night, bursts into the Hall when the warriors are sleeping after a feast, and devours and carries off thirty of them. Grendel, (so is the demon named) returns the next night and many nights after with the same intent, with the result that the Hall is deserted, to the grief and humiliation of King Hrothgar and his people.

News of this is carried abroad 'in sad songs', and so reaches Gothland (the part of Sweden south of the lakes Wener and Wetter). There dwells the Gothic king, Hygelac. Among Hygelac's strongest warriors is his own nephew, Beowulf, famous for the strength of his grip. Beowulf determines to cross the sea to Hrothgar and rid him of Grendel. He sets sail with fourteen picked companions, arrives at the Hall Heorot, and, after being received in audience by Hrothgar, keeps watch in the Hall. Grendel comes at nightfall; kills one of Beowulf's men; goes, then, to seize Beowulf himself, but is himself seized in Beowulf's terrible grip. After a desperate struggle, in which the interior of the Hall is wrecked, Grendel's arm

is torn off at the shoulder ; he flies to his pool in the fen-land and there dies. Beowulf fixes the horrible arm and hand of the monster to the outer wall of the Hall. In the morning the Danes gather round the Hall, and some of them track Grendel by the blood-marks on the ground to his lair. A great banquet is given in honour of Beowulf, and he receives many costly gifts from Hrothgar and his queen, Wealtheow.

But the next night (Beowulf being lodged in the king's ' bowers ' and not in the Hall), when the Danes have again taken possession of the Hall, an avenger of Grendel comes in the shape of his mother, a demon as terrible as her son. She kills one of the king's chief men. Amid the renewed dismay and lamentation Beowulf undertakes his second adventure. He goes to the haunted pool, plunges in, fights the she-demon in a cavern beneath it, slays her there with an ancient giant sword which he sees hanging on the rocky wall, cuts off the head of the corpse of Grendel and bears it up through the waters. With it he brings the hilt of the ancient sword—all that is left of it, for the blade has melted in the poisonous blood of the demons. There is more banqueting, and Beowulf is laden with more rich gifts—armour and weapons, collar and armlets, a standard, and caparisoned horses.

The hero then returns with his men to his own land, gives his king and uncle, Hygelac, an account of his adventures, and, like a true and loyal thane, presents his lord and his queen with the greater part of the gifts which Hrothgar had given him, receiving from Hygelac gifts and honours in return.

On the death of Hygelac the throne of the Goths is offered to Beowulf, but he refuses it, and remains the loyal guardian and adviser of the young Heardred, son and successor of Hygelac. When Heardred is slain in battle, however, Beowulf becomes king of the Goths, and he rules well and wisely for fifty years, until a certain slave and outlaw, fleeing from his master's wrath, blunders into an ancient sepulchral tumulus, wherein there is a vast treasure of golden objects. This treasure is guarded by a great dragon, but the outlaw robs the hoard of a golden cup while the dragon is asleep, takes it to his lord as a peace-offering, and is forgiven his offence. But the dragon,

finding part of the treasure gone, rages round the mound vainly seeking the despoiler. In revenge he flies forth by night and desolates the country with his flaming breath. Beowulf's own home is thus destroyed. The hero, well stricken in years as he is, resolves to fight the dragon single-handed, his courage being no less than it was in the days when he slew the demons, Grendel and his dam. He goes with twelve attendants, guided by the outlaw, to the dragon's den and challenges the dragon, who immediately comes out. The fight goes hard with the old hero; his men, whom he had bidden to stand aloof, run away; only one of them, Wiglaf, comes to his lord's rescue. The dragon inflicts a mortal wound upon Beowulf, but he and Wiglaf together slay the beast. Beowulf bids Wiglaf bring out of the tumulus the treasure, that he may see it before he dies. Beowulf thanks the Ruler of all, King of Glory, Everlasting Lord, that he has been allowed to conquer; bids Wiglaf tell the Gothic warriors to raise for him a high mound on the Whale's Ness, so that seafarers driving their ships over the ocean foam may see it and call it Beowulf's Mound; gives his collar, helmet, and coat of mail to Wiglaf; says to him, 'Thou art the last of our race; fate has swept away all my kinsmen; I must follow them' —and so dies. The poem ends with the burning of Beowulf, and the building of the funeral mound as he had commanded.

Included in the story are several lays and episodes of great interest, skilfully worked in with the narrative—the LAY OF SIGEMUND (the earliest version of what was afterwards developed into the story of Siegfried and the dragon Fafnir); the LAY OF HEREMOD (one of the earlier dynasty of Danish kings before the coming of Scyld); the LAY OF FINN, king of the Frisians (especially interesting as being part of the ancient fragment of manuscript known as THE FIGHT AT FINN'S BURH, discovered in the library of Lambeth Palace, printed by Dean Hickes, but now lost); the STORY OF THRYTHO, wife of Offa, an ancient king of the Angles; and the EPISODE OF FREAWARU, daughter of Hrothgar and Wealtheow, prophetically foretold by Beowulf himself. Besides these there is an interesting reference to the 'Collar of the Brisings', a famous piece of art-work carried off by Hama when he fled from

Eormenric (Hermanric, king of the Ostro-Goths), who died in A.D. 375.

Such then, in brief summary, is the story of *Beowulf*. The merits and demerits of it have been discussed by every scholar, by every mere reader, time and again. Mr W. P. Ker, Professor of English Literature in University College, London, has summarized the matter in his book on the *Dark Ages* (1904). 'A reasonable view of the merit of *Beowulf*', he says, 'is not impossible, though rash enthusiasm may have made too much of it, while a correct and sober taste may have too contemptuously refused to attend to Grendel or the fire-drake. The fault of *Beowulf* is that there is nothing much in the story. The hero is occupied in killing monsters, like Hercules or Theseus. But there are other things in the lives of Hercules or Theseus besides the killing of the Hydra or of Procrustes. Beowulf has nothing else to do when he has killed Grendel and Grendel's mother in Denmark: he goes home to his own Gautland, until at last the rolling years bring the fire-drake and his last adventure. It is too simple. Yet the three chief episodes are well wrought and well diversified; they are not repetitions exactly; there is a change of temper between the wrestling with Grendel in the night at Heorot and the descent under water to encounter Grendel's mother; while the sentiment of the dragon is different again. But the great beauty, the real value of *Beowulf*, is in its dignity of style. In construction it is curiously weak, in a sense preposterous; for while the main story is simplicity itself, the merest commonplace of heroic legend, all about it in the historic allusions there are revelations of a whole world of tragedy. Yet with this radical defect—a disproportion that puts the irrelevances in the centre and the serious things on the outer edges—the poem of *Beowulf* is unmistakably heroic and weighty. The thing itself is cheap; the moral and the spirit of it can only be matched among the noblest authors'. Then, with reference to the accessory Lays and Episodes which are so interesting a feature of *Beowulf*, Professor Ker has, in his *Epic and Romance* (1897), some remarks which are most instructive. 'In the introduction of accessory matter', he says, 'standing in different degrees of relevance to the main plot, the practice of *Beowulf* is not essentially different from that of the classical

epic. In the *Iliad* we are allowed to catch something of the story of the old time before Agamemnon—the war of Thebes, Lycurgus, Jason, Heracles—and even of things less widely notable, such as, for instance, the business of Nestor in his youth. In *Beowulf* in a similar way the inexhaustible world outside the story is partly represented by means of allusions and digressions. The tragedy of Finnesburh is sung by the harper, the stories of Thrytho, of Heremod, of Sigemund are introduced like the stories of Lycurgus or of Jason in Homer. They are illustrations of the action taken from other cycles . . . In the episodic passages of *Beowulf* there are, curiously, the same degrees of relevance as in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. In *Beowulf* and in the Homeric poems there are episodes that are strictly relevant and consistent filling up the epic plan, opening out the perspective of the story; also episodes that, without being strictly relevant, are rightly proportioned and subordinated; and thirdly, episodes that seem to be irrelevant and may possibly be interpolations. All these kinds have the effect of increasing the mass as well as the variety of the work, and they give to *Beowulf* the character of a poem which, in dealing with one action out of an heroic cycle, is able by the way to hint at and partially represent a great number of other stories'.

III

ORIGIN OF THE POEM

The existing Manuscript of *Beowulf* was written, as we have seen, in the tenth century, or in the last years of the ninth, by two scribes or copyists who did not always understand what they were copying, a fact which may go to prove the antiquity of the manuscript from which they copied—for all we know, the original manuscript of the author.

Who was the author? What is the origin of the poem?

Carl Victor Müllenhoff was among the first to study

Beowulf from the point of view that unity of design in the poem was out of the question. The years [1849–1869] of study he gave to the poem brought him to the conclusion that six different authors were concerned in the production of it—an author, A, an interpolator, B, and four others who add, and interpolate, and amplify.

'The German method of studying what they call the Inner History of this poem', says Professor Earle, 'is to begin by forming an imaginary idea of the original epic, and then to employ this ideal for a standard of criticism. Professor Ten Brink, who has worked on these lines, describes his ideal of English epic poetry in its oral stage: "Simple in outline and plain in style, and therefore the contradictions, irregularities, inversions, repetitions which swarm in the text of *Beowulf* can only be explained by gradual accretion of heterogeneous elements in the process of transmission". But the fact is that the theory about the simplicity of the earliest epic is contrary to all evidence, if not to all probability. The original epic poetry was a literature, if I may so speak, without writing; it was dependent upon memory; it was transmitted by the living voice; and the effect was not the golden simplicity too fondly attributed to it, but the very reverse—a voluble and rambling loquacity. This is the natural character of the Lay, and still more of the Epic, which is a compilation of Lays. . . . It is a remarkable example of the force of a literary tradition how the Germans have transferred to the *Beowulf* that passion for discovering the sutures of poetic workmanship which they have excited among themselves through generations of competitive theorizing about Homer, an enthusiasm which is the outcome of habit cultivated by rivalry. In no other way can it be accounted for, as the pleasure which they feel in it can hardly be called natural. It seems rather perverse to be for ever scanning the wrong side of the tapestry, or breaking up the musical toy to look for the secret of the music'.

Scholars have not, however, been wanting who have not only held to the theory of a single author or compiler of the poem. Dr G. Sarrazin, the eminent scholar of Kiel, for instance, thinks he is to be found, in part, at least, in Cynewulf (eighth century). Professor Earle thinks

that possibly Hygeberht, Bishop of Lichfield and the chief adviser of Offa, King of Mercia (758–796) was the poet.

Speaking generally, it may be said that the Continental opinion as to the origin of *Beowulf* is that the poem is made up of separate poems, and is an accretion of lays which, so to speak, have coalesced into a whole; whereas in England the tendency is to believe the poem to be either the work of a single author, or of a compiler who re-wrote as a continuous work ancient legendary material. This last opinion is that of the Danish scholar, F. Rönning (1883), who does not deny that *Beowulf* embodies earlier songs, but maintains that they were the raw material used by a single poet and wrought into the organic and artistic whole which we now have.

Mr Thomas Arnold, of University College, Oxford, discusses in his valuable little book, *Notes on Beowulf* (1898), the various theories which assign the composition of *Beowulf* to Cynewulf, to the author of the Anglo-Saxon poem of *Andreas*, and to the author of another Anglo-Saxon poem entitled *Guthlac*, and he arrives at a theory of his own. 'There were current', he says, 'in the Scandinavian countries in the seventh century, sagas, either in the Danish or Geatic (Gothic) dialect. Among these sagas that of *Beowulf* must have had a prominent place; others celebrated Hygelac, his uncle, Hnaef the Viking, the wars of the Danes and the Heathobards, of the Danes and the Swedes, etc., etc. About the end of the seventh century missioners from England are known to have been busy in Friesland and in Denmark endeavouring to convert the natives to Christianity. Some one of these, whose mind had a turn for literature and dwelt with joy among the traditions of the past, collected or learnt by heart a number of these sagas; and taking that of *Beowulf* as a basis, and weaving many others into his work, composed an epic poem of upwards of three thousand lines, to which, although it contains the record of two, or rather of three, adventures, the heroic scale of the figure who accomplishes them all imparts a real unifying epic interest. The poet who, returning to England, gave this work to his countrymen cannot at present be identified. It was not Cynewulf . . . nor the authors of *Andreas* or of *Guthlac*. A fresh searching examination of the entire mass of Anglo-Saxon poetry

with a view to the solution of this one question—Who wrote *Beowulf?*—must be made before the problem can be put aside as insoluble. Such an examination, if not undertaken in England, will doubtless be ultimately carried out by some scholar of a Swedish or German university'.

Professor Ker has given it as his opinion that *Beowulf* and the Anglo-Saxon poem of *Waldere* are 'the work of educated men, intended, no doubt, as books to read. They are not, like the *Elder Edda*, a collection of traditional oral poems'. And in his *Epic and Romance* (1897) he says: 'Whatever may be the secrets of its authorship, *Beowulf* exists as a single, continuous narrative poem, and whatever its faults may be it holds a position by itself and a place of some honour as the one extant poem of considerable length in the group to which it belongs. The controlling power in the story of *Beowulf* is not that of any kind of romance or fantastic invention. There are things in it that may be compared to things in the fairy tales; and again there are passages of high value for their use of the motive of pure awe and mystery. But the poem is made what it is by the power with which the characters are kept in right relation to their circumstances. The hero is not lost or carried away in his adventures'.

No less interesting are Mr Stopford Brooke's observations in his *History of Early English Literature* as to the origin of *Beowulf*. 'The same kind of controversy', he says, 'which has raged over the composition of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* has raged also over *Beowulf*. It is said that it is a single poem composed by one man, and, on the contrary, that it is a poem built up in process of time by various hands, and consisting of various lays of different ages. This opinion has been worked out by Müllenhof with a minuteness which makes the most severe demands upon our credulity. We are to conceive first of two old lays by different authors, then of a continuation of one of these, and then of an introduction to the whole by two other authors. The fifth, a reviser, added another portion, and another reviser, the sixth in the series, increased the poem by episodes from other sagas and by Christian interpolations. Elaborate arrangements of this kind are as doubtful as they are interesting. The main point, however, seems clear. *Beowulf* was built up out of many legends,

which in time coalesced into something of a whole, or were, as I think, composed together into a poem by one poet. The legends were sung in the Old England [Anglen, now Schleswig Holstein] across the seas, and brought to our England by the Angles, or by that band of Jutes or Saxons whom many suppose to have settled at an early time in northern Northumbria. They were then sung in North-umbria, added to by Northumbrian singers, and afterwards when Christianity was still young [still young, that is, in England], compressed and made into a poem by a Christian singer '.

And this brings us to the consideration of the important point, that the poem is full of passages which point most absolutely to the fact that the author or compiler of *Beowulf* was not a pagan, but a Christian. There are more than fifty passages in which mention is made of the Christian God. There are allusions to evil spirits, hell, and the judgment, and to Old Testament history, and a notable one (lines 175–188—' Sometimes they made sacrifices at their idol-tents ', etc., at page 9 of my translation), which would be sufficient of itself to determine the religion of the author. ' Is it possible ', asks Mr Clark Hall in the Introduction of his *Beowulf*, ' that all these references were inserted by a later hand. I think not. Let us bear especially in mind the large number of incidental allusions. To have made such a considerable number of isolated alterations in the original text would have meant infinite trouble for the editor, and it imputes very great skill to him. To all appearances, he must in many cases have begun his emendation with the second half-line, so that he would be hampered by having to observe the alliteration of the first half-line '.

Then, to enquire more closely into the Christian passages of the poem, there is no mention of Christ, or of the Church, or of the Mother of God, or of the Holy Trinity. And in certain passages there is a curious mixture of heathenism and Christianity. When Beowulf expresses his determination to stand fast against the attack of the dragon, he exclaims, ' It shall be for us as Fate (Wyrd, one of the three Scandinavian Norns or Fates), the Allotter of every man decrees for us ! ' And in one of Beowulf's last speeches he says : ' In all this, sick as I am with mortal wounds, I may have comfort, because the Ruler of men cannot

upbraid me with the murder of kinsmen when my life parts from my body'. Tribal custom among the Northern races held the murder of a parent or a kinsman to be the worst of crimes; it was without redress, at the same time unpardonable and unavenged, and it is this that is in Beowulf's mind in the attitude he assumes to the Christian Deity. 'It is a mixture of sentiment', says Mr Clark Hall, 'often met with in the later Anglo-Saxon literature, and was, in fact, a prominent feature of the age, so that there is no need to explain its occurrence in *Beowulf* by interpolation; it is a natural product of the times; we simply find it in *Beowulf* in an early form'.

Long ago, in 1857, Thorpe expressed an opinion that *Beowulf* was a Christian paraphrase of a heathen saga composed in the south-west of Sweden, and he even cherished the hope that the original saga might some day be discovered in a Swedish library. Enough perhaps has been said as to the essentially English character of the poem, but here, again, the acute mind of Mr Clark Hall comes to our assistance. 'If we assume a translation', he says, 'we must postulate an original which would presumably have some sort of family resemblance to the Older Edda, and we should expect the translator to follow generally the methods of the original Scandinavian poet in his handling of the verse. Yet we find the ways of the *Beowulf* poet to be akin to those of other Anglo-Saxon poets, and in striking contrast to those of the Northerners'. In the Northern alliterative verse the sense is confined to each couplet, each pair of lines concludes the sense of the phrase, whereas in the Western poetry the sense is continuous, and runs on through an indefinite number of lines. 'Any page of the *Elder Edda* of the North, and of the Anglo-Saxon poets will show the difference', as Professor Ker points out. *Beowulf* possesses the proper characteristic Anglo-Saxon type, is the typical specimen of the Anglo-Saxon epic style, the specimen by which the Teutonic epic poetry must be judged.

Next as to the question of the nationality of the author. It has been asked: Why should an Englishman write a poem in praise of a Gothic hero? To which it seems to me a sufficient answer that it was because he thought the story of the Gothic hero an interesting one. The poem is in the Old English language; it is not found in Continental

literature ; it has the special characteristics of Anglo-Saxon poetry. 'It is distinctly English', says Mr Clark Hall, 'in other ways ; in its conciseness and vigour, and especially in its dignified soberness and tender sadness. The sadness is even more English than the vigour ; it permeates Anglo-Saxon poetry to such an extent that we can hardly get away from it'. The same writer brings strong evidence to bear that the author of *Beowulf* was an Englishman of Mercia—the central part of what afterwards became England. The author of *Beowulf* 'goes out of his way to mention Garmund and Offa of Angeln and Eomaer, ancestors of the Mercian royal family. Wealtheow, Hrothgar's queen, who appears prominently in Part I of the story, was a lady of the Helmings, a tribe connected by place-names [Helmingham, for instance] with Mercia and East Anglia, and the name borne by her son, Hrothmund, appears in a genealogy of the East Anglian kings'.

The evidence as to the authorship of *Beowulf* tends, therefore, to establish the conclusions that:—

(1) The poem was the work of a single author who may have used Danish or Gothic material which he found ready to his hand, acting on the principle long afterwards worked upon by Shakespeare and enunciated by Molière, 'Je prends mon bien où je le trouve'.

(2) The author was a Christian, probably one who had been recently converted but not very fully informed in the faith.

(3) He was an Englishman, probably a Mercian Englishman.

IV

DATE OF THE POEM AND THE HISTORICAL EVENTS MENTIONED IN IT

THERE are no fewer than four passages in *Beowulf* which all refer to one and the same event, namely, the death of Hygelac, Beowulf's uncle and king, in an expedition which he made against the Frisians. The passages are at lines 1202–1214 (page 39 of my translation) ; 2354–2368 (page 155) ; 2497–2508 (page 159), and 2910–2921 (page 173). In the first of these passages the poet tells us how when

he was slain in the feud against the Frisians, his body fell into the power of the Franks (their allies in the battle), and was stripped of its armour and the famous Collar of the Brisings. In the second the poet tells of the bloody death of King Hygelac in Friesland, and of Beowulf's escape from the disaster by swimming across the sea. In the third, Beowulf tells how in that fight he slew Daeghrefn, the champion of the Hugas (Franks) with his hand-grip. In the fourth the messenger who goes to the Goths with the news of Beowulf's death expresses his fears for the future when the news reaches the Franks and Frisians, and refers to Hygelac's fatal expedition. 'Ever since then', he says, 'the favour of the Merovingian king has been denied to us'.

Now it was discovered by Outzen and Leo in the early days of the systematic study of *Beowulf*, and established beyond doubt that King Hygelac was identical with the Chochilaicus, King of the Danes, mentioned by the historian, Gregory of Tours, who wrote in the sixth century as having invaded the land of Theodoric, the country of the Attoarii, the Hetwara of our poem, and was slain in a great battle by Theodebert, Theodoric's son. (*See* my note at p. 55). This was in the year 515, and thus we get in our poem a historical personage and a historical date. The reference to the Merovingian king goes to prove that the poem was not written later than the year 752, which is the historic date of the fall of the Merovingian dynasty. It is certain, therefore, that the date of the writing of the poem must lie between the years 515 and 752. We are told in the poem that after the death of Hygelac in 515, his son Heardred succeeded, that Beowulf acted as his guardian, and that when Heardred was slain by the Swedes Beowulf became king of the Goths and ruled for fifty years. So that Beowulf's own lifetime—assuming, of course, that there was such a person—lay in the latter part of the fifth and the first sixty years of the sixth century. The general result of the references made in the poem to the death of Hygelac and to the Merovingians is, according to Mr Thomas Arnold (*Notes on Beowulf*, p. 111), that *Beowulf* as we know it was composed within the period from 568 (which he calculates is the proximate date of Beowulf's death) to 752. From this interval, he says, the first hundred years 568–668 may be deducted partly to allow for the

lapse of time since the hero's burial, and partly because Anglo-Saxon culture before the arrival of Christianity (with St Augustine in 579), and without some previous literary practice could not have been equal to such a task. This deduction made, Arnold arrives at the years 670–750, as marking the limits within which the poem was written. Accepting this reasonable argument, Mr Clark Hall says that the language of the poem, and especially its vocabulary, warrants us in putting the poem at as early a date as possible within that limit. 'For purposes of comparison', he says, 'let us take the poem of *Widsith*, the main body of which was certainly composed at an earlier date than any we can assign to *Beowulf*. It is most remarkable that out of the three hundred words or so contained in this short poem which are not proper names, all except twenty are also to be found in *Beowulf*, and that in the hundred lines which are not taken up by lists of names, we have no less than twenty-seven locutions and phrases which can be paralleled from *Beowulf*. An important grammatical feature common to both poems is the extreme rarity of the definite article—a certain mark of age. And there are other resemblances all of which point to the early limit being nearest to the truth. 'A few years ago', adds Mr Clark Hall, in an article on the Home of Cynewulf, 'Professor Walker pointed out how the peaceful state of Mercia, as evidenced by the long reigns of its kings, would conduce to literary activity', and then he quotes the following passage from Stopford Brooke upon the state of Mercia. 'Pendas' son, Peada, whom he made viceroy of the Middle Angles, became Christian in 653, and introduced four Northumbrian priests into his province. . . . Two years after Penda was slain, and on his death all Mercia became Christian. . . . Wulfhere, his son, 657–675, the very years in which vernacular literature began so bravely in Northumbria, founded a number of abbeys. Medeshamstede [Peterborough] in the Fen Country, may claim him as one of its patrons. Fable gathers round other foundations attributed to him, but the growth of fable proves at least that centres of learning now arose in the heathen realm. Under Æthelred, who followed Wulfhere, the Mercian Church was organised.'

'So', concludes Mr Clark Hall, and most modern students

of Beowulf, myself gratefully included, conclude with him, 'I picture to myself a Mercian courtier, perhaps a Scôp (minstrel), whose early life may have been spent under the heathen Penda, who changed his religion with the court without being able to get, or perhaps even wishing to get definite instruction in the new faith, and who perhaps came in some degree under Northumbrian literary influences, writing the earlier part of the poem pretty much as we now have it about A.D. 660, and the latter some twenty years or so after that'.

V

THE LITERARY QUALITY OF BEOWULF

'Loud by the harp the song resounded;
Then many men, exulting in mood,
Said in words—those who well knew—
That they had never heard a better song'.

THE words are the words of Widsith, the 'Far Traveller', said or sung in the earliest poem in the English tongue, one of great interest to us here, for it contains many names and many phrases which occur in *Beowulf*, and, being itself the story of the singer and of his roving life, 'a picture of the poet in his happiness singing his life in lyrical fashion', it describes for us, perhaps, to some extent the poet of *Beowulf*. For, Christian as he was, it is possible that our unknown poet was a Scôp, attached, maybe, to the court of the Mercian kings, 'one who knew many songs, and could greet the harp with his hands, and had in himself his gift of joy which God gave to him'. He speaks himself many times of the rapture of song in the hall, of the 'wood of joy', and he may himself often have waked the rapture of the royal hall with his own wonderful poem. I am one of those who believe that *Beowulf* was composed for such a purpose, and that there is distinct evidence in the poem itself that it was so. Mr Stopford Brooke, after a not too favourable criticism of the poetic standard reached by *Beowulf*, admits that 'when all is said we feel we have scarcely a right to estimate the poem in this critical fashion

unless we could have heard it delivered. To judge it in our study is like judging an altar-piece far away from the town and the associations for which it was originally painted. If we want to feel whether *Beowulf* is good poetry or not let us place ourselves in the hall as evening draws on, when the benches are filled with warriors and seamen, and the chief sits in the high seat, and the fires flame in the midst, and the cup goes round, and then hear the harper strike the harp. With gesture, with the beat of his voice and of the hand upon his instrument, at each alliterative word of the saga, he sings of the great fight with Grendel, or the dragon, of Hrothgar's journey, of the sea voyage, to men who had themselves fought against desperate odds, to sailors who knew the storms, to the fierce rovers of the deep, to great ealdormen who ruled their freemen, to thegns who followed their kings to battle and would die rather than break the bond of comradeship. Then, as we image this and read the accented verse sharply falling and rising with the excitement of the thing recorded, we understand how good the work is, how fitted for its time and place, how national, how full of noble pleasure'.

Volumes have been written upon the merits and demerits of *Beowulf* as literature. No real and true judgment can be arrived at as to either in a modern rendering. It has been translated in prose, in blank verse, in imitative accented verse, in ballad metre, in literal line for line version. In all these much of the style, conciseness, and vigour of the original must and does evaporate. But even in translation there are easily recognised passages which are of the quality which only the genuine poet can show. The dignity of the opening; the mystic Passing of Scyld; Beowulf's Reply to Unferth's Taunt; the Putting to Sea of Beowulf and his men; the Coming of the Demon Grendel; the Haunted Mere; the Lament of the Last Survivor; the Awakening of the Dragon; the Loyalty of Wiglaf and his Rebuke of the Coward Thanes; the dying words of Beowulf, and finally—a solemn burial scene at the close as at the beginning—the Funeral Pyre of the hero. All these are grand and noble passages, some of them unequalled in Anglo-Saxon poetry. The descriptions of the three great fights are full of spirit and 'go', and they are skilfully varied, and there are shorter passages, epithets, aphorisms,

moral reflections, throughout the poem which are often of striking beauty. Take for instance the mourning of a father for his son (lines 2460): 'Then he takes to his bed, sings a sad lay, the one in memory of the other. *All seems too spacious for him—the fields and the homestead*'. Or this on death: 'Not easy is it to flee from death, let him try it who will, but each one of soul-possessing children of men dwelling on earth by need compelled must seek the place prepared where his body fast in its narrow bed sleepeth after the feast'. Or this on a battlefield: 'No sound of harp shall wake to the warrior; but the wan raven, eager over the death-doomed, shall have much to talk about—shall say to the eagle how he fared at the feast when, with the wolf, he stripped the slain'.

No one can read *Beowulf* without being reminded of Homer. The boasting of the Homeric heroes, the descriptions of armour and weapons, of sea voyages, find parallels in *Beowulf*, and, as Mr Arnold says, 'that naïve and fresh delight with which in the Homeric poems mention is made of everything made or used by man, as if the sense of the human initiative were a recent and delicious perception, and the mind were only beginning to become conscious and to take pride in the consciousness of the inventive skill of the race'—this is found in *Beowulf* to an extent not equalled by any other Anglo-Saxon poem. Just as the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are the poems of a nation's youth—the youth of Hellas—*Beowulf* is the poem of the youth of England, and so, as the years roll on, becomes a more and more precious possession of the English race.

The seasons change; the winds they shift and veer;
The grass of yester year
Is dead; the birds depart, the groves decay;
Song passes not away.
Captains and conquerors leave a little dust,
And kings a dubious legend of their reign;
The swords of Cæsars—they are less than rust:
The Poet doth remain.

VI

THE SCENES AND SURROUNDINGS OF BEOWULF

I HAVE put into the Notes which accompany my translation most of the available information as to the geography of *Beowulf*, and it need only be summarized here. Not a single name of a town is mentioned, and only those of a few countries; but, on the other hand, many tribes, with many epithets for their tribal names, occur throughout the poem.

COUNTRIES MENTIONED

SCEDELANDS (line 19), and SCEDEN-IG (line 1686), the southernmost part of what is now Sweden. The modern names of the district are Skane and Karlskrona. This was part of the 'Scanzia' of Jornandes, the historian of the Goths, which he conceived to be a great island, whence the Gothic nation issued 'like a swarm of bees' over the mainland of Europe. The early kings of the Danes possessed the Scedelands, according to the poet of *Beowulf*, and it formed part of the Danish realm long afterwards.

THE LAND OF THE BRONDINGS (line 521). The Brondings were the tribe over which Breca, who competed with Beowulf in the great swimming match, was chief. Both are mentioned in the ancient poem *Widsith*, where (in line 26) it is said: 'Breoca (ruled over) the Brondings and Billing over the Wernas'. The Wernas, Thorpe says, were the Varini or Verini, whose name is known to us by the 'Leges Angliorum et Werinorum', and their earliest seat seems to have been in Mecklenburg. If so, perhaps, the Brondings should be placed near them, in Mecklenburg or Pomerania (*see* map at p. 10).

THE LAND OF THE FINNAS (line 580). This is also mentioned in the account of the swimming match, Beowulf having landed there after the five days' contest in the sea. Sarrazin locates it in the district of Bohuslan, north of the Gota Elf (river) and Beowulf's own country (*see* map at p. 10).

FRYSLAND (line 1126) and FRESLAND (line 2357). Frysland is the country of the North Frisians, the people of

King Finn; and Frēsland that of the West Frisians, the allies of the Franks and Hugas against Hygelac in his raid into Frēsland, as is four times described in the poem. The people of King Finn are spoken of in *Beowulf* as Eotenas, identified with the Jutes. Eotan or Eotenas, says Mr Arnold, seems to be the same word as Jotan, Jutes; and what is said by Procopius about the kingdom which in his time [sixth century] the Frisians had in Britain naturally recurs to the memory. It looks as if by the Frisians Procopius meant the same people whom Beda and the author of *Beowulf* call Jutes or Eotan. All this part of *Beowulf*, which describes the episode of King Finn (lines 1068–1159) is of the greatest interest to us, for 'it is strongly characteristic of Teutonic manners and ideas; it is hardly possible not to believe it to be in the main historical and the Angles and Saxons were closely connected with the Frisians, whose language to this day resembles English more than any other of the Low German dialects'.—Arnold.

'A number of names of nations', says Mr Arnold, 'which may be described as the Frisian group—FRISIANS, FRANKS, HETWARE, and HUGAS, serve to show that Friesland, the country between the Ems and the Zuyder Zee, was often in the thoughts of the poet, partly as the scene of the stirring Episode of Finn and Hnaef, but chiefly as the country where Hygelac met his death. Müllenhof has remarked that Teutonic legends must have generally come to England in the first place from Friesland. The Franks, after the conversion of Clovis (A.D. 496), gradually encroached on the Frisians, who must in the sixth century have owned all the country as far south as Utrecht. . . The HETWARE correspond to the Attoarii, whose territory (on the Lower Rhine round Cleves, according to Müllenhof) Hygelac was ravaging when surprised by the attack of the Franks. They are the Chatti of Tacitus, and the Chattuarii of Strabo. . . The HUGAS are the Chanci of Tacitus ['the noblest of the German races,' he calls them]. They were neighbours of the Frisians, occupying a part of the sea coast, but stretching also far into the interior of Germany'. In the battle which was fatal to Hygelac, Daeghrefn, a warrior of the Hugas, was killed by Beowulf, as Beowulf himself tells, not with the sword, but by being crushed to death in the hero's powerful arms.

SWEORICE, (the C is hard), the kingdom of the Swedes, is twice mentioned (lines 2383 and 2495), in the accounts given of the wars between the Swedes and the Goths in Beowulf's lifetime. It lay north of Gothland and Hygelac's realm, from which it was separated by the Lakes Wener and Wetter, and the water courses which connect them with the sea on either hand. These wars are not mentioned in the Swedish annals, and the narrative of them in *Beowulf* forms, naturally, a most interesting part of the poem to Swedish historians and students. The name of Sweden is still, Svea-Rike.

NATIONS AND TRIBES

Though the countries mentioned in *Beowulf* are few, the names of various nations and tribes are, as I have said, of constant occurrence—those of the Danes, Goths, and Swedes being, naturally, of the most importance.

The DANES, under their epithet of Gar Dene (Spear-Danes) appear in the very first line, and they are also called Beorht Dene (Bright-Danes); Hring-Dene (Ring-Danes); East, North, South and West Danes; Ingwine (Friends of Ing) after Ing, the first mythic king of the East Danes, the divine root, as Stopford Brooke says, of the Ynglings as well as of the Scyldings, of the Angles as well as of the Danes; Scyldings (sons of Scyld) with the epithets, Ar-Scyldingas (Honour Scyldings); Here-Scyldingas (Army Scyldings); Sige Scyldingas (Victory Scyldings); and Theod-Scyldingas (People Scyldings); and Hrethmen (Triumph Men). The Danish realm, the realm of Hrothgar, extended probably from the central portion of the Danish peninsula over the islands, with its central seat in the Island of Zealand, and across the sound along the southernmost shore of Sweden (the Scedelands of the poem).

The GOTHS, Beowulf's people, called throughout the poem GEATAS, have the epithets Guth-Geatas (War-Goths), Sae Geatas (Sea Goths); Weder Geatas, and Wederas (? from Lake Wetter); and Hrethlingas, sons of Hrethel, Hrethel being father of Hygelac, and grandfather of Beowulf. The ethnical relationship between Geatas, Goths and Getæ has been, and is still, matter of controversy. The

Geatas of Beowulf inhabited Southern Sweden between the Danes of the 'Scedelands,' the extreme southern part, and the Swedes who were to the north of the great Lakes Wener and Wetter. To this day these two districts keep their ancient names, that of the Geats being Götarike with Ost Gothland, and Wester Gothland for its north-eastern and north-western parts adjoining the southern shores of the lakes; and that of the Swedes being Svearike, to the north of the lakes. Kemble thought the Geatas were Angles, and Bugge that they were Jutes, but their identification with the Goths is much more certain. I have used the word 'Goth' for Beowulf's people throughout my translation in preference to 'Geat', believing, as I do, that the names Geata, Gotan, Gota, all mean simply Goths, and refer to the great race originally settled in southern Sweden; now Götarike, and to those of that race, who, 'issuing like a swarm of bees', as Jornandes says, pushed southwards from the Baltic shores to the Vistula and the Euxine Sea. The Goths who harassed the Roman Empire on the Danube undoubtedly belonged to the nation whose less enterprising remnant, as Gibbon says, 'remained in their ancient home, part of which is even at present divided into East and West Gothland'. In this, as Mr Arnold points out, there is nothing more remarkable than in the fact that the Saxons, who colonized Britain in the fifth century, left a large portion of their countrymen behind them, who, and their country, are called Saxons and Saxony to this day. Similarly the Goths of South Sweden, though they are now one people with the Swedes, have never lost the sense of their identity with the Teutonic conquerors who first broke the gates of Imperial Rome.

The SWEDES are referred to four times as Sweon, and once as Sweo-theod (Swede-people). They are also called Scylfingas, after the reigning dynasty, with the epithets Guth-Scylfingas (War Scylfings) and Heatho-Scylfings (Battle Scylfings). Our hero, Beowulf, was himself a Swede on his father's side, a fact which had important consequences for him, for when war breaks out between Swedes and Goths, that is between his paternal and maternal kindreds, he takes no part in it, according, no doubt, to tribal custom.

WAEGMUNDINGS, mentioned in lines 2607 and 2814,

when Wiglaf recalls to mind that Beowulf had bestowed upon him the seat and the chieftainship of the Waegmundings, as his father had had it, and next, when Beowulf, dying, says to Wiglaf, 'Thou art the last of our kin of the Waegmundings', and gives him his helmet, collar, and coat of mail. Wiglaf was the nearest paternal kinsman of Beowulf, and Beowulf had passed on to him the hereditary right of the chieftainship of the Waegmundings, says Mr Frederic Seebohm in his book on Tribal Custom. And he goes on: 'Why had he done this? If we might tentatively use the clue given by ancient Greek tribal custom to elucidate a Scandinavian case, we should say that on failure of male succession the "sister's son" of Hygelac (*i.e.* Beowulf) had been called back into his mother's (Gothic) kindred to become its chieftain, leaving Wiglaf, his next of kin on his father's side, to sustain the chieftainship of his paternal kindred'.

The WYLFINGAS occur twice (lines 461, 471), when Hrothgar, the Danish King, addressing Beowulf, tells him how he knew his father, Ecgtheow, and how Ecgtheow, having slain Heatholaf the Wylfing, took refuge among the South Danes when Hrothgar was but young on the Danish throne, and how he, Hrothgar, healed the feud by sending gifts of ancient treasures over the sea to the Wylfings, and Ecgtheow 'swore oath to him'. This, as Mr Seebohm has pointed out, is the reason why Beowulf appeared as the natural helper of Hrothgar in the troubles caused by the Demon Grendel. Beowulf, now 'at honour's call' had come to fight the monster, requiting what Hrothgar had done for his father. Müllenhoff identifies the Wylfings with the Wulfingas of German heroic legend, and thinks they were a Gothic tribe or kin to the Goths who dwelt on the south-eastern shores of the Baltic.

HEATHO-RAEMAS (line 519). When Unferth, envious of Beowulf, taunts him about his swimming match with Breca, he says, 'Then in the morning tide the ocean cast him up on the Heatho-Remes land'. The German scholars, Ettmüller and Müllenhoff, unite in identifying the Heatho-Remes with the people of Raumarike, a district of Norway to the north of Christiania. Thence, says the poet, Breca sought his beloved fatherland, the land of the BRONDINGS; and if, as we have seen, the Brondings are to be placed in

Mecklenburg or thereabouts, Breca would have a long voyage before him!

HEATHO-BARDS ('War-Beards'). This tribe is mentioned in Beowulf in the 'Episode of Freawaru' (lines 2024–2068), a prophetic narrative, told by Beowulf himself, to Hygelac, wherein he mentions that Freawaru, daughter of the Danish King Hrothgar, was betrothed to Ingeld, son of Froda, king of the Heathobards, with a view to putting an end to the feud between the Danes and the Heathobards. Froda had fallen in battle with the Danes. The son of one of the warriors who slew him is imagined by Beowulf as having been chosen to form one of the retinue of the Lady Freawaru to the court of her Heathobard husband, and an old Heathobard warrior sees the Danish courtier wearing Froda's sword and excites Ingeld's fury at the sight. The courtier is murdered, the assassin escapes, the feud is renewed. Curiously enough the ancient poem of *Widsith* here again helps to illustrate *Beowulf*, for we read in *Widsith* :—

'Hrothwulf and Hrothgar, uncle and nephew, longest held peace together after they had expelled the race of Wikings, and had humbled Ingeld's sword and slaughtered at Heorot, the host of the Heathobards'. So that Beowulf's prophetic vision was fulfilled. The Heathobards have been identified by some scholars with the Lombards, and by Müllenhoff with the Heruli of Jornandes. Arnold states that they 'had a small kingdom in the island of Zealand', within Hrothgar's realm in fact.

GIFTHAS (line 2494). Beowulf, in his address to his men before the fight with the dragon, speaking of his services to Hygelac, says there was no need for Hygelac to seek for another warrior among the Gifthas, or the Spear-Danes, or the Swedes. The Gifthas are supposed by some to be the Gepidæ, a Gothic people mentioned by Jornandes, in whose time, however, (A.D. 530) they were settled in ancient Dacia—Wallachia and Southern Hungary. In *Widsith* we read, 'With the Gefthas I was, and with the Winedas', the Winedas being the Wends who inhabited what is now East Prussia, an association which might place the Gifthas on the Baltic coast. Here again it might be that these Gifthas were those who remained in their ancient seat, while the more enterprising or

more restless part of the nation had migrated far southward.

MEREWIOING (lines 2920, 2921). 'Ever since then the favour of the Merovingian has been denied to us', the foreboding words of the messenger when he takes the news of the death of Beowulf to the Gothic camp, after the fight with the dragon. It is, as I have said, one of the important passages of the poem as it helps to fix the date of its composition. The Merovingian dynasty of the Franks came to an end in 752. The reference in *Beowulf* is to the first dynasty, that of Chlodowig or Clovis the Merwing. It was Grundtvig, the Danish scholar, who first pointed out (in 1849) that the word Merewioingas meant 'the Merovingian', the Frankish king, and later Bachlechner explained how the word is correctly formed after the phonetic laws of the Northumbrian dialect of English. For the Frankish *Merewig*, which in Southern English would also be *Merewig*, would in the north regularly become *Merewio*, as Northumbrian *Oswio* answers to West Saxon *Answig*. 'This', says Earle, 'was an observation of great importance as bearing upon the question of the original dialect in which *Beowulf* was written'.

WENDLAS (line 348). Wulfgar, the first to greet Beowulf on his arrival at Hrothgar's Hall, is described as a chief of the Wendlas, probably the Vandals. They are mentioned in *Widsith* under the name Wenlas. Their ancestral lands were between the Oder and Vistula. 'At least as early as the Christian era, and as late as the age of the Antonines, the Goths were established towards the mouth of the Vistula', and 'Westward of the Goths the numerous tribes of the Vandals were spread along the banks of the Oder and the sea-coast of Pomerania and Mecklenburg. A striking resemblance of manners, complexion, religion and language seemed to indicate that the Vandals and the Goths were originally one great people. The latter appear to have been subdivided into Ostrogoths, Visigoths, and Gepidae. The Ostro and Visi, the eastern and western Goths, obtained those denominations from their original seats in Scandinavia. In all their future marches and settlements they preserved with their names the same relative situation. When they first departed from Sweden the infant colony was contained in three vessels. The

third, being a heavy sailer, lagged behind, and the crew which afterwards swelled into a nation, received from that circumstance the appellation of Gepidæ, or loiterers'.

With these quotations from Gibbon and Jornandes, I will bring my enumeration of the nations and tribes of *Beowulf* to a close, adding only the remark that what Gibbon says of the Goths, can be said of the whole of the peoples mentioned in the poem. Danes, Swedes, Goths, Franks, Frisians, all were kindred peoples. Beowulf, the Goth, and Wulfgar, the Wend, found at the court of Hrothgar, the Dane; Ongentheow, the Swede, found in Gothland; Hnaef, the Dane, found in Friesland; and Breca, the Bronding, found in Norway, the same 'manners, complexion, religion and language'.

The map on page 10 of this book illustrating the geography of *Beowulf* is, in fact, also a map of the centre from which radiated to the south, to the east, and to the west that tremendous migration of peoples which so profoundly influenced the destinies of the world. And it was at the very period in which our poet has laid the events of the first English epic poem that the migration westward was in progress, from the land of the Jutes, Frisians, Saxons and Angles, to the great island across the North Sea which shared the fate of the rest of Europe at the fall of the Western Roman Empire.

Why may not the Hengest who is twice mentioned in *Beowulf* (pages 35 and 36) be the same Hengest who, according to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 'landed (in the year 449) in Britain on the shore which is called Wippidsfleet (Ebbsfleet, in Kent)'? Mr Arnold says that it is remarkable that the Hengest of *Beowulf* seems to be connected with the Jutes, while the famous Hengest who settled in Kent was also a leader of Jutes, and he thinks that we may possibly identify them. The minstrel who sings in *Beowulf* the 'Lay of King Finn', in which the name of Hengest occurs, does not tell us *when* the Fight at Finn's Burh took place. Why may it not have taken place in the first half of the fifth century before Hengest's emigration to Britain? And if the edintification be held to be a reasonable one, how great an interest is added to our first English Epic!

VII

SOCIAL LIFE IN *BEOWULF*

'As a monument of language the poem of *Beowulf* is highly valuable, but far more valuable is it as a vivid and faithful picture of old Northern manners and usages as they existed in the halls of the kingly and the noble at the remote period to which it relates. In this respect where are we to look for its like? Who presents them almost to our gaze like the poet of *Beowulf*? The whole economy of the High Hall he sets before us—the ranging of the vassals and guests, the mead-cup borne round by the queen and her daughter, the gifts bestowed on the guests, the decoration on the walls, and the gleeman's tale'.

So wrote Thorpe sixty years ago, and the years that have passed since he brought out his edition of the poem have added vastly to his all too narrow view of the value of *Beowulf* for the study of the early social history of our race. Appreciation of it has grown as the knowledge of it has increased. Twenty years ago Mr James A. Harrison, Professor of English at the Washington and Lee University, who had brought out an edition of the text of *Beowulf*, wrote on the subject of the life depicted in *Beowulf*, that 'Whatever may be the character of the life mirrored in the poem—whether English, Scandinavian, or general Teutonic, or, as some would have it, all three—the life depicted is sufficiently akin to what we know of Old English life to give us a sort of feeling that we are dealing with a national possession, that we have an ownership in this drama of antique prowess, that its thrilling breath and its terse talk are forerunners of what we find later so abundantly in poetry peculiarly English; and the fact that this ancient work of truth and imagination, of myth and of historical event, is clothed in the purest poetic Saxon of Wessex gives an additional emphasis to the research, as of value to the purely English student of ancient times, and may help us to build up for ourselves some conception of what those times were. The poem of *Beowulf* is the most valuable document for the study of early Teutonic social history. Its age, the primitiveness of the life depicted, enable us,

he adds, to reconstruct for ourselves a partial picture of that ancient life, and, along with it, a picture of the life of our own immediate ancestors. 'In seeing exactly what the hero Beowulf saw, in trying to reconstruct for ourselves the life and landscape that surrounded him in the sixth century of our era, we shall be getting a glimpse into the origins of our race, none the less objective because these origins are far away. The Epic of *Beowulf* is a sort of poetic *Germania*, an unconscious poetic treatise on the customs and habits of the Early Germans, at once confirmatory of, and supplementary to, Tacitus. The life, the varied woof of the poem is so strange yet so familiar that it repels while it attracts; it is ours and yet it is not. We are startled by its "sensuous explicitness", its direct and fervid quality, which, far from having hardened into mere formulæ, is still in a state of glow and fermentation. Though we say that *Beowulf* has no descendants, and, so far as we know, no ancestry, though the whole massy epic stands before us complete, so far as we know, in the eighth or ninth century, a perfect excerpt from a wide life which in a certain sense has closed for ever in it, we have but to look for an instant into ourselves, into our general Teutonic consciousness, and there we see its lineal descendants, the ideas which informed and moulded it. All things are in a twilight, to be sure, but it is a dawn, not a dusk; it is the beginning of our Teutonic life that we see pushing out vigorous germs and striding towards the light with unmistakable emphasis'.

It has been my aim in this volume to illustrate the text of the poem with authentic examples of the antiquities of the period preserved in the Northern museums, so that a distinct idea can be formed of the objects mentioned—the costumes and armour, ornaments and weapons, in the description of which the poet takes so deep a delight. These illustrations will show the high point to which the art of the armourer and goldsmith had attained. There is a special reference in the poem to the hangings of the Hall Heorot and the wonder they inspired—interesting because the art of embroidery was one for which the Anglo-Saxons were afterwards celebrated. The Hall itself was evidently a vast and splendid structure, with much gilded decoration, and, no doubt, bearing at its gable ends the great carved harts' heads from which it took its name. It was evidently

a usual form of finial for a timber gable, for in the Anglo-Saxon poem of *Andreas* the Temple of Jerusalem is imagined to be a sort of great 'Horned Hall'. Throughout *Beowulf* we are struck with the intense appreciation of art, and this alone shows to how great an extent the Northern nations had progressed since Tacitus wrote his *Germania* in the first century.

It is also none the less remarkable that there is a higher degree of refinement in the society depicted in *Beowulf* than in that which is shown in the later sagas and the *Nibelungen Lied*. Mr Harrison again has put this for us very precisely. Calling attention to the purity which is so remarkable a feature of *Beowulf*, there being no hint or allusion to anything impure, he says: 'In the *Edda* we have tragedy in crude lumps, tangled masses of mystery and blood without repose or symmetry. Scenes of dreadful violence, unredeemed by a single trait of human beauty or love, rush past us in a sort of picture-orgy. We see it all and feel it intensely, but the result is repulsion. The Hero Saga of Iceland is all catastrophe; each lay is a roll of thunder and it is over; with all its intense realism it is vague and momentary. It is different in *Beowulf*, for here we have a lay of three thousand lines, within which the details are numerous, character is developed, difficulties overcome, a mode of life delineated, line by line the items of a threefold situation (the three great deeds of Beowulf) accumulated with great art, a catastrophe not coming like a bursting rocket but reined in, restrained, subtly approached, poetically handled. Full as it is of evidences of having been fumigated here and there by a Christian incense-bearer, it is in general a unit as it stands, presents a homogeneous whole, a well harmonized picture of Baltic life—a picture at one with itself'.

For my part, I am thankful for the 'Christian fumigation', even though much may have been lost to our knowledge of Scandinavian mythology in the process. Not even the mention of the famous 'Collar of the Brisings' can draw the author or compiler of *Beowulf* into mentioning the goddess Freyja, whose neck it adorned in Valhalla, but he has allowed Wieland, the famous Wayland Smith of legend (of whom we have memorials in England to this day), and Wyrd, one of the three principal Norns or Fates

to stand. Writing as he probably did within a century of the bringing of Christianity from Rome by St Augustine, and being himself a Christian, we can very well understand the elimination by the author of the pagan deities. But he did more than that. Whether or not, in the material to his hand, in the form of old Danish or Swedish *Beowulf-saga*, he found passages of immorality and brutality which occur in the later Icelandic sagas, it is certain that *Beowulf* is quite free from anything of the kind. Those who wish to arrive at a due appreciation of the purity of the poem have only to compare it with the Norse *Völsunga Saga* as we have it in its twelfth-century redaction. Who can read that famous saga without a feeling of disgust at its brutal savagery—a hotch-potch of murder, parricide, fratricide, incest, treachery—a long-drawn tale of vile thoughts and bloody deeds. I have never been able to understand how such men as Mr Magnusson and Mr Morris could bring themselves to invite us to seek for poetic beauty in the *Volsunga Saga* by 'breaking through whatever entanglement of strange manners may at first trouble us', or how they can claim it as being for us what the Tale of Troy was to the Greeks. No Germanic epic, neither the *Volsunga Saga* nor *Beowulf*, can ever hold that position. We must turn to the Celtic literature and the Arthurian cycle for the nearest approach to a great National Tale, and it is one for the *British* people.

Let us be thankful on the whole, then, that the poet or compiler of *Beowulf* was a Christian and set about his task with the evident intention of eliminating from it Scandinavian theology and, possibly, some heathen brutalities. His having done so has not impaired the value of the poem as an authentic record of sixth-century society, for *the heathen basis is there;* the poem is a heathen poem, just 'fumigated' here and there by its editor. The saga spirit remains in what may always have been a *clean* saga—clean and *masculine*, for the Christian editing has not eliminated the intense virility and vigour of the poem. In this respect let the reader contrast it with the *Nibelungen Lied*, in such a point, for instance, as the giving of gifts by the treasure givers in their Halls, Hrothgar and Hygelac in *Beowulf*, Siegfried and Gunther in the *Nibelungen Lied*. The gifts in *Beowulf* are horses, jewels, famous swords, massive

helmets, coats of ring-mail, war-standards; whereas in the *Nibelungen Lied* there is constant giving of clothes. It is this, as Mr Harrison has pointed out, which in the great German epic betrays a streak of effeminacy which winds all through that Romance. 'The word romance, indeed', he says, 'which is applicable enough to the *Nibelungen Lied*, shows what a gap lies between the German and the Anglo-Saxon epic, to which it is totally inapplicable. It is a degradation to *Beowulf* to speak of it as a romance. There is no trace of the courtly epic here, with its cheap finery, its scent of faded perfumes, its painted women, its love of clothes'.

Masculinity being, then, another special characteristic of *Beowulf*, we may expect to find also a high esteem and respect for women; and we do find it. The women are an interesting and attractive feature of *Beowulf*. We get pictures of the noble lady of the time in the characters of Wealtheow, the queen of the Danish king, Hrothgar; of Freawaru, his daughter; of Hygd, the queen of Hygelac; of Hildeburh, weeping like Rachel for her children; and, in an unfavourable light, Thrytho, the cruel and arrogant queen of Offa the Angle. Wealtheow is gracious, motherly, 'discreet in speech', 'mindful of courtesies' and court etiquette. The women of Beowulf's time are 'peace-weavers'; they bear round the cup in the Hall, and one can well imagine that their presence had a softening influence upon the rough warriors. The life in the king's Hall; the liberality of the king; his thanes, who were his officers in war-time and councillors in peace, and who, by receiving his treasure, weapons, and horses, and feasting in his Hall, became *ipso facto* his thanes or *gesiths* (comrades); the feasts, where drinking was heavy and drunkenness frequent—a prevalent Northern vice even then; the gleeman's stirring tale of old sung to the harp—all these are a special feature of the poem. We see the warriors in war-time as in peace, in battles on land and voyages by sea, racing their horses like good sportsmen, swimming matches far out in blue water, and, finally, loving a good sea boat. The endearing epithets for sea-going craft in *Beowulf* are numerous; the long clinker-built, fine-lined boats of the Northmen walked the waters like things of life—'Then most like to a bird the foam-necked floater started forth

over the rolling sea'. And the sea itself—'The sea gleams through every line of the poem—that grey, gleaming sea of the North. It runs through every canto. The feeling of freedom, of health, of opulent respiration which it gives is delightful; you feel that the sea was an essential part of old Germanic life. The flash of water is seen everywhere. There are fens, morasses, dragon pools, haunted woodland streams, misty slopes wet with the humidity of the sea, tarns of haunted water that affright the stags. . . . The author delights in describing the plunge of these dim and whelming seas—how they roll in livid surges, or turn up their "fallow" flanks, or lie locked in ice'.—Harrison.

Thus we have in this wonderful poem the characteristics of purity and masculinity. They are embodied in the character of Beowulf himself, which has been analysed for us by Mr Clark Hall. 'It is a character', he says, 'drawn in great detail, and, upon the whole, with admirable consistency. The poet is a faithful chronicler even of his hero's faults, and his portrayal of Beowulf becomes all the more valuable on that account. We feel that we may safely take Beowulf as a truthful type of the best of the noble warriors of his day. We have in two places—at the end of the first and again at the end of the second part of the poem—the author's own estimate of his character. In the first place he is described as valiant, discreet, and large of heart, in the second as mild and gentle, kindly to his men, and eager after fame. As we go through the poem we shall find these traits appearing in his words and actions.

First we notice the loftiness of his sentiments—glory is what a man should aim at; death or victory. The brave man must not be a brute, he must be 'an officer and a gentleman'—even when he fights with monsters! He cannot leave his rival, Breca, in the lurch. The courtesy which surprises and charms us in the poem is very marked in Beowulf, who could forget a transient quarrel like a well-bred man. There is nothing more violent than Beowulf's outburst of ill-temper at the taunts of Unferth; but Unferth makes amends, and is received again as a friend without reserve.

Beowulf's nobility of soul comes out in many places, but most of all, I think, in his refusal of the proffered

kingdom, followed by faithful, loyal, and respectful help of the young king until he came of age. He is not unambitious, but seems indifferent to an honour which he does not have to fight for. He is a mercenary and an adventurer by profession—we must not forget it; and he looks for his reward—Hrothgar and others do not forget that. He is treated like a gentleman, rejoices in his present, and is ready to do service again on the same terms. But though he even talks of fighting for gold, it is for others rather than himself. Gold is not topmost in his thoughts, but glory. The gifts he has received he gives away with generous hand. The spirit of adventure which has marked the Englishman in all ages is very strong in him.

He is prudent and discreet, except in the Unferth episode already referred to, in which he clearly lost his temper, and from which we see that he was foolhardy in his youth. He gives evidence of political acumen. According to the standard of the times he is unassuming, self-restrained, and modest—what boastfulness he has belongs to the age, and seems to have been almost obligatory in his profession. There is a fine passage where, in his dying hour, he boasts with inborn paganism, of general righteousness of life. Pious he is, without a doubt, but his piety, as we see from this and other passages, is half-heathen and half-Christian, and strongly tinged with gloomy fatalism. Sadness is the prevailing note in Anglo-Saxon poetry; but in Beowulf's case we have the added pathos of his loneliness. We may dismiss the darker side of Beowulf's character with a very few words. In some respects it is evident that his ethical standard was low; for he takes great credit to himself for not having sworn *many* false oaths, or murdered his relations. At the same time it must be remembered that it was the sacred duty of every man to avenge the slaughter of his nearest kinsfolk and his dearest friends, and that in taking vengeance the custom of the times permitted every sort of treachery'.

This duty of revenge, the vendetta, the feud, is one of the peculiar features of customary law among the Early Germanic tribes, and has always claimed the attention of historians. 'As the story of *Beowulf*', says Mr Frederic Seebohm in *Tribal Custom in Anglo-Saxon Law*, 'involves a homicide with Beowulf's maternal kindred, and fighting

and bloodshed between the kindred in spite of the marriage link, and as it deals also with outside feuds, it happens to present remarkable opportunities for studying the action of tribal custom in various cases. The evidence it gives is all the more valuable by its being an Anglian version of Scandinavian traditions, inasmuch as the poet or his Anglian interpreter assumes throughout that the laws of the game, under Scandinavian tribal custom, were too well known to need explanation to his Anglian audience'. Mr Seebohm devotes a chapter of his valuable work to the evidence of *Beowulf*, and he sums up thus the results of his study as to tribal custom incidentally revealed in the poem :—

(1) 'There is no feud within the kindred when one kinsman slays another. However strong the natural instinct for avengement, it must be left to fate and natural causes. Accidental homicide does not seem to be followed even by exile. But murder within the kindred breaks the tribal tie and is followed by outlawry'.

The case in *Beowulf* of the slaying of Herebeald by his brother Haethcyn illustrates the question of kin-killing. Herebeald, the poet says, 'had to quit life unavenged'.

(2) 'Marriage between two kindreds is a common though precarious mode of closing feuds between them. The son of such a marriage takes no part in a quarrel between his paternal and maternal relations.

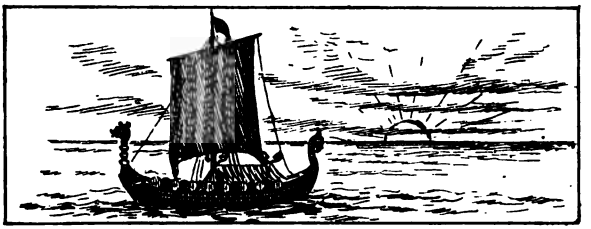
(3) 'When a marriage takes place the wife does not pass entirely out of her own kindred into her husband's. Her own kindred, her father and brothers, maintain a sort of guardianship over her, and the son in some sense belongs to both kindreds. He may have to join in his maternal kindred's feuds, and he may become the chieftain of his maternal kindred on failure of direct male succession, even though by so doing he may have to relinquish the right of chieftainship in his paternal kindred to another kinsman'.

Thus, for the historian, the poet, the philologist, the artist, the archæologist, and the simple reader who loves a good story well told, our first English Epic affords instruction, delight, amusement. I will close this imperfect and inadequate Introduction to it in the words of the great English scholar who was the first to set it before us in its right light—J. M. Kemble :—

'With this I take leave of my reader, exhorting him to judge this poem not by the measure of our times and creeds but those of the times which it describes; as a rude but very faithful picture of an age, wanting, indeed, in scientific knowledge, in mechanical expertness, even in refinement, but brave, generous, and right-principled; assuring him of what I well know, that these echoes from the deserted temples of the past, if listened to in a sober and understanding spirit, bring with them matter both strengthening and purifying the heart'.

W. H.

LONDON, *March* 1907.



"They let the sea bear him; gave him to the Ocean"

BEOWULF

PART I

THE FIRST ADVENTURE: THE FIGHT WITH THE DEMON GRENDEL

I

THE GLORY OF THE DANES. THE PASSING OF SCYLD

[Lines 1–63]

WHAT! We have heard of the power of the nation-kings of the SPEAR-DANES in days of yore, how the Athelings did heroic deeds!

Often did SCYLD OF THE SHEAF tear away the mead-settles from bands of ravagers, from many peoples. A cause of terror was he, the earl, since first he was found helpless; but he got comfort for that; he waxed great under the heavens, throve in honours, until each one of those who dwelt around, beyond the Whale-road, had to obey, to yield tribute. A good king was that!

To him, afterwards, a son was born, a youngling in his courts; one whom GOD sent to the people for comfort. He understood the dire distress which they formerly suffered so long a while through being lordless. On him,

therefore, the Lord of Life, King of Glory, bestowed honour in this world; renowned was BEOWULF[1] son of SCYLD in the SCEDE-LANDS; his fame spread wide. So shall a young man derive benefits from abundant money-gifts among his father's friends, that afterwards, in his old age, willing followers will hold to him, stand by their chief when war comes. By praiseworthy deeds shall a man thrive in every tribe.

Then SCYLD, the strenuous, departed at the fateful hour to go to the Lord's keeping. Him then they bore to the sea-shore, his dear followers, as he himself bade whilst he, Friend of Scyldings, ruled them with words; long did he possess the power, a beloved land-chief.

"The Atheling's ship, ring-stemmed"

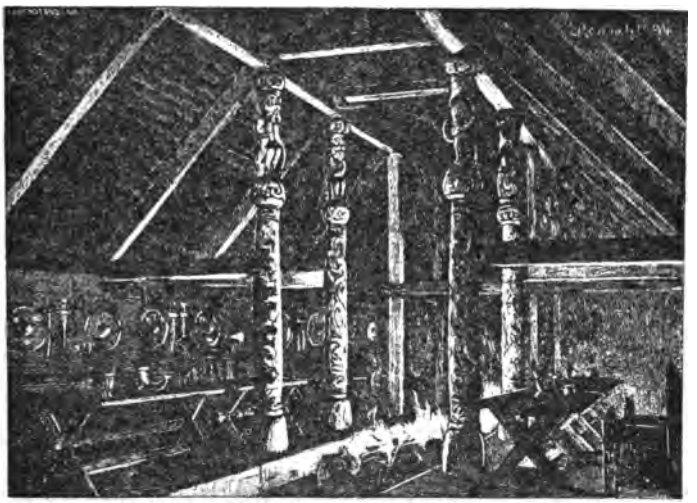
There in the haven stood the Atheling's ship, ring-stemmed, glistening, and ready to put out. They laid him, then, their dear lord, Bestower of rings, in the bosom of the ship; near the mast was the mighty one. Thither, from ~~over~~ far ways, many treasures were brought, ~~art-wrought~~ ornaments. Never heard I of keel more splendidly fitted out with battle-weapons, war-gear, swords, and coats of mail. On his breast lay many precious objects which were to go with him afar into the keeping of Ocean. Not at all

[1] Not Beowulf the Goth, the hero of the poem.

with fewer gifts and national treasures did they provide him than did those who, at the beginning, had sent him forth, alone, over the sea when he was a child! Moreover, they set for him a golden ensign high overhead; let the sea bear him; gave him to Ocean. Sad ~~was~~ their soul, mourning their mood.

Be they councillors in Hall, heroes beneath the heavens, men cannot for truth say who received that freight.

Then for a long time was BEOWULF of the SCYLDINGS, beloved king of people, renowned in the burgs among the folk—elsewhere from his home went the chief, his father—until afterwards from him sprang high HEALFDENE. While he lived, aged and fierce in war, he ruled the glad SCYLDINGS. To him were four children born into the world in succession: HEOROGAR, leader of bands, and HROTHGAR, and HALGA the Good; ELAN, the Queen, I heard, was the wife [of ONGENTHEOW,] the Battle-Scylfing.



An Ancient Northern Hall
From Dr Gudmundsson's *Den Islandske Bolig*

II

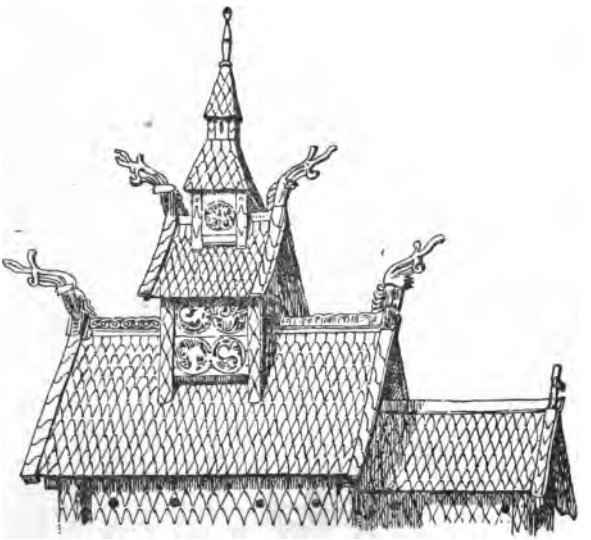
THE HALL HEOROT

HOW KING HROTHGAR BUILT THE GREAT HALL WHICH HE CALLED HEOROT [HART] AND AROUSED THE HATRED OF GRENDEL, AN EVIL MONSTER OF THE KINDRED OF CAIN

[Lines 64–188]

THEN was given to HROTHGAR success in war, honour in battle, so that his kinsmen-friends gladly obeyed him, until the youths grew up, a mighty band. It came into his mind that he would command men to build a Hall-dwelling, a Mead Hall, greater than children of men had ever heard of, and therein would he deal out to young and old, even as GOD had given him, except the share of the people, and the lives of men. Then, as I heard, far and wide, the work of adorning the Folk Hall was bidden to many a kindred throughout this Middle-earth.

It befel him in time, quickly among men, that it was all ready—greatest of Hall dwellings. He whose word had power far and wide devised for it the name 'HEORT' ['Hart']. He belied not his promise; he dealt out rings, treasure at the banquet. Lofty and horn-gabled arose the



"Lofty and horn-gabled arose the Hall"
Borgund Church, Norway

Hall. Hostile waves of hateful fire awaited it; nor yet was it long ere the sword hatred of Son-in-law and Father-in-law was to awaken, after deadly enmity.

HOW GRENDEL, A DEMON OF THE FENLAND, HEARD THE MERRIMENT IN THE HALL OF THE HART AND WORKED MISCHIEF

THEN the powerful Demon who abode in darkness could hardly for a while endure to hear every day the mirth, loud in the Hall; the sound of the harp was there, the clear song of the Bard.

He said—he who narrated the Creation of Man from of old said—that the Almighty made the Earth, the brightly beauteous plain which water encircles round; exulting in victory He set sun and moon for lights to lighten the land-dwellers and decked the regions of the world with branches and leaves; created life also for every being that goes about alive.

Thus were the noble warriors living happily in bliss until a Certain One began to devise evil—a fiend of Hell. GRENDEL was the grim demon named—a mighty stalker of the marches, who held fen and fastness. The joyless being dwelt awhile in the abode of the race of Sea-monsters after the Creator had proscribed him. Upon the kindred of Cain did the Eternal Lord avenge that murder because he slew Abel. No pleasure had He in that feud, but for that crime the Creator banished him far from mankind. Thence were born all the evil progeny—giants and elves and sea-monsters; such, too, were the Giants who strove long with GOD. He paid them their reward for that!

THE DEMON GRENDEL MURDERS THIRTY THANES

THEN after night came went he to seek out the high House, how the RING-DANES had bestowed themselves in it after the beer-drinking. Then found he therein a band of Athelings asleep after feasting; they knew not sorrow—that woe of mankind! The Creature of destruction, grim and greedy, was soon ready, fierce and furious, and he seized in their sleep thirty thanes. Thence, exulting in spoil, he set off back again to go homeward—to seek his abode with that fill of slaughter.

Then at dawn, with break of day, was GRENDEL'S war-craft disclosed to men; then, after that meal of his, weeping arose, a great cry in the morning. The mighty prince, the Atheling honoured above all, sat unhappy, endured heavy woe, suffered thane-sorrow when they looked upon the track of the enemy—of that accursed demon. Too severe was that strife, loathsome and lasting! No longer was it than one night before he again planned more murderous

evils and recked not of feud and crime ; he was too fast fixed in them ! Then was it easy to find a man who sought rest for himself elsewhere—a bed among the chambers [of Hrothgar's burg] when the hatred of him who held the Hall was made known to him, truly told by manifest token. He who afterwards kept himself farther and safer was the one who escaped the fiend !

Thus, then, GRENDEL ruled and wrought against right, one against all, until the best of Houses stood idle. A long

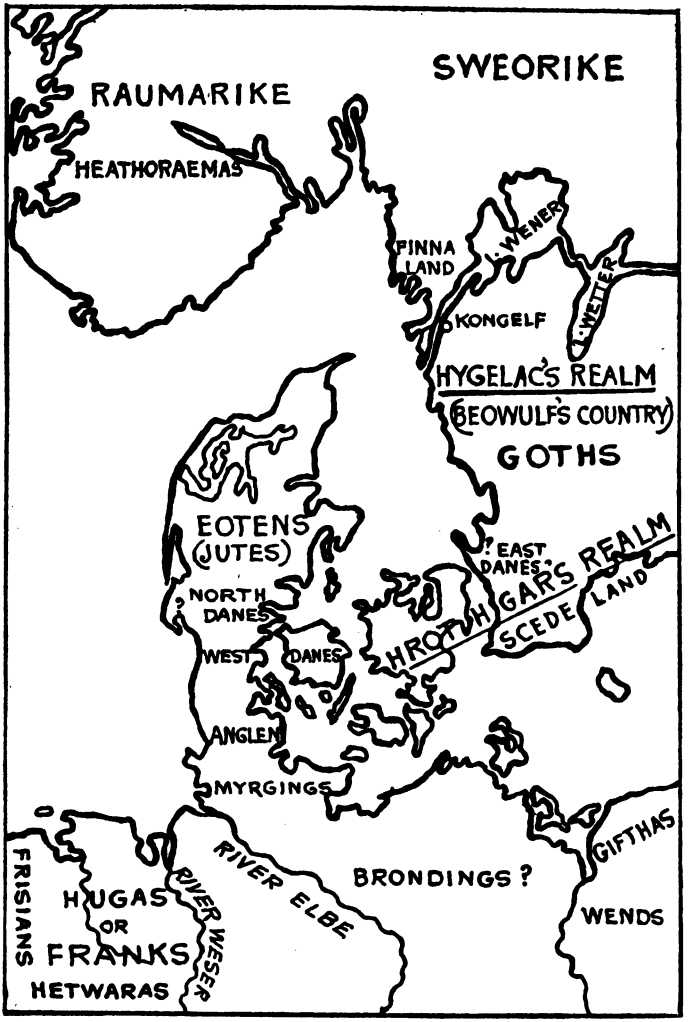
Gift-stool

time it was ! Twelve winter-tides did the Friend of Scyldings [HROTHGAR] endure distress, great sorrows, woes of every kind ; for it was openly known to children of men in sad songs that GRENDEL from time to time waged hateful war against HROTHGAR, violence and feud for many seasons, strife continual—would not peaceably stay from any one

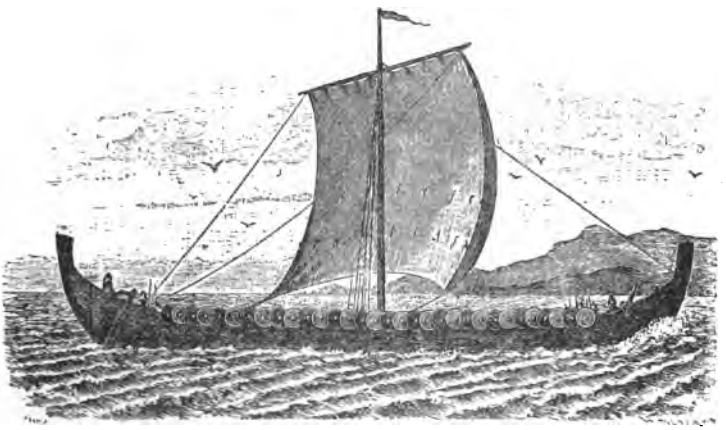
man of Danish race that life-bale, nor compound for money; no one of the wise men there could expect to be fairly ransomed out of the slayer's hands. The terrible Demon—dark Death-shadow—kept pursuing warriors of high rank and low, bound them and entrapped them. Night after night he held the misty moors;—men know not whither Hell's sorcerers wander to and fro! So many crimes, cruel injuries, did the enemy of mankind, the LONE-GANGER often perpetrate! He occupied HEOROT, treasure-decked Hall, in the dark nights—yet might he not approach the Gift-stool, precious before the Creator, nor know His mind.

Great sorrow, grief of heart, was that for the Friend of Scyldings! Oftentimes did many who were mighty in council sit; devised plans, what it would be best for strong-souled men to do against the fearful terrors. Sometimes they made sacrifices at their Idol-tents, prayed aloud that the Spirit-slayer would give them help against the national torment. Such was their custom—the hope of heathens! —they remembered Hell in their heart-thoughts! The CREATOR they knew not, the Judge of deeds; knew not the Lord God; could not praise Heaven's Protector, the King of Glory.

Woe be to him who through deadly hate shall thrust down his soul into the embrace of fire, to hope for no comfort nor the least change! Well be it for him who, after his death day, may seek the Lord and implore protection in the Father's bosom!



The Geography of Beowulf



"Most like to a bird the foamy-necked floater went, wind-driven over the sea-wave"

III

THE COMING OF BEOWULF

[Lines 189–668]

BEOWULF, A THANE OF HYGELAC, KING OF THE WEDER-GOTHS, HEARS OF GRENDEL'S CRIMES AND SETS SAIL FOR DENMARK

[Lines 189–228]

THUS, then the son of HEALFDENE [HROTHGAR] constantly brooded over his time-long care; the wise chieftain could not ward off his woes. Too severe, too loathsome, too long-lasting was that strife which had come upon that people; forced misery; grim war; greatest of evils by night!

A thane of HYGELAC, excellent among the Goths, heard in his home of the deeds of GRENDEL. He was, in the day of this life, the strongest in might of mankind; noble and powerful. He bade make ready for him a good wave-crossing ship; said he would seek out the War-King, the

great prince, over the Swan's-road, since he had need of men. Not at all did prudent people blame him for that voyage, dear to them though he was ; they whetted him—the stout-hearted one ; they looked for good omens. The brave one had chosen fighting men from the people of the Goths, the keenest he could find of them ; he took ship ; some fifteen in all. A skilful seafaring man pointed out the landmarks.

Grendel with his "Glof"

Time passed on ; the ship was on the waves, under the mountain the boat; the warriors, ready, stepped up on to the prow ; the billows rolled the sea upon the sand. The warriors carried into the bosom of the ship, bright ornaments, splendid war-gear; the men —men on a willing journey — shoved out the timber-braced craft. Then, most like to a bird, the foamy-necked floater went, wind-driven over the sea wave, until at the same hour of the next day the curved prow had ploughed along so far that the travellers saw land, the sea-cliffs shine, steep mountains, broad headlands of the sea. The sea was crossed ; the voyage at an end.

Then quickly the Weder people went up on the land, made fast the ship; their mail coats rattled—garments of battle; they thanked GOD that the wave-ways had been easy for them.

BEOWULF AND HIS MEN ARE CHALLENGED ON LANDING BY THE DANISH COASTGUARD

[Lines 229–285]

THEN from the wall the guard of the Scyldings, he who was set to hold the sea-cliffs, saw them as they lifted over the bulwarks bright shields, armour ready for war. Curiosity tormented him in the thoughts of his mind as to what those men were. Then went the thane of HROTHGAR, riding his horse, to the sea-shore. Strongly he shook the mighty spear shaft in his hand, and he spoke these formal words:

"Who are ye, who, bearing arms, protected by coats of mail, bringing thus a tall ship over the sea-way, have come hither over the waters? At the coast end I have been keeping ocean-watch that no enemy may do harm with ship-army in the land of the Danes. Never have shield-bearing men come here more openly; nor did ye know the password of our warriors the observance of kinsmen. Never saw I greater earl on earth than is one of you—a warrior in arms!—no stay-at-home, adorned with weapons is that, unless his looks, his distinguished appearance belie him! Now must I know your origin ere ye go far from here or advance farther, as false spies, into the land of the Danes. Now, ye dwellers afar, seafarers, hear my simple thought: it is best to make quickly known whence ye are come."

Him the chieftain answered; thus the leader of the war band unlocked his word-hoard:—"Of the race of the Gothic people are we, and hearth-companions of HYGELAC. My father was well known among the people, a lordly leader, ECGTHEOW named. Many winters he lived, ere, an old man, he went on his way from his dwellings; every wise man far and wide throughout the earth remembers him well. With friendly mind are we come to seek thy lord,

the son of HEALFDENE, protector of the people; be thou a good adviser to us. We have a great errand to the mighty lord of the Danes, nor, as I hope, shall aught of it be hidden. Thou knowest if it is, as we indeed have heard say, that among the SCYLDINGS, a destroyer—I know not what—a secret hater, works terror in his deeds, malignity untold, oppression and slaughter in the dark nights. I can teach HROTHGAR counsel with magnanimous mind how he, prudent and good, may overcome the fiend; whether for him the misery of afflictions should ever cease, release come at last and the waves of care become cooler; or whether he must suffer hereafter a time of trouble and oppression, so long as the best of Houses remains there in its high place."

THE COASTGUARD ALLOWS BEOWULF AND HIS COMPANIONS TO PASS. THEY JOURNEY FROM THE SEA-SHORE TO HROTHGAR'S HALL

[Lines 286–319]

The guard spoke, there where he sat on horse, a fearless warrior: "A sharp shield-warrior, he who judges well, shall know the difference between words and works. What I hear is that this band is friendly to the lord of the Scyldings. Go forth, bearing your weapons and armour; I will guide you. I will also bid my comrade-thanes to hold with honour against any enemy your floater, the new-tarred vessel on the sand, until the wooden craft with the curved prow bears the beloved man back over the sea-streams to the boundaries of the Weders. To such a well-intending man it will be granted that he shall pass safe through the rush of battle."

They set out, then, on their journey; the floater remained quiet riding at her hawser—the broad-bosomed ship fast at anchor. The Boar-image shone over the cheek-guards of the helmets, plated with gold, adorned, and fire-hard. The Boar kept guard! Battle-minded they raged along; the men hurried along; went down together until they could see the timbered Hall, splendid and gold adorned. That was to dwellers on earth the

foremost of Halls under heaven, in which the ruler dwelt; its light shone over many lands. To them, then, the warrior showed the glittering dwelling of the brave that they might straightway go to it. He turned his horse—war hero that he was—then spoke word:

"The boar-image shone over the cheek-guards of the helmets"

"It is time for me to go. May the Father Almighty with His favour keep you safe in your adventure. I will to the sea to keep ward against hostile bands."

BEOWULF AND HIS COMPANIONS ARRIVE AT HROTHGAR'S HALL

[Lines 320–498]

The road was stone-laid; the path kept the men together. The mailed coat of war shone, hard and hand-riveted, the bright ring-iron sang in the armour as they first approached the Hall in their war-gear. Sea-weary, they set their broad shields, bucklers wondrous hard, against the Hall-wall, and rested then on the benches; their mail-coats rang—war-armour of men; their spears, the weapons of seamen, stood all together—the ashen wood, grey at the point! Glorious in weapons was the iron-clad troop! Then a brave warrior asked the sons of battle as to their kinship: "Whence do ye bring these plated shields, grey shirts of mail and masked helms, this heap of war-shafts? HROTHGAR'S messenger and servant

am I. Never saw I of strangers thus many men more bold seeming. I think that ye have sought out HROTHGAR from valour; not because of exile, but from high-mindedness."

Him, then, the hero renowned for strength answered—the brave lord of WEDERS, hardy under helm, then spoke word thus:

"We are HYGELAC'S table companions. BEOWULF is my name. I wish to tell my errand to the son of HEALFDENE, the famous prince, thy chief, if he will grant to us that we may greet him, so good as he is."

"The mailed coat of war shone, hard and hand-riveted"

WULFGAR spoke — he was a chief of the WENDELS; his strength of mind, war-prowess and wisdom were well known to many:

"I will ask the Friend of DANES, Lord of SCYLDINGS, Bestower of rings, the mighty prince, as thou dost petition, concerning thy journey and will at once announce to thee the answer which the good one thinketh to give me."

Then went he quickly to where HROTHGAR sat, aged and bald, with his company of earls; the valiant one went and stood before the shoulders of the lord of the DANES; he knew the custom of a nobleman.

WULFGAR spoke to his lord and master:

"There have voyaged hither, come from afar over the sea-way, people of the GOTHS; the one who is chiefest the sons of battle call BEOWULF. They are suppliants, my lord, that they may exchange words with thee. Do not thou refuse them reply, gracious HROTHGAR. In their war-trappings they seem worthy of the esteem of earls; especially distinguished is the chief who has led the battle-heroes hither."

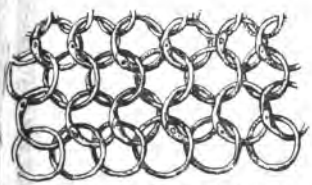
HROTHGAR spoke, the Helm of the Scyldings:

"I knew him when he was yet a lad. ECGTHEOW was his old father called, to whom HRETHEL THE GOTH gave his

only daughter for his home; and now his son has come boldly here and sought a faithful friend. Moreover the seafarers who carried thither from here tribute gifts for the goodwill of the Goths said that he, renowned in battle, has in the grip of his hand the main strength of thirty men. Him as I hope hath HOLY GOD sent us as a gracious help for the West Danes against the terror of GRENDEL. I shall offer treasures to the brave one for his daring. Do thou make haste; bid the kindred-band come in together to see me. Say to them also in words that they are welcome to the Danish people."

Then went WULFGAR to the door of the Hall, brought word from within: "My victor-lord, chief of the East Danes, bade me say to you that he knows your noble blood, and that ye are welcome to him hither, men of stout heart, over the sea waves. Now may ye go in battle-gear under war-masks to see HROTHGAR. Let your battle shields and wooden slaughter-shafts await here the words of council."

Arose then the chieftain, many warriors around him, a mighty band of thanes; some bided there to guard the war-gear as the hardy one commanded. Together they hastened as the guide directed them under the roof of HEOROT. He went forward—strong hearted, hardy under helm—until he stood at the High Seat. BEOWULF spoke—his mail coat shone upon him, the armour-net cunningly linked by skill of smith:



"The armour-net cunningly linked by skill of smith"

"Hail to thee, HROTHGAR! HYGELAC'S kinsman and vassal-thane am I. In my youth I have undertaken many exploits. GRENDEL'S doings have been plainly made known to me on the turf of my native land; seafarers say that this Hall—noblest of Houses—stands empty and useless to every man after the evening light has become hidden beneath heaven's serene. Then, lord HROTHGAR, my people—the best of them, prudent men—advised me that I should seek thee, because they knew the greatness of my strength;

they themselves saw it when I came from hostile snares, blood-stained from the foe, where I bound five, slew a brood of giants, and killed sea-monsters by night upon the waves; endured pressing distress, avenged the sorrow of the Weders —for they had suffered woes—ground down their enemies. And now I will decide the matter, alone, against GRENDEL, against this monster, against the giant. Now, therefore, Ruler of the Bright-Danes, Protector of Scyldings, I will ask of thee one boon—and do not thou deny it me, O Defender of Warriors, dear Friend of the People, now I have come thus far: that I alone and my band of earls—this hardy band—may purify HEOROT. I have heard also that the monster in his heedlessness recks not of weapons. I therefore renounce—and may HYGELAC my liege-lord be of happy mood towards me therefor—that I should bear sword or broad yellow round shield into the fight; but I will grapple the fiend with grip of hand and strive for life, foe against foe. There shall he whom Death takes trust in the doom of GOD. If he prevail I suppose that he will fearlessly devour Gothic people in the War-Hall as he often did the best of the HRETHMEN. Thou wilt not need to cover my head [by burial], for if Death takes me he will have me, all stained with gore, bear off my bloody corpse bent upon devouring it; the Lone-ganger will feast without sorrow and stain the moor-pools;—no longer wilt thou need to take care for my body's sustenance! If battle carries me off do thou send to HYGELAC this best of battle-shrouds that covers my breast, choicest of garments; it is the legacy of HRETHEL, the work of WELAND. Goes aye WYRD[1] as she may!"

HROTHGAR, Helm of Scyldings spoke: "For battle in our defence hast thou sought us, BEOWULF, my friend, and for kindly help. Thy father fought a mighty feud; he was the slayer with his own hand of HEATHOLAF among the Wylfings; then the kin of the Weders could not harbour him for fear of war. Over the rolling sea then he sought the SOUTH DANES' folk, the HONOUR-SCYLDINGS, what time I first ruled the people of the Danes and in my youth held the gem-rich, hoard-city of heroes. HEREGAR was dead then, bereft of life, my elder brother, son of HEALFDENE;

[1] Wyrd: one of the three principal Norns or Fates of Scandinavian mythology.

he was better than I. Afterwards I settled the feud with fee; I sent treasures of the olden time over the ridge of water to the WYLFINGS; he (ECGTHEOW) swore oaths to me.

"Sorrow in my soul it is to me to tell any man what GRENDEL with his thoughts of hate has framed for me of shame in HEOROT; of sudden harms. The company of my Hall-floor, my war band, is dwindled; WYRD swept them away into GRENDEL'S terror. GOD can easily restrain the brutish ravager from his deeds! Full oft over the ale-cup did the warriors boast, flushed with beer, that with their terrible swords they would abide GRENDEL'S onset in the Beer-Hall. Then, at morning-tide, this Mead-Hall, this lordly Hall, was stained with gore, all the bench boards covered with blood, when the daylight shone, the Hall with sword-blood. I owned thereby, of liegemen, dear noble companions, the fewer by those whom death took away! Sit, now, at the feast and unbind thy thoughts, thy war-fame to men, as thy mind stirs thee."

Then was a bench cleared for the Goth-men all together in the Beer-Hall, and there went they, the stout-hearted, to sit, proud in their might. A thane did the service, one who bore in his hand an art-adorned ale cup, and poured out the bright liquor. From time to time a minstrel sang clear in HEOROT. There was joy of heroes, no small band of Danes and Weders!

THE JARRING NOTE—UNFERTH'S TAUNT

[Lines 499–606]

UNFERTH spoke up, the son of ECGLAF, who sat at the feet of the Scyldings' lord; unbound the battle-rune. The voyage of BEOWULF, brave sea-farer, was a great vexation to him, because he did not grant that any other man should

ever gain more honour on this Middle earth beneath the heavens than he himself.

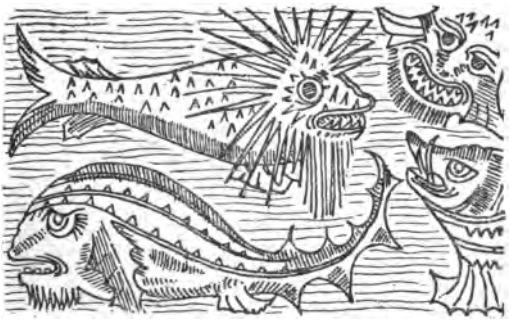
"Art thou that BEOWULF who strove with BRECA on the wide sea in a swimming race, when, out of pride, ye made trial of the flood, and, from a foolish boast, risked your lives in deep water? No man, friend or foe, could dissuade you from your sorrowful adventure when ye swam on the sea, when ye covered over the sea-stream with your arms, measured the water ways, splashed them with your hands, glided over Ocean. The sea, the winter's flood welled up in waves! Ye strove for seven nights in the realm of water. He overcame thee in swimming; he had greater strength. Then, in the morning-tide, the ocean cast him up on the Heatho-Remes' land, whence he, dear to his people, sought his beloved home, the land of the Brondings, his stronghold, where he had people, burgh and treasure-rings. The son of BEANSTAN truly fulfilled all his boast against thee! And so I expect for thee a worse result—though thou hast everywhere prevailed in the battle-rush—a grimmer warfare, if thou darest to await GRENDEL at close quarters for the space of one night!"

BEOWULF spake, ECGTHEOW'S son:

"What! thou hast spoken a great deal about BRECA and talked about his adventure, my friend UNFERTH, drunk with beer! I say with truth that I possessed more sea-strength, endurance on the waves, than any other man. When we were boys we two said and boasted—both were then still in our youth-life—that we would risk our lives out on the sea; and so we did. We had a naked sword, hard in hand, when we swam on the sea; we thought to defend us against the whale fishes. Not by any means could he float far from

"We thought to defend us against the whale fishes"

me on the flood-waves — swifter on the sea, I would not quit him! Thus were we two in the sea for the space of five nights until the flood, swelling waves, coldest of weather, darkening night, drove us apart; and the north wind, battle-grim, turned against us; rough were the waves! The anger of the sea fishes was aroused; there did my body-shirt of mail, hard and hand riveted, afford no help against enemies; the braided battle-fence, decked with gold lay on my breast. A many-coloured fiendish destroyer dragged me to the bottom; he had me fast, grim beast, in his clutch; yet it was given to me to reach the monster with my point, with war-sword. The



"Thus did the evil-doers often fiercely threaten me"

onset took off the mighty sea-beast by my hand. Thus did the evil-doers often fiercely threaten me. I did them thane-service with my dear sword, as was fitting! By no means did they have joy of their meal, the workers of harm, in devouring me, sitting round their feast near the ground; but in the morning, mangled with blade, they lay up on the sea-shore, put to sleep by the sword, so that never after could they hinder seafarers upon the high sea! The light came from the east, bright beacon of GOD; the waves grew calm, so that I could see the headlands, the windy walls of ocean. Often does WYRD save an earl, undoomed when his valour avails. However that may be, it was granted to me that I should slay with sword nine sea-monsters. Never have I heard of a harder fight by night

under heaven's vault, nor of a man more wretched upon the ocean streams. Yet I, weary of my adventure as I was, endured the clutch of the foe with my life whole. Then the sea, the flood with its tide, the swelling ocean, bore me to the land of the Finns.

"I have never heard such armed-strife, such sword-perils told of thee. Never yet did BRECA in the battle game, nor either of you, do so daring a deed with bright swords—not of that do I boast much—though thou wast the murderer of thy brothers, thy head-kinsmen! For that thou shalt suffer punishment in Hell, though thy wit be good. In truth I tell thee, son of ECGLAF, that GRENDEL, the terrible demon, would never have wrought so many horrors upon thy chief, humiliation in HEOROT, if thy mind, thy soul, were as battle-fierce as thou thyself sayest. But he has found out that he need not very much fear the feud the terrible sword-onset of your people, the Victor-Scyldings! He takes enforced pledges; spares none of the people of the Danes; but he wars at pleasure, slays and feasts, and expects not strife with the Spear-Danes. But now, ere long I shall show him in battle the courage and strength of the Goths. Afterwards, let him who may go high-hearted to the mead-drinking when the morning light of another day, the ether-clad sun shall shine from the south over the children of men."

QUEEN WEALTHEOW TAKES THE CUP ROUND THE HALL

[Lines 607-668]

THEN was the Bestower of Treasure, grey-haired, famous in war, in happy mood. The prince of the Bright-Danes trusted in help, the shepherd of the people heard from BEOWULF his steadfast resolve. There was laughter of heroes; the din resounded; speech was joyful. WEALTHEOW went forth, the Queen of HROTHGAR, mindful of courtesies; gold-adorned, she greeted the men in Hall, and then the free-born wife gave the cup first to the Home-guardian of the East-Danes, dear to his people, bade him be blithe at the Beer-drinking. He joyfully received the

feast and the Hall-cup, victory-famed King! Then around every part, among the high nobles and the low, went the Lady of the Helmings and gave the costly cup until the time came that she, ring-adorned queen, noble of mind, bore the cup to BEOWULF. She greeted the chieftain of the Goths, discreet in speech, thanked GOD that her wish had been fulfilled that she might rely upon some hero as a comfort in affliction.

He, the slaughter-fierce warrior, received the cup from WEALTHEOW, and then, eager for battle, he spoke—BEOWULF spoke, the son of ECGTHEOW:

"When I put out to sea and sat in the sea boat with my band of men, I made this resolve that once for all I would work the will of your people or stoop in the strife, fast in the grip of the fiend. I shall do the noble deeds which become an earl or await in this Mead-Hall my last day."

Well pleasing to the wife was the defiant speech of the Goth. Gold-adorned, the freeborn Queen of the people went to sit by her lord.

Then again, as before, brave words were spoken in Hall; the people were joyful; it was the sound of a conquering folk until suddenly the son of HEALFDENE wished to seek his evening rest; he knew that battle against the High Hall was purposed by the Demon when they could not see the light of the sun, when shapes of the protecting shadow came stalking, wan beneath the sky, night darkening over all.

The whole company arose; then greeted they one man the other—HROTHGAR, BEOWULF—and wished him success, power in that Wine-Hall, and said these words:

"Never yet, since I could lift hand and shield, did I entrust the lordly Hall of the Danes to any man, save now to thee. Have, now, and hold the best of Houses; remember fame, make known thy mighty strength, be wakeful against the foe. No wish shalt thou lack if thou achievest this work of might with life."

Then out of Hall with his band of warriors went HROTHGAR, Defence of Scyldings; the war-chief would seek WEALTHEOW, the queen, for bed-mate. The Glory of Kings [GOD] had set a house-guard against GRENDEL, as men heard say; He did special duty around the lord of the Danes; He offered him a guard against the giant.

IV

THE FIGHT WITH GRENDEL

[Lines 669–836]

THE NIGHT WATCH FOR THE DEMON

[Lines 669–709]

THE chieftain of the Göths, however, trusted firmly in his proud power, in the Creator's favour. Then he doffed his iron coat-of-mail, the helm from his head, gave his ornamented sword, choicest of weapons, to his attendant-thane, and bade him guard the battle-gear. Then spake brave BEOWULF, the Goth, some vaunting words ere he stepped up to his bed:

"I do not account myself less in fighting power, in the work of war, than GRENDEL himself; therefore I will not put him to sleep, deprive him of life, with the sword, though I may rightly do so. He knows not of these noble arts—to strike back at me, hew my shield—fierce though he be in hostile works. But at night we shall forego the sword, if he dare seek war without weapons, and then may the wise GOD, the Holy Lord, adjudge the glory on whichsoever hand may seem to Him fit."

He laid him down, then, the battle brave; the cheek-bolster received the earl's face, and around him many a keen sea-warrior bent himself to his Hall-rest. No one of them thought that he should ever seek again from there his beloved home, people, or free burg where he was nurtured; for they had heard tell that a bloody death had carried off far too many of the Danish people in that Wine Hall.

But to them, to the people of the WEDER-GOTHS, the Lord gave the webs of success in war, comfort and help, that they all should overcome the fiend through the strength of one, through his own might. Truly it is known that Mighty GOD has always ruled over the race of men!

In the dusky night the Shadow-goer came striding on. The warriors slept who should hold that Horn-Hall—all but one! It was known to the men that, if the Creator willed it not, the ceaseless foe might not drag them under the shadow; but he, wrathfully awake against the enemy, awaited in swelling rage the issue of the fight.

THE COMING OF GRENDEL

[Lines 710–745]

THEN from the moor, under the misty slopes came GRENDEL, stalking. GOD'S anger he bore upon him. The evil destroyer thought to entrap some of the race of men in the high Hall. He strode under the clouds to the place where he might best descry the Wine Hall, the Gold Hall of men, variegated with gilding. Not the first time was it that he had sought out HROTHGAR'S home! Never in the days of his life, before or after, did he find hardier warrior and Hall-thanes!

He came, then, faring on to the Hall, this being bereft of joys. The door, fast with fire-forged bands, soon sprang open when he touched it with hands. Bent on evil, for he was swollen with fury, he burst open the mouth of the House. Quickly thereafter, the fiend trod upon the variegated floor; on he went in wrathful mood; there stood in his eyes a horrid light, most like to flame. He saw many men in the Hall, the kindred-band, sleeping all together—a troop of fellow-warriors. Then laughed he in his heart; the fell monster resolved that ere day came he would sever life from body of every one of them; for the hope of full feasting had come to him. It was no longer fated that he should devour more of mankind after that night! The kinsman of HYGELAC beheld a terrible calamity —how the evil destroyer was about to act with sudden grips. Nor did the demon think to delay it, but, as a

beginning, he quickly seized a sleeping warrior, rended him unawares, bit his flesh, drank the blood in streams, swallowed with unceasing bites, and soon had devoured all of the dead man, to his feet and hands.

GRENDEL CLUTCHES BEOWULF, AND IS HIMSELF SEIZED BY THE HERO AND HIS ARM TORN OFF

[Lines 746–836]

He stepped forward nearer; then seized with his hands the high-hearted warrior as he lay; the fiend reached out with his hand; but he, with cunning thought, swiftly seized and sat upon his arm. Soon did the worker of evil find this: that never in this Middle World, these regions of earth, had he met with a mightier hand-grip in any other man! He became terrified in mind and soul; none the sooner for that could he escape; his mind was bent on getting away, he wished to flee into the darkness and seek the devil's gang—his condition there [in the Hall] was not such as he had found it before, in the old days!

Hygelac's brave kinsman then bethought him of his speech in the evening. Upright he stood and grasped him tight; his fingers burst. The giant made to go out; the earl stepped further. The mighty demon thought to twist himself away, if he could do it, and thence flee away to the fen-pools. He knew the power of his fingers was in the grip of his foe. A sad journey was that which the destroyer had made to Heorot!

The lordly Hall resounded; among all the Danes, the dwellers in the town, the warriors, the nobles every one, there was panic. Furious were both the fierce and mighty warders. The Hall resounded. Great wonder was it that the Wine-Hall withstood the battling foemen; that the fair earthly dwelling did not fall to the ground; but it was all fast within and without with iron bands smithied with cunning thought. There, as I have heard, many a mead-bench adorned with gold fell from the sill—there where the foes fought. The wise men of the Scyldings did not ever before imagine that any man could shatter it, splendid and horn bedecked, by strength, or unlock it by craft; unless indeed the embrace of flame should swallow it in smoke.

A sound arose—one that was new enough! A fearful terror fell upon the North-Danes, upon every one of those who heard from the wall the wailing—GOD'S enemy screaming a horrible lay, a triumphless song—the slave of Hell lamenting his wound!

He held him fast—he who was strongest of men in the day of this life. The Defender of Earls would not on any account let the death-bringer escape alive—he did not account GRENDEL'S life days useful to any people! There did many an earl of BEOWULF'S draw an old ancestral sword, wished to defend the life of the dear lord, the famous chief—if so they might. They knew not, indeed, when they risked the contest—stout-hearted battle heroes—and thought to hew him on every side to seek out his soul, that not any of the choicest weapons on earth, no war-sword, was able to touch the ceaseless destroyer, because he had laid a spell upon victorious weapons, upon every kind of blade. His life-parting from the days of this life was to be miserable, and the alien spirit was to journey far into the power of fiends. Then he who formerly in mirth of mood had devised many crimes against mankind hostile to GOD found out that his body would not last, for the brave kinsman of HYGELAC had him by the hand. Each while he lived was hateful to the other. The evil monster suffered pain of body; on his shoulder was manifest a spreading wound; the sinews sprang asunder, the flesh burst. To BEOWULF was given the battle-glory; GRENDEL, life-sick, must flee thence to seek out his joyless dwelling under the fen-slopes; too well he knew that the end of his life was come, the number of his days. The desire of all the Danes had come to pass after that deadly conflict! Then had he cleansed the Hall of HROTHGAR, he, wise and strong of soul, who erewhile came from afar, saved it from war. He rejoiced in his night's work, the greatness of his might. The chieftain of the Gothic people had made good his boast to the East Danes, had removed, too, all distress, the hostile sorrows which they erewhile suffered and had to endure by compulsion—no little insult! That was clear token—when the battle brave hero laid down the hand, arm, and shoulder—GRENDEL'S clutching limb was there all together—under the wide roof!

V

THE REJOICING FOR VICTORY

[Lines 837–1250]

THE PEOPLE GATHER AT THE HALL AND TRACK GRENDEL TO THE MERE OF THE DEMONS

[Lines 837–867]

THEN, in the morning, as I have heard, there was many a warrior around the Gift-Hall; the people's leaders came from far and near along the wide ways to see the wonder—the tracks of the monster. His life parting seemed not sorrowful to any of the men who gazed upon the track of the gloryless one, how, weary at heart, vanquished in fight, doomed and driven to flight, he directed his life tracks away thence to the Mere of the Water Demons.

There the surface was surging with blood; frightful lashing of waves welled up, all mingled with hot gore—with sword-blood; the death-doomed one dyed them, when, joyless, he laid down his life in his fen refuge—his heathen soul. There Hell seized him.

From there the older comrades, and also many a young one, proudly riding on horses—heroes on steeds—came back from their joyful journey from the Mere. There was BEOWULF'S glory proclaimed; many often said that, south or north, by the two seas, over the earth's extent, no other of bearers of shields beneath heaven's expanse was better than he, more worthy of a kingdom. Yet did they not at all blame their friend and lord the gracious HROTHGAR, for that was a good king. At times the famous warriors would let their dun horses run in race where the land ways seemed fair, known for their goodness.

A BARD SINGS THE LAYS OF SIGEMUND AND HEREMOD

[Lines 868–915]

AT times a thane of the king, a vaunt-laden man, mindful of songs—one who remembered a very great number of

tales of old time—invented a new story interwoven with fact. This man forthwith began cleverly to handle BEOWULF's adventure and successfully to narrate skilful tales, to interchange words. He told everything that he had heard say:

THE LAY OF SIGEMUND

Of SIGEMUND, of his mighty deeds; much that was unknown of the WAELSING'S strife; his wide journeyings of which the children of men did not know well, his feuds and crimes, except FITELA, who was with him when he would say something of such matters—uncle to nephew—for they were ever comrades at need in every fight. Very many of the Giants' race had they slain with swords.

To SIGEMUND after his death-day there came no little fame, since, hardy in war, he slew the Dragon, the Keeper of the Hoard. He, Atheling's son as he was, risked the daring deed alone under the grey rock. FITELA was not with him, yet it was granted to him that his sword pierced the wondrous Dragon, that it stood fast in the wall—noble iron! The Dragon died the death! The mighty warrior had so prevailed that he could enjoy the Ring-Hoard at his own will. The son of WAELS loaded his sea-boat, bore the bright-treasures into the bosom of the ship. Heat consumed the Dragon.

He was by far the greatest of Adventurers among nations of men—a Defence of warriors by his mighty deeds. He throve, therefore, in the days of old.

THE LAY OF HEREMOD, A DANISH KING

AFTER the battle-prowess of HEREMOD, his strength and valour waned; he was betrayed among the Jutes into the power of his enemies and quickly sent away. Overwhelming sorrow crippled him; too long he became a life-care to his people, to all his Athelings. Thus in former days many a prudent man oft bewailed the adventure of the stout-hearted one, those who had trusted to him for help in troubles, that the son of their prince would grow up, take his father's lordship, possess the people, treasure, and stronghold, the kingdom of heroes, the fatherland of the Scyldings.

He (BEOWULF) the kinsman of HYGELAC, was more desirable to all mankind, to his friends. But crime entered into HEREMOD.

HROTHGAR GOES TO THE HALL AND GIVES THANKS TO GOD AND TO BEOWULF

[Lines 916–990]

RACING, at times, they measured the yellow roads with their horses. Then the light of morning was sent hastening forth. Many a stout-hearted man went to the high Hall to see the rare wonder; the King himself also, Guardian of treasure-rings, strong in glory, famed for virtues, stepped forth from the bride-bower with a great company, and his queen with him measured the path to the Mead-Hall with her maiden band.

HROTHGAR spoke. He went to the Hall, stood on the landing of the entrance-porch, looked at the steep roof variegated with gold, and GRENDEL'S hand:

"For this sight be thanks given forthwith to the Almighty. Much evil and suffering have I endured from GRENDEL. GOD can ever work wonder after wonder—the King of Glory! It was but now that I expected not to get relief for myself from any of my woes in all my life whilst the noblest of Houses stood, stained with blood, sword-gory. The woe had scattered wide all the wise men, who did not expect that in all their lives they could defend the national building from harm from demons and phantoms. Now, through the might of the Lord, a warrior has done a deed which, hitherto, with all our wisdom we were unable to accomplish. What! this may she say, if she yet lives, whatever woman brought forth this son after man's nature, that the Eternal Creator was gracious to her in her child bearing.

"Now, BEOWULF, best of men, I will love thee in my heart as a son; hold fast henceforth the new kinship. To thee there shall be no lack of worldly wishes over which I have power. Full oft for less have I fixed the reward, the treasure honour, to a lesser warrior, to one weaker in conflict. Thou for thyself hast effected by thy deeds that thy renown shall live for ever and ever. May the Almighty reward thee with good as He did but now!"

BEOWULF spoke, ECGTHEOW'S son:

"With great good-will have we done that deed of might,

fought the fight, boldly risked the strength of the Unknown. I could have wished rather that thou thyself couldst have seen the fiend in his trappings, death-weary! I thought to pin him down quickly with hard grips on a death-bed, so that he might lie in my hand-grip, struggling for life, lest his body should escape; but I might not stop him from going, as the Creator willed it not. I did not hold on to him firmly enough for that—the mortal foe! the fiend was too powerful on his feet. But to save his life and to mark his track he has left hand, arm, and shoulder. Not thus, however, did the wretch buy consolation; none the longer will the evil-doer live burdened with sins; but pain has straitly seized him in its needy grasp, its baleful bonds. There, sin-stained creature, shall he abide the Great Doom, as the glorious Creator shall prescribe for him."

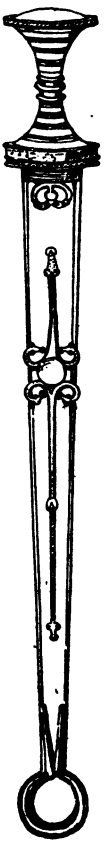
Then was the son of ECGLAF [UNFERTH] more silent in vaunting speech of warlike deeds, since the Athelings beheld, each of them, in front of him, the hand, the fingers of the fiend, set by the earl's might, upon the high roof. Each nail-place was most like to steel, the hand-spurs of the heathen, the battler's horrible claw! Everyone said that there was nothing harder that would touch him—no good sword of old that would cut off that bloody battle-fist of the demon!

THE HALL IS RESTORED. HROTHGAR GIVES A GREAT FEAST IN HONOUR OF BEOWULF, AND MANY GIFTS TO HIM AND TO HIS COMPANIONS

[Lines 991–1062]

THEN was it quickly ordered that HEOROT should be adorned within by hand; many there were, men and women, who prepared that Wine House, the Guest Hall. Gold-varied hangings shone along the walls, many wonderful sights for any one who looks on such things. That bright dwelling was greatly broken, fast though it was all within iron bands; the hinges torn away; the roof alone was wholly sound when the demon, stained with deeds of crime, despairing of life, had turned to flight. Not easy is it to flee from death, let him try it who will; but each one of soul-possessing

children of men dwelling on earth, by need compelled, must seek the place prepared, where his body, fast in its narrow bed, sleepeth after the feast.



"Many saw a mighty treasure-sword borne before the hero"

Then was the time and moment for the son of HEALFDENE to go to the Hall; the king himself would partake of the feast. Never heard I of tribe in a greater body bearing themselves better around their Treasure-giver. They sat down then on the benches, possessors of plenty; rejoiced in the feast. Many a mead-cup did their kinsmen, great-hearted HRŌTHGAR and HROTHULF, courteously share with them in the high Hall. HEOROT was filled within with friends —the people of the Scyldings wrought no deeds of guile meanwhile.

Then the son of HEALFDENE gave to BEOWULF as reward of victory a golden ensign, a decorated shafted standard, a helmet and coat of mail; many saw a mighty treasure-sword borne before the hero. BEOWULF took the cup in Hall; no need had he to be ashamed before the warriors of that fee-gift. Never have I heard of many men who in more friendly wise bestowed upon each other at the ale bench four precious things adorned with gold. Round the crown-piece of the helm a roll, wound about with wires, gave protection for the head from the outside, so that no shower-hardened sword, the legacy of files, might daringly injure it when the shielded warrior should go forth against his foes.

Then the Defence of Earls [HROTHGAR] bade lead beneath the barriers to the Hall eight horses with cheek plates. On one of them stood conspicuous a cunningly wrought, art-adorned saddle; it was the war-seat of the high king when the son of HEALFDENE had a mind for achievements in the sword game; never did the valour of the far-famed one fail in the forefront while the slain were falling. And then the Prince of the Ingwines gave over to BEOWULF possession of both horses and weapons; bade him enjoy them well.

Thus like a man, did the great lord, the Treasure-warden of heroes, reward battle-shocks with horses and treasures, such as none can dispraise who wills to speak truth according to right.

Then, besides, the Lord of Earls bestowed at the mead-

"Round the crown-piece of the helm a roll, wound about with wires, gave protection for the head"

bench upon each one of those who crossed the sea-ways with BEOWULF a precious object, an heirloom, and he ordered that gold be paid for that one whom GRENDEL had lately wickedly slain, as he would have slain more of them had not All-knowing GOD and the hero's bravery averted WYRD from them. The Creator ruled over all mankind as He doth even now; wherefore Understanding is everywhere best, and Forethought of mind. Much of loved and of loathed must he endure who long here in these days of strife makes use of the world.

HROTHGAR'S MINSTREL SINGS IN THE HALL THE SONG OF KING FINN

[Lines 1063–1159]

THERE was song and sound blended together in praise of HEALFDENE'S battle chief; the wood of joy [the

harp] was struck, a lay oft recited, what time HROTHGAR's bard was to awaken joy in Hall along the mead-bench.

THE LAY OF KING FINN

HNAEF of the SCYLDINGS, the hero of the HALF-DANES, was doomed to fall in Frisian battle by the sons of FINN, when fear got hold of them. Of a truth HILDEBURH had no cause to praise the good faith of the Jutes; she, all unsinning, was bereft of her dear ones in the shield-play [battle]—of sons and brothers. They fell by Fate, wounded by the spear. That was a sorrowful woman!

"The wood of joy was struck"

Not without cause did the daughter of HOC (HILDEBURH) bewail the Divine Decree when morning came, when she beheld her slaughtered kinsmen there, under heaven, where erstwhile she had possessed the world's best joy. War swept away all FINN's thanes except a few only, so that he could not at all contend against HENGEST on the battlefield or save by fighting the sad remnant of his men from the Prince's thane (HENGEST). But they (the Frisians) offered him (HENGEST) terms: that they would fully prepare for him another dwelling, a hall and high seat; that he might share equal possession of it with the sons of the Jutes; and that at treasure-givings the son of FOLGWALDA (FINN) should daily do honour to the Danes, would honour the band of HENGEST with rings, with even as much costly treasure of beaten gold as he would encourage the Frisians in the Beer-Hall. Then, on both sides, they made a fast treaty of peace. FINN strongly and without dispute, declared with oaths that he would hold the sad remnant in honour according to the decree of his councillors [Witan] so that no man there should break the compact by words or works, or ever undo it through guileful craft, even though they (the Danes), now lordless, followed the slayer of their Treasure-giver, since of necessity it was so imposed upon them; but if any of the Frisians should call to mind this deadly

feud with taunting words, then the edge of the sword should avenge it. The oath was sworn and gold treasure brought up from the hoard.

The best of the warriors of the Battle-Scyldings [HNAEF] was, ready on his funeral pyre. Easy to be seen at the pile was the blood-stained shirt of mail; the swine all golden, the iron-hard, boar-crest; many an Atheling injured by wounds. Some had fallen in the struggle.

HILDEBURH then bade that her own sons be committed to the fire at HNAEF'S pyre; their bodies to be placed on the pile and burned. The unhappy woman wept upon his (HNAEF'S) shoulder, lamented him in songs. The war hero ascended; the greatest of death-fires curled upwards to the clouds, roared before the mound. The heads melted away, the wound-gates burst; then out sprang the blood from the foe-inflicted wounds of the body. Flame, greediest of spirits, swallowed up all of both people whom war had taken. Their flower had passed away!

Bereft of their friends, the warriors then departed to visit their dwellings, to see FRIESLAND, their homes, and their high burg. HENGEST dwelt with FINN all that blood-stained winter, loyally, without dispute. He remembered his native land, though he might not drive his ring-stemmed ship over the sea. The ocean surged with storm, warred with the wind. Winter locked the waves in ice-bonds until another year came to the dwellings, as it yet doth, and the glory-bright weather, which constantly observes fit seasons. Then was winter gone, fair was the bosom of earth, the exile hastened forth, the guest from the dwellings. He (HENGEST) thought rather of revenge for harm than of seafaring—whether he could not bring about a deadly conflict and so commemorate the sons of the Jutes. So it was that he escaped not the way of the world when the son of HUNLAF thrust into his breast a battle-gleamer, best of swords, whose edges were well known among the Jutes.

So, too, afterwards cruel death by the sword befell the bold-hearted FINN in his own home, when GUTHLAF and OSLAF after their sea voyage mournfully lamented the fierce struggle; blamed him for their share of woes. His flickering spirit could not keep within his breast. Then was the Hall strewn with bodies of foe-men. FINN also was slain—the king among his retinue—and the queen taken. The warriors of the SCYLDINGS bore to their ships all the household goods of the land-king, whatever they could find of ornaments and cunningly-wrought gems at FINN'S home. They bore the noble lady over the sea-way to the Danes —led her to her people.

WEALTHEOW TAKES ROUND THE CUP. SHE GIVES RICH GIFTS TO BEOWULF, AND ESPECIALLY A GOODLY COLLAR

[Lines 1160–1231]

THE Lay was sung, the Gleeman's song. Pastime rose again; clear sounded the clamour of the benches; cup-bearers poured out wine from wondrous vessels. Then came WEALTHEOW forth, went under golden circlet to where the two good ones sat, uncle and nephew; as yet there was peace between them; each was true to the other. There too sat UNFERTH, the spokesman, at the feet of the Scylding's lord; everyone of them trusted his spirit, that he had great courage, though he was not honour-fast with kinsman in the play of swords.

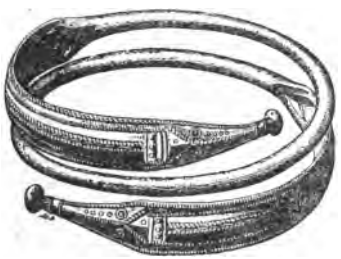
Spoke then the Lady of the Scyldings: "Take this cup, my noble lord, bestower of treasure! be thou happy, gold-friend of men! and to the Goths speak kind words, as one should do. Be gracious towards the Goths, mindful of gifts; near and far thou now hast peace. It was told me that thou wouldst have the warrior for a son. HEOROT is cleansed—the bright Ring-Hall! Enjoy then while thou mayest many a reward, and leave to thy kin people and kingdom when thou must needs go forth to behold the Godhead. I know my gracious HROTHULF, that he will honourably maintain the youths, if thou, O Friend of Scyldings, leavest the world ere he does. I think that he will requite our offspring with good if he be mindful of all that we two have done for his pleasure and dignity in the past, while he was yet a child."

Turned she then to the bench where her sons were, HRETHRIC and HROTHMUND and the sons of the warriors, all the youths together. There by the two brothers sat brave BEOWULF the GOTH.

To him the cup was borne and friendly invitation offered

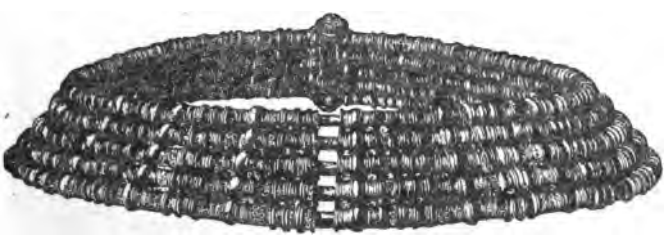
Wealtheow the Queen
(The details of costume and ornament are derived from actual specimens in various museums)

in words, and twisted gold gladly presented—two armlets, a mantle, and rings; of collars the goodliest that ever I heard of on earth. Never under heaven have I heard of a more excellent hoard-treasure of heroes since HAMA bore away to the bright burgh the COLLAR OF THE BRISINGS, the collar and its precious casket. He fled the cunning enmity of Eormanric and chose the Everlasting Counsel.



Gold armlet found in the island of Oland

That collar had HYGELAC the Goth, SWERTING'S grand-son, on his last expedition, when, beneath his war-sign, he defended his treasure, guarded the spoil of the slain. Fate carried him off, when, from pride, he sought his own



"Of collars the goodliest that ever I heard of on earth"

woe—a feud with the Frisians. He, mighty chieftain, bore the ornament with its precious stones over the brimming sea—he fell beneath his shield! Then into the grasp of the Franks passed the life of the king, his breast mail, and, with it, the Collar. Meaner war-wolves stripped the body, as is the fortune of war. The people of the Goths held the battlefield.

The Hall rang with sound. WEALTHEOW spoke; in the presence of the company she said: "Receive this collar with all hail, BEOWULF, beloved youth, and use this mantle —national treasures—and prosper well! Show thyself

strong, and be to these lads friendly in counsel. I will be mindful of thy reward for that. Thou hast brought it to pass that, far and near, throughout all time, men shall honour thee even as widely as the sea encircles its windy land-walls. Be while thou livest a prince blessed with possessions ; I wish thee store of costly treasures. Be thou kindly in deeds to my sons, guarding their happiness. Here each noble is true to the other, mild in mood, faithful to his liege lord, the thanes are united, the people ever ready, the warrior band, cheered with wine, do as I bid."

THE HALL IS CLEARED FOR SLEEPING

[Lines 1232–1250]

SHE went to the seat. There was the choicest of feasts ; men drank wine. They knew not WYRD—stern destiny—as it had befallen many an earl ! When evening came and HROTHGAR departed to go to his court—the ruler to his rest —numberless nobles guarded the Hall, as they had often done before. They bared the bench-board ; it was overspread with beds and bolsters. Of the revellers a certain one bent himself to his rest in the Hall ; near to his death and doomed to die !

At their heads they set the war-disks, the shining shield-wood. There on the bench above the noble was easily seen towering battle-helm, ringed coat of mail, mighty battle-shaft. It was their custom ever to be ready for war, both at home and in the host, or both of them, at just such time as need might befall their liege lord. It was a good people !

END OF THE FIRST ADVENTURE

PART I

NOTES

NOTES

(The lines are those according to the text of Mr A. J. Wyatt)

Line 1, page 1

What! we have heard: 'Hwaet'! The *What!* is interjectional, an abrupt but effective beginning to an epic which was intended to be recited by bards. It occurs in other parts of *Beowulf*, and in the later Anglo-Saxon Epics—*Andreas*, the *Holy Rood*, *Destinies of the Apostles*, and *Juliana*.

Chaucer, in the *Prologue* to the *Canterbury Tales*, so uses it, line 853:

> He seyde, Sin I shal beginne the game,
> What! welcome be the cut a Goddes name.

In the opening scene of *Hamlet*, Horatio says: 'What, has this thing appeared again to-night?'—and, just before, Bernardo says: 'What, is Horatio there?' In both cases, as in *Beowulf*, the word is an exclamation, not an interrogation. So also in *Julius Cæsar*, ii, 1: 'What, Lucius, ho!'

The Spear Danes: 'Gar Dena': The Gar was the throwing spear or javelin, of which the warrior carried two into battle to throw over the enemy's 'shield-wall'.

Line 3, page 1

Athelings: I have generally used this word without translation. The Athelings were next in dignity to the King, being his sons and near relations.

Line 4, page 1

Scyld of the Sheaf: 'Scyld Scefing': Ethelwerd in his chronicle, early tenth century, recording the death of King Ethelwulf, son of Egbert, states that Ethelwulf was descended from Sceaf who 'came with one ship to an island of the Ocean named Scani [the southern part of Sweden, now Skane] sheathed in arms, and he was a young boy, and unknown to the people of that land, but he was received by them, and they guarded him as their own with much care and afterwards chose him for their King.' Sceaf, he says, had a son named Sceldi [Scyld], whose son was Beaw.

William of Malmesbury (middle of the twelfth century) in his *History of the Kings* also derives Ethelwulf's descent from Sceaf, 'who,' he says, 'as some affirm, was driven on a certain island in Germany called Scandza (of which Jornandes the historian of the Goths speaks), a little boy in a skiff, without an attendant, asleep, with a handful of corn at his head, whence he was called 'Sceaf'; and on account of his singular appearance, being well received by the men of that country and carefully educated; in his riper age he reigned in a town which was called Slaswic, but at present Haitheby. That country, called Old Anglia, whence the Angles came into Britain, is situated between the Saxons and the Goths.'

In the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* a similar pedigree of Ethelwulf is given; it was the source of that given by Ethelwerd and William of Malmesbury. All these correspond with our poem as to the sequence of Scyld and Beowulf in the pedigree; but in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* Scyld is the son of 'Heremod' and not of 'Sceaf'; no 'Sceaf' is mentioned until, much higher up, we find him in the line as the son of Noah, 'born in the ark'!

According to the version of the legend in Ethelwerd and William of Malmesbury, Sceaf was the foundling who came in the ship to the Swedish shore; but in our poem it is Scyld, called Scyld Scefing, *i.e.* of the sheaf (or, possibly, *son* of Scef or Sceaf) and it is he who, we must suppose, was found with the sheaf at his head in the boat.

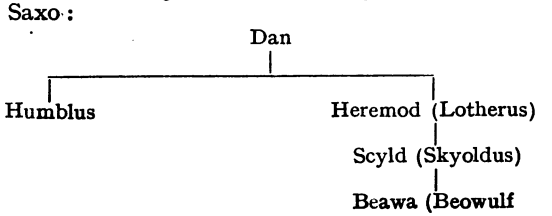
Mr Horace Marryat, in his *Residence in Jutland* (1860, vol. ii) gives the following version of the Legend of King Skiold: 'Ledreburg, planted on a height, overlooking a deep valley, possesses a deep historic interest, for it stands on the site of the ancient Leira, stronghold of pagan worship in the island of Zealand, founded by King Skiold, son of Odin. He arrived in a ship from afar. At this time all Denmark was sad, for the King had no son, and the Danes knew not whom they should choose as a successor, when, one day, as they flocked down to the sea-shore, they observed in the distance a sail as it approached the land. It was evidently a ship royal. The mast was of gold; it had silken sails, and was laden with great riches of gold and silver. Upon the deck of the vessel lay a beautiful child, a little boy reposing upon a shield, while his head

rested upon a sheaf of wheat. And when the people saw they cried, " Behold, it is the son of Odin, who comes to be our King." So they took the child, and they sowed the corn, and it came up in plenty, each ear bearing more than any ear had before borne in their country, and the boy was proclaimed King of Denmark. When only twelve years old he caught a bear and bound it in thongs, and at eighteen became King. Courageous and just was King Skiold. In victory he declared, " Honour is the share of the King, but booty for the soldiers ! " Long did he reign over Denmark ; and, when an aged man and about to die, he caused himself to be placed in his old ship by his weeping servants, and when the sails were set, the sun shone bright and the wind arose, the ship sailed forth. All men wept, and no one knew where he went to. Such is the Legend of King Skiold.'

The late Mr Thomas Arnold of University College, Oxford, in his *Notes on Beowulf*, says that ' The Legend of Sceaf is evidently one of great antiquity, and no writer who is not English anywhere mentions it. Is not this some presumption that the legend was of English growth ? '

' This,' says Mr Stopford Brooke, ' is our Ancestral Myth —the story of the first culture-hero of the North, the patriarch, as Rydberg calls him, of the Royal families of Sweden, Denmark, Angeln, Saxland and England '. And it matters not much whether it was Scyld or Sceaf.

Dr Clark Hall, commenting on the fact that Scyld appears in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* as the son of Heremod and not of Sceaf, says that Scyld is undoubtedly the same as Skjold, the Skyoldus of the Danish historian Saxo Grammaticus (1180–1208). The father of Skyoldus is stated by Saxo to have been Lotherus, and Lotherus has clearly been identified (by Sievers) with Heremod. Sceaf, therefore, says Dr Clark Hall, must disappear as a historical personage, and he gives the correct genealogy as follows, from Saxo :



Line 10, page 1

Beyond the Whale Road: This phrase for the ocean is also found in the Anglo-Saxon poem of *Andreas* and the *Genesis* of Caedmon.

Line 18, page 2

Beowulf, son of Scyld: This Beowulf the Dane, son of the founder of the Danish royal line, from whom the Danes are often called Scyldings, is not to be confused (though his appearance at the opening of the poem is apt to confuse him) with its hero Beowulf of the Goths. Kemble in his edition of *Beowulf*, 1837, drew attention to the name 'Beaw' in the genealogies, and connected Beowulf with it as an enlarged form of the name, 'wulf' being a termination of honour, as in Sax-wulf, Cuth-wulf, etc.

Line 19, page 2

The Scede lands: i.e. the Danish countries, but primarily Sceden-ig, the modern Skane, the southernmost province of Sweden, once under Danish rule.

Line 23, page 2

His willing followers: 'wil-gesithas': 'Given a king,' says Dr Wm. Stubbs, 'a new order of nobility was sure to arise—nobility by service. The ancient leaders of the Germans surrounded themselves with a court of brave men, the heroes and wise men of the nation. These are called the King's Gesiths or Companions, his servants or thanes, his *comites* or counts, his *principes* or princes.' And in his *Tribal Custom in Anglo-Saxon Law*, Mr F. Seebohm points out that the word 'gesith' in *Beowulf* evidently includes with members of the near kin such others not necessarily blood relations as may have joined the warrior band of the hero. And thus the extension of comradeship or kinship adds to the greatness and power of his 'maegd' or tribe. In the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, under the year 755, we read that an Atheling, named Cyneard, beset King Cynewulf of Wessex in a house at Merton and slew him there. The King's thanes aroused by the affray rushed to the spot 'each as he was ready, and with utmost speed. And the Atheling (Cyneard) offered money and life to each of them, and not one of them would accept it, but they continued fighting till they all fell, except one, a British hostage, and he was

sorely wounded.' To borrow a phrase from our poem, Those were good Gesiths!

Line 25, page 2

In every tribe : 'maegtha' : The 'maegtha', or kindred, was a group of families descended from a common ancestor and corresponded to the Roman *gens*.

Line 30, page 2

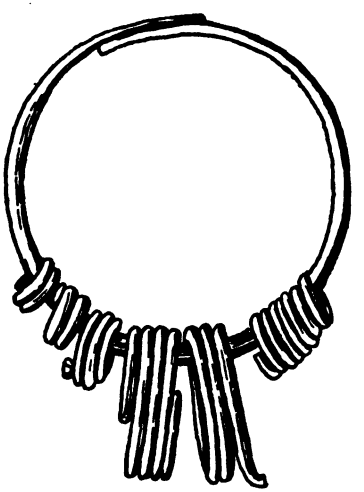
Friend of Scyldings : 'Wine Scyldingas' : Wine-friend enters into the composition of many names: Winfrid, Ethelwine, etc.

Line 32, page 2

There in the haven : 'at hythe' : Several English seaport towns still bear the name of Hythe.

Line 32, page 2

The Atheling's ship ring-stemmed : 'hringed-stefna' : An epithet often used of a ship, and meaning, I think, that the high stem, or figurehead, was carved in that way. The illustration in the text is from the Bayeux Tapestry, one of Harold's ships sailing across to Normandy — of a period long subsequent to the date of the poem; but, considering that the type of the vessels of the Northmen remained unchanged for centuries it is, I think, a sufficient and striking illustration of the epithet, which has often puzzled commentators.



Line 35, page 2

Bestower of rings: 'Beaga Bryttan' : Bestower, that is, of ring-money. There were no native coins, and gold by weight was used for payment. It was in the

form of gold rings, sometimes of spiral form. These rings have often been found frequently broken off at one or both ends. Reference to these treasure-rings dispensed by the king to his thanes is constant throughout the poem. The accompanying illustration is from an actual specimen of ring-money.

Line 38, page 2

Never heard I of keel : 'ceol' : So in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* under the year 449 : 'And in their days [the days of the Emperors Martianus and Valentinus] Vortigern invited the Angles thither, and they came to Britain in three *keels*.' 'The vessels in the coal trade in the north of England are still called *keels*' (Earle).

Line 47, page 3

A golden ensign : 'segen gyldenne' : Not, as I think, a flag, or banner, but a military ensign in metal of some emblem, with or without ornamentation, around and beneath it, on a pole ; such as were the Roman standards or 'eagles' (*insignia*).

Line 49, page 3

Gave him to Ocean : 'gafon on Garsecg' : Gar-secg is 'Spear-man'. The myth of an armed man, a spearman, is employed by the Anglo-Saxons as a term to denote the Ocean, and has some analogy to the personification of Neptune holding his trident. Spears were placed in the hands of the images of heathen gods, as mentioned by Justin.

Line 52, page 3

The Passing of Scyld : Professor Earle compares the Passing of Scyld to the Passing of Arthur, and says that between Scyld and Arthur there is a complete analogy. 'Both arrive from the unknown in their infancy, and both are shipped away to the unknown after death. The Passing of Scyld is the best-preserved picture that time has spared us out of Teutonic heathendom. I am almost prompted to surmise that it is the most archaic thing extant in all

literature. It reflects the Age of Bronze, for then it was that the mighty dead were so shipped away.' Compare, too, the burial of Haki on a funeral pyre ship in the *Inglinga Saga*, the burial of Balder, and Charles Mackay's *Sea King's Burial*.

Line 57, page 3

High Healfdene ; Heorogar, leader of bands ; Hrothgar ; Halga the good ; Elan, the queen : These were the three sons and the daughter of Beowulf the Scylding.

Healfdene, father and predecessor of Hrothgar as King of the Danes. He is the Haldanus of Saxo Grammaticus.

Heorogar, or Heregar, appears to have been King after Healfdene for a considerable time. He left his armour after his death not to his son Heoroweard but to his brother Hrothgar, who succeeded him ; Hrothgar gave it to Beowulf, the hero of the poem, who in turn gave it to his master Hygelac, king of the Weder Goths.

Hrothgar, King of the Danes at the time of Bewoulf's expedition, and a principal figure in the first part of the poem. He is the Roe of Saxo Grammaticus, and the founder of the ancient Danish royal town of Roskilde. Hrothgar is the Hroar of the *Hrolf's Saga*.

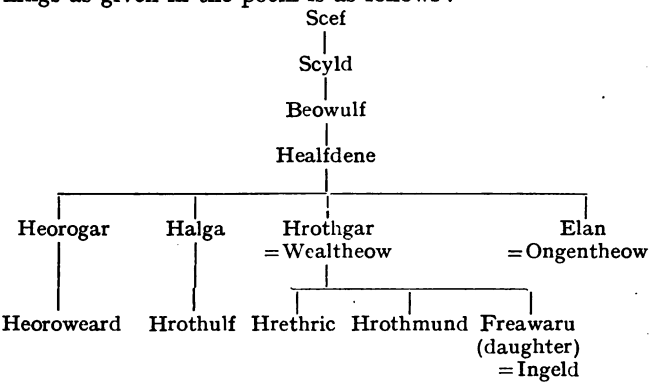
Halga : In the *Hemiskringla* he is Helgi, son of Halfdau, and his kingdom is in Leidre, the district in the Danish island of Zealand at the head of the Ise fiord, where, according to all probability, Hrothgar's Hall ' Heorot ' stood. In Saxo Grammaticus Halga appears also as Helgi. His adventures, as told in the *Heimskringla* and by Saxo do not bear out the epithet of ' the good ' given him in *Beowulf*. Halga's son Rolf Kraka is the Hrothulf of our poem, the nephew of Hrothgar.

Elan, the queen, I heard, was the wife of Ongentheow, the Battle Scylfing : In the original (lines 62, 63) the lines are—

hyrde ic thaet Elan cwen . . . . .
Heatho-Scylfingas heals-gebedda,

there being a gap in the versification after *cwen*. This Ettmüller supplies with ' Ongentheowes waes ', making the

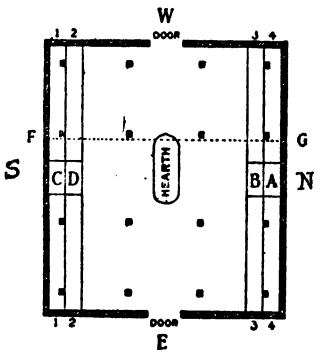
meaning as given in the translation. The line of the Danish kings as given in the poem is as follows :—



Line 67, page 5

The Hall 'Heorot': Dr Clark Hall gives in his edition of *Beowulf* a description of an ancient Scandinavian Hall furnished him by Dr L. Simons. 'The Scandinavian dwelling', he says, 'was rectangular; its roof was supported by four rows of pillars, of which the two outer rows were close to the walls, the two others being separated from these outer rows by about a third of the breadth of the building, so that the Hall was divided into a nave and two side aisles. In the middle was an open hearth. The two side aisles were covered with wooden planking, raised usually by two steps towards the wall, and this served for seats. Of these tiers of seats those to the right of the entrance at the east end were the more honourable. Exactly in the middle of each tier were the two places of special honour (A, B, C, D, in the plan) of which the two upper ones were the most distinguished, and the space was enough for several persons. The highest place (A) was always taken by the chieftain to whom the House belonged, and in the case of our poem this would be Hrothgar. The second highest place (C, opposite) was given to the most notable guest—to Beowulf, when he arrived at the Hall. Loose tables, probably nothing more than planks, similar to those forming the seats, but movable and supported by trestles, were placed in front of the raised seats. On the seats the warriors

slept after the tables had been stored on the floor of the middle aisle.' Dr Clark Hall refers for further details of the ancient Scandinavian house to Paul's *Grundriss der Germanischen Philologie*, Part xiii, pp. 228–35. In Sir G. W. Dasent's *Story of Burnt Njal*, plan, section, and elevation are given of the later Icelandic Hall, in which the principal features of the Earlier Hall just described were preserved, though it was probably larger and more elaborate, and the great hearth extended down the centre to a greater length, sometimes in two or more sections. The plan and elevation here given are from Dr Clark Hall's edition of *Beowulf*. A comparison of them with the interior view at page 5 will, I think, make the general aspect and arrangements of the ancient Northern Hall quite clear. It is important for the proper understanding of the poem.



Diagrams of a Scandinavian Royal Hall. Upper figure: Ground plan; Low figure: Vertical Section or line F. G.

Line 75, page 5

Middle earth: 'Middangeard': 'The earth, the abode of men, is seated in the middle of the universe bordered by mountains and surrounded by the great sea. On the other side of this sea is the Utgarth (the out-yard) the abode of giants. The Mith-garth (the middle-yard—the earth) is defended by the Yard, or burgh, Asgarth, the Burg of the Gods, lying in the middle, the heaven being conceived as rising above the earth.'—Cleasby and Vigfusson's *Icelandic Dictionary*.

Line 82, page 6

Horn-gabled: 'Horn-geap': Literally 'horn-wide', mean-

ing that it was wide between the horns, the gable tops or finials which decorated the apex of the gables. The Church of Borgund in Norway, of the upper portion of which I give an illustration in the text, taken from the work of Mr Dahl on the *Timber Buildings of the North*, is a striking example of decorated gable ends. Hrothgar's great Hall no doubt had at the apex of its gables carved, and perhaps gilded, heads of the stag or hart, in allusion to its name 'The Hall of the Hart', or 'Hart Hall'. Stopford Brooke says of it: 'The Hall was a rectangular, high-roofed wooden building, its long sides facing north and south. The two gables at either end had stag horns on their points curving forwards, and these, as well as the ridge of the roof, were probably covered with shining metal and glittered bravely in the sun'.

I have been fortunate enough to find among the Harleian Manuscripts of the British Museum an eleventh century drawing of a Hall or palace, *the roof of which is actually adorned with the head and antlers of a stag*. The manuscript is a Latin Psalter, and the drawing stands at the head of the Psalm 'Beatus Vir', 'Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord'.

Line 82, page 6

Hostile waves of hateful fire awaited it, etc.: It is intimated here, and again later on in the poem that Hrothgar's splendid Hall was doomed to destruction by fire 'when hatred should arise between son-in-law and father-in-law'. We hear more of this quarrel later on in the 'Episode of Freawuru', daughter of Hrothgar, and her betrothal to Ingeld, son of Troda, King of the Heathobards. Hrothgar and Ingeld are the father-in-law and son-in-law here referred to. See the note to the 'Episode of Freawaru'.

Line 92, page 7

The Almighty made the earth, etc.: Professor Earle says: 'If we talk, as some people do, of this poem of *Beowulf* being a work of the second, third, or fourth century imported to this country with the English colonization, then such a passage as this must be called an interpolation. But if it is simply an English Epic of the eighth century I find it quite natural that a Christian poet of that time, while intending

to keep mainly on the lines of the old poetry and to draw his materials therefrom, should take a Hymn of Creation for a sample of the music that tortured the demon, and also as the first musical overture of an epic which, whatever its material, is in spirit Christian'. It is interesting to compare this 'Hymn of Creation' in *Beowulf* with Caedmon's *Hymn* on the same subject preserved in the MS of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* at Cambridge. Caedmon wrote between A.D. 658 and 680. It is within those same years that many competent authorities, Dr Clark Hall among them, place the composition of *Beowulf*, and not, as Professor Earle does, in the eighth century. Caedmon's *Hymn* runs thus—

Now shall we glorify the Guardian of heaven's realm,
The Maker's might and the thought of His mind,
The work of the Glory-Father, how He of every wonder,
He the Lord Eternal, laid the foundation;
He shaped erst for the sons of men
Heaven their roof, Holy Creator!
The Middle world He, mankind's Guardian,
Eternal Captain, afterwards created,
The land for men, Lord Almighty!

This, and this 'Hymn of the Bard' in *Beowulf*, are among the two earliest pieces of religious poetry extant in the English language.

Line 140, page 8

A bed among the chambers: 'bed aefter burum': A bed among the bowers, *i.e.* somewhere in the range of buildings attached to the Hall. 'They had shrunk into stables and corners or fled the place entirely, so that it had become almost a solitude.'—Earle. The word *bur* was often used in the Middle Ages for a lady's chamber, and now means arbour. 'The Lowland Scotch *byre*, a cowhouse, is merely another spelling and application of the same word. The original sense is a dwelling-place, a place to be in.'—Skeat.

Line 168, page 9

Yet might he not approach the Gift-stool: 'Gif-stol': This and the following phrase, 'nor know His mind', have been the subject of much comment by the various editors of the poem. That the demon might not approach the high seat

of the king is a natural thought enough. Dr Clark Hall aptly quotes from *Hamlet*—

> There's such divinity doth hedge a king
> That treason can but peep to what it would
> Acts little of his will.

But the phrase that follows, 'ne his myne wisse', makes the whole passage difficult of interpretation, and it has been interpreted in many ways. I have followed what seems to me the most natural one, and translated 'nor know His mind', namely, that God intended to make his visits to the Hall fatal to him.

Line 175, page 9

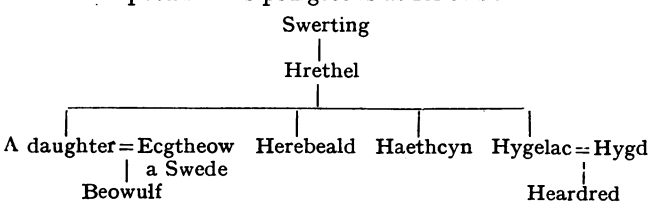
Sometimes they made sacrifices at their Idol tents, etc.: 'This unique and striking passage', says Earle, 'dates the time and place of the poet relatively to the times of heathenism from which the narrative is a survival. . . . This passage and this only declares explicitly the position of the poet'.

Line 177, page 9

The Spirit slayer: 'Gast-bona': 'Gast', Professor George Stephens says, was a word of vague signification, varying in sense from *man* to *monster*, and he translates *Jast-bona* as 'Giant-killer', meaning Thunor, the old god Thor. Ettmüller also considers that Thor, the ancient foe of the Giant brood, is intended.

Line 194, page 11

A thane of Hygelac's, excellent among the Goths: Hygelac was King of the Goths, and uncle and lord of Beowulf, the hero of the poem. His pedigree is as follows:—



Haethcyn, brother of Hygelac, killed their elder brother Herebeald and succeeded to the throne. Haethcyn was

himself slain by Ongentheow, King of Swedes; then Hygelac became the King of the Goths and attacked Ongentheow, who was slain in a battle at the Raven's Wood. Hygelac, who was still young on the return of Beowulf from the expedition to Denmark which forms the subject of the narrative in the first and second parts of the poem, married Hygd. The death of Hygelac is referred to four times in the poem (at lines 1202, 2354, 2501, and 2914, with the lines that follow in each case) as having occurred in a raid made into Friesland. This is of great interest and importance as fixing the approximate date of the three great adventures of Beowulf which form the main subject of the poem, for Hygelac has been identified with the Chocilaicus, or Chochilagus, of Gregory of Tours mentioned in his *Gesta Regum Francorum*, iii, 3. Hygelac is therefore a historical personage, and the raid in which he was slain is a historic event.

Gregory of Tours, who wrote in the sixth century, narrating the events of the life of Theodoric son of Clovis, says that at that time the Danes came with a ship-army and their king, named Chochilaicus, over the high seas, and devastated the country of the Attoarii (the Hetwara of our poem) in the land of Theodoric and filled their ships with captives, their king remaining, meanwhile, on the sea-shore. And when this had been made known to Theodoric, he sent his son Theodebert with a great army into those parts, who, following them up, fought with them in a great battle, defeated them and slew their king, and recovered and restored the captives to their own land.

This event, says M. Guizot in his edition of Gregory, took place in the year 515. We have that date, therefore as a certainty in the chronology of *Beowulf*. 'It is the only reference in the poem to a historical event contemporary with the events which it relates', says Dr Clark Hall.

The Hetwaras, Hattuarii, Attoarii, Chattuarii (Strabo) or Chatti (Tacitus *Germania*, 30), were a Franco-Frisian tribe who dwelt on the Lower Rhine, round Cleves, and they were allies of the Frisians and Franks in repelling Hygelac's attack.

The Goths: in the poem 'Geatas': I have throughout written Goths and not Geatas, believing, as I do, that the

Geatas of *Beowulf* are identical with the Goths. There is great weight of evidence, says Professor Arnold, tending to this identification. Gibbon in his tenth chapter says: 'From the time of the geographer Ptolemy, the southern part of Sweden seems to have continued in the possession of the less enterprising remnant of the Gothic nation, and a large territory is even at present divided into East and West Gothland. In this, of course, there is nothing more remarkable than in the fact that the Saxons who colonized Britain left a large portion of their countrymen behind them, who and their country are called Saxons and Saxony to this day. Similarly, the Goths of the south of Sweden, though they are now one people with the Swedes, have never lost the sense of their identity with the Teutonic conquerors who first broke the gates of imperial Rome. Pytheas of Marseilles, who lived in the fourth century B.C., and was a contemporary of Alexander the Great, is the first to mention the Northern races. Passing through the Baltic Sea he met with tribes of Guttones, Teutones, and Ostii, *i.e.* the Goths, the Teutons, and the Ests, and he heard that the Guttones traded with the Teutones in amber for which the Baltic coasts have always been famous'. Tacitus in his *Germania* (ch. xliii.) says that the Gothones 'are ruled by kings a little more strictly than the other German tribes, but not as yet inconsistently with freedom', and that they are near the Sinones or Swedes. Jornandes, who wrote in the sixth century and was himself of Gothic race, says in his book, *De Rebus Getecis*, that there is a 'great island in the northern sea called Scanzia' [in reality Skane, the southernmost part of Sweden], and that the Gothic nation 'bursting forth from the bosom of this island like a swarm of bees came into the land of Europe'. And it was his belief the original place of the Danes, the Swedes, and the Finns. Issuing from this 'great island' under their King Berig they landed at a place called Gothiscanzia [perhaps Dantzig, at the mouth of the Vistula], and then advancing southward they defeated the Scythians who dwelt between the Baltic and the Euxine, and spread themselves over the rich lands bordering on the last-named sea. All this was before the Christian era, and, says Professor Thomas Arnold, there seems to be no reason for rejecting the Scandinavian origin of the Goths. Jornandes appeals to the ancient lays

of the Goths. Would not these lays be likely to express a real and trustworthy memory respecting their earliest seats? And such a conclusion seems to be especially reasonable when the testimony of Pytheas, Tacitus, and Ptolemy respecting the original abodes of the Gothones is remembered.

In the ancient poem of *Widsith* (which used to be called the *Scop*, or *Gleeman's Tale*, or *The Traveller's Tale*), an earlier poem than *Beowulf*, we read: Ætla (Attila) ruled the Huns, Eormanric the Goths (Gotum); and, later on: 'I was with the Huns, and with the Hreth-Goths (Hreth-Gotum) with the Swedes and with the Geats (Geatum) . . . and I was with Eormanric, all which time the Goths' king treated me well there (Gotena Cyning)', etc.

Upon this Professor Arnold remarks that in the apparent distinction here made by the writer of *Widsith* between the Geatas and the Gottan the difficulty is perhaps not so great as it seems. 'The Traveller gives to different peoples the names by which he found them calling themselves at the times when he visited them. The Gothic people living near the Swedes—in what is now called Götarike or Gotland, he calls Geatas (Gautar), just as the author of *Beowulf* does, and as we may be certain they called themselves. But the Gothic people living under the rule of Eormanric or his successor, who had passed through many vicissitudes since they left their ancient home, were likely enough to have altered to some extent the pronunciation of their name so that it would sound Gota, not Geata, in the Traveller's ear'.

Line 200, page 12

The Swan's-road: 'Swan-rade': We have had Whale-road already as an epithet of the sea. This one of the 'Swan's-road', a natural one when the wild swan was common in those waters, occurs also in the Anglo-Saxon poems of *Andreas*, *Elene*, and *Juliana*.

Line 204, page 12

They looked for good omens: Tacitus says of the Germanic tribes: 'No people practice augury and divination by lot more diligently'.—*Germania*, ch. x.

Line 208, etc., page 12

He took ship . . . the foam-necked floater went over the wave until at the same hour of the next day . . . the travellers saw land: The course of Beowulf and his men from Hygelac's burg in Gothland to the head of Kioge Bay in the Danish island of Zealand, lay due south. I have already mentioned in the note upon Hrothgar's Hall of Heorot the conclusions which have been arrived at as to its probable site at Leire, ten miles inland from the head of the bay, and this will be a convenient moment to speak of the starting-point of Beowulf's eventful voyage and adventure. Further on in the poem (at line 1923), when his return is described, the poet gives us a meagre account of King Hygelac's royal seat. From the landing-place he says they had not far to go to seek Hygelac 'where he dwelt in his home, himself with his followers, near the sea-wall. Splendid was the building . . . the King noble in Hall'. And (at lines 2324–2334) when the ravages of the Dragon which devastated Gothland are described, we read that the fire-drake destroyed not only Beowulf's own home, 'best of dwellings, the Gift-Seat of the Goths', but 'the stronghold of the people, water-washed from without'—'ea-lond utan'. Taking these indications, and admitting the obscurity of the phrase 'ea-lond utan'—perhaps simply 'an island, from without'—it seems likely that the site of Hygelac's Burg was at Kongelf, an ancient town situated upon the Gota-Elf, the river which connects the great lake Wener with the sea at the point where the river forks to encompass the large island of Hisingen which, says Professor Arnold, seems to correspond well with the 'ea-lond utan' of the text. Further down the river on the main stream and at its mouth is Göteburg, Gothenburg, the modern capital of the district. From the mouth of the Gota-Elf to the bight of Kioge Bay in the island of Zealand, Denmark, the distance is 160 miles. Beowulf's voyage takes twenty-four hours, and this, says Arnold, the wind being favourable, as according to the narrative it was, would be a fair allowance of time for Beowulf's ship to accomplish the distance.

Line 222, page 12

Steep mountains: 'Beorga's steapne': There are no mountains either on the mainland or islands of Denmark,

though there are in Gothland. Professor Arnold says the poet may be confounding the descriptions of the Danish and Swedish scenery which he received.

Line 236, page 13

Formal words: 'Methel-wordum': Words suitable for the Methel or assembly.

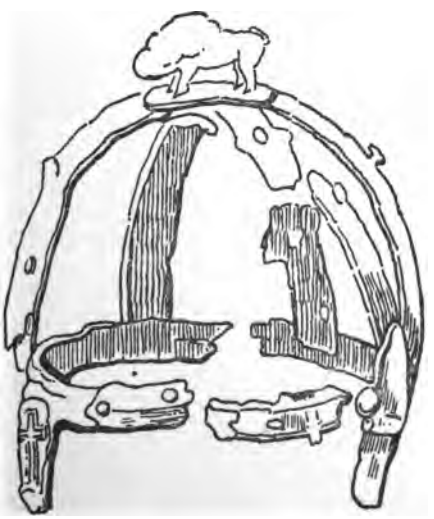
Line 289, page 13

Unlocked his word hoard: 'word-hord onleac': Thus is the first line of the poem of *Withsith:*

Withsith spoke, his word-hord unlocked.

Line 303, page 14

The Boar-image shone over the cheek-guards . . . the boar kept guard!: The *Germania* of Tacitus—inestimable possession of the Germanic race — at once throws light upon this remarkable passage. We read in chapter xlv: 'The Suevic Sea (the Baltic) washes the tribes of the Aestii, whose rites and fashions and style of dress are those of the Suevi (the Germans) while their language is more like the British. They worship the mother of the gods *and wear as a religious symbol the device* of a wild boar. This serves as armour and as a universal defence, rendering the votary of the goddess safe even amidst enemies'. What the Roman historian observed and wrote in A.D. 98 finds confirmation



from an English poet five hundred years later. The image of a boar thus used, as we see, by the Goths, was connected with the worship of the goddess Freyr, to whom the boar was sacred. I give here an illustration of an actual helmet, or rather, its iron framework, which is all that remains, surmounted by the boar crest—for so it would be termed in heraldry. It was found at Benty Grange, Derbyshire, in 1848, in an Anglo-Saxon barrow, and is described and figured by Mr Thomas Bateman in *Ten Years' Diggings in Celtic and Saxon Grave Hills* (1861). The framework of the helmet, he says, is of iron bands radiating from the crown of the head and riveted to a circle of the same which encompassed the brow. From the impression on the metal it is evident that the outside was covered with plates of horn disposed diagonally, so as to produce a herring-bone pattern. In the interesting little bronze relief which itself formed part of the decoration of a helmet, reproduced in the text at p. 15, we have precisely this 'herring-bone' pattern of which Mr Bateman speaks. It was found in a sepulchral cairn at Bjornhofda, in the Island of Oland, which lies along the east coast of the ancient country of the Goths (now the province of Gotarike, in Sweden), and is in the National Museum of Stockholm. Thus, as often happens, we find an English specimen illustrated and confirmed by one in the old homes of a kindred race. And—what makes this specimen so interesting to us—the warriors have the boar-crest on their helmets, a very notable illustration for our poem, in which the boar on the warrior's helmet is so often mentioned. The ends of the horn plates in the Benty Grange example were secured beneath with strips of horn corresponding with the iron framework and attached to it by ornamental rivets of silver. On the bottom of the front rib which projects so as to form a nasal is a small silver cross slightly ornamented round the edges by a beaded moulding, and on the crown of the helmet is an elliptical bronze plate supporting the figure of an animal carved in iron with bronze eyes, now much corroded, but perfectly distinct as the representation of a hog. There were found also in the grave 'many fragments, some more or less ornamented with silver, which have been riveted to some part of the helmet in a manner not to be explained or even understood. There are also some small buckles of iron which probably

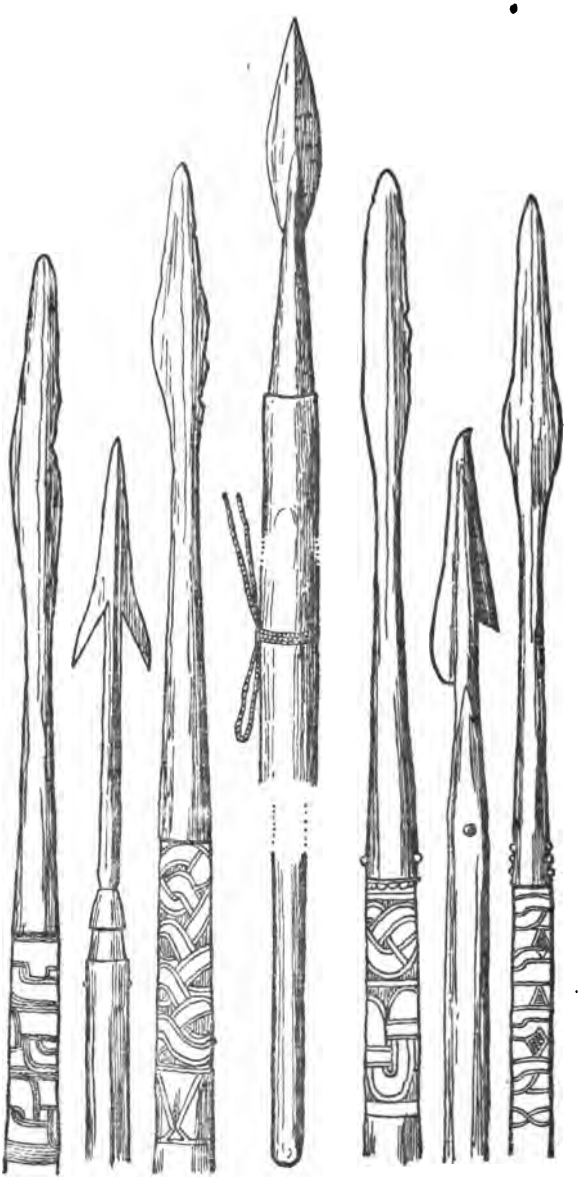
served to fasten it upon the head'. Mr Roach Smith, in the second volume of his *Collectanea Antiqua* (1852), quotes from *Beowulf* the various references made to the boar-crested helmet and the passage from Tacitus, and says: 'Nothing can be more satisfactory than the explanation of the hog upon the Saxon helmet found in Derbyshire presented by these citations from Tacitus and *Beowulf*. Vestiges of this superstition are said still to linger in Sweden, where in the month of February, sacred to Frea, the peasants make little images of boars in dough or paste.

Line 320, page 15

The road was stone laid: 'straet wæs stan-fah': 'Here,' says Professor Earle, 'we have manifestly before our eyes one of those ancient causeways which are among the oldest visible institutions of civilization; the world-spanning roads of the Romans were but grander specimens of the primitive causeway.' The original type of it is well preserved in many a village church path; and he associates the word *stig*—path, with the verb *stigan*—to ascend, the path being raised above the level of the ground on either side.

Line 328, page 15

Their spears, weapons of seamen, stood all together—the ashen wood grey at the point: This is the most descriptive and poetical of the many allusions in the poem to the national weapon of the Northern nations. It will be remembered that one of the poet's epithets for the Danes—occurring in the first line of the poem—is 'Gar-Dena', 'Spear-Danes'. Here he apostrophizes the spear with the descriptive phrase—an exclamatory one—'the ashen wood grey at the point'—meaning, of course, the grey iron head of the spear. I give a group of spears in illustration of this passage. The central one, with a thong for throwing, and the two with barbed points were discovered in the Nydam Moss in Sleswig, with a beautiful twenty-eight-oared boat and a vast mass of antiquities; the four with the ornamented shafts are a portion of an extensive find made at Kragehul, near Assens, in the island of Funen, Denmark. There, in 1864, were found eighty spear heads, all of different shapes, thirty spear shafts ornamented with engraved lines,

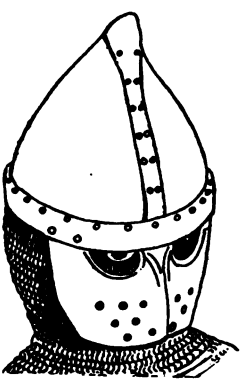


" The ashen-wood, grey at the point ':

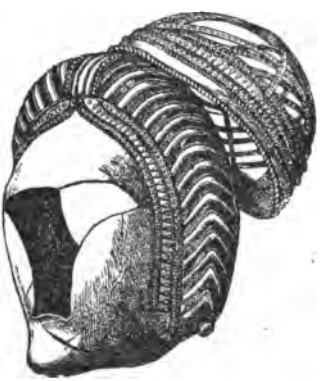
besides ten iron swords with damascened blades, scabbards, shields, knives, silver mountings of horse gear, and many other interesting objects. I have included in the illustration the two barbed spears because, later on in the poem (at line 1437), barbed boar spears are specially mentioned. The average length of the spear shafts is nine feet, and the spear heads were frequently decorated with ornamental designs inlaid in gold and silver. The spear was thus a handsome as well as a serviceable weapon, and it is natural that our weapon-loving poet, after referring affectionately to 'the ashen wood with the grey tip', should exclaim: 'Glorious in weapons was the iron-clad troop!'

Line 334, page 15

Masked helms: 'grim-helmas': Here again archæology steps in to explain precisely what our poet means by 'masked helms'. In the years 1858–1861 there was found in the



Norman helmet with mask



Silver-masked helmet found in Thorsbjerg Moss, Sleswig

Thorsbjerg Moss in Sleswig (the district which was the original home of the English) a remarkable series of antiquities, among them a silver mask with a headpiece attached to it by a movable hinge. The mask is of silver lined with plates of bronze, and externally covered in many places with thin plates of gold. It weighs in its present imperfect state about 1½ lb. This remarkable specimen is of a some-

what earlier date than that of the events of our poem, but it illustrates precisely what the poet meant by a 'grim-helm.' I have put with the Thorsbjerg specimen a Norman masked helmet from Viollet le Duc's *Mobilier Français*, because I believe that it represents a type of head defence which had probably remained unchanged for centuries.

Line 371, page 16

The Helm of the Scyldings: This expression, implying, of course, the protecting power of the King, finds a parallel in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, act I, sc. v, where Cleopatra speaks of Antony as—

> The demi Atlas of this earth, the arm
> And burgonet of men,

burgonet being a term for helmet.

Line 373, page 16

Ecgtheow was his old father called: Ecgtheow, father of Beowulf, was a Swede, a Waegmunding, who married into the Gothic royal family; the name of Beowulf's mother is not given; she was a daughter of Hrethel, and sister, therefore, of Hygelac.

Line 404, page 17

The High Seat: 'on heothe': 'In the Norwegian yeoman's home as the Sagas describe it, the place of honour for the father of the house was on the high seat in the middle of one of the long walls. In front of the high seat stood the two high-seat posts. These were dedicated to the gods in heathen times. The existence of such high seats in the houses of the Swedish yeomen during heathen times is shown from the fact that both the name and the thing itself continued in some districts till very late times'.—Montelius, *Civilization in Sweden*, p. 151.

Line 422, page 18

Sea monsters: 'niceras': 'The Anglo-Saxon *nicor* or *nicer*,' says Professor Arnold, 'has equivalents in all the Teutonic languages — Icelandic, *nykr;* Old High German, *nichus;* Danish, *nök;* Swedish, *näk;* German, *nix.*

Originally it was a water goblin which, according to the usual description, was human above and like a fish or serpent below.'

Line 438, page 18

Broad yellow round shield: 'sidne scyld geolo-rand': The shields of the Northern warriors were of yellow linden-wood (lime-tree) strengthened by strips of metal with a metal edging, and probably covered with hide and painted. They were held by a handle crossing a central opening, the hand being protected by a boss, often of great richness, which projected from the outside and was riveted to the shield by rivets round the flat edge of the boss. Many of these shields and their reinforcing strips of metal, their metal edging and their handles, have been found. The one here figured was discovered with a mass of antiquities in the Thorsbjerg Moss in Sleswig, and the edging and strips of metal found detached have been added to it to complete its restoration.

Shield found in Thorsbjerg Moss, Sleswig

Line 445, page 18

The best of the Hrethmen: A name for the Danes. In the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, under the year 787, we read that in that year 'first came three ships of Northmen from Hærethaland. And then the Reeve, (the sheriff) rode thereto and would drive them to the King's town for he knew not who they were, and they there slew him. Those were the first ships of Danish men that sought the land of the English

race '. It is an account which reminds us of the arrival of Beowulf on Danish land and his interview with the Warden of the Coast.

Line 450, page 18

And stain the moor-pools : ' mor-hopu ' : Sarrazin, the German scholar, identifies the marshy pools near Lejre in the Danish island of Zealand, the probable site of Heorot, with the moor-pools here mentioned.—Sarrazin, *Beowulf Studien*, 4, quoting the Swedish writer, F. Münter.

Line 452, page 18

If battle carries me off : ' gif mec hild nime ' : Or perhaps if Hild carries me off. Hildr is the name of one of the Scandinavian Walkyries or Battle-maidens who bear the slain to Walhalla.

Line 455, page 18

Choicest of garments . . . the legacy of Hrethel . . . the work of Weland : Wieland, in Old German ' Welant ', in Icelandic ' Völundr ', in English ' Wayland ', the famous smith of ancient Germanic legend, corresponding broadly to the Greek Hephaistos (Vulcan). Wieland was the master of all smiths, and one of the most famous of heroes and demigods. During the Middle Ages, says Grimm, his memory lasted among smiths, whose workshops were termed Wieland's Houses. Near Ashbury in Berkshire, is the barrow and sepulchral stone chamber called Wayland Smith's Cave. According to tradition Wayland (the Wieland of mythology) an invisible saint, had his abode here and would shoe a traveller's horse if left with a piece of money for payment. It is interesting that Wayland should thus be associated with a sepulchre, for the barrows were supposed to be tenanted by ghosts, and Wieland was a ghostly being as well as hero and demigod.

Line 460, page 18

Thy father fought a mighty feud : Hrothgar reminds Beowulf how Ecgtheow, Beowulf's father, slew Heatholaf the Wylfing, and was driven out by his own people, who feared invasion on that account ; how Ecgtheow fled to Hrothgar ;

how Hrothgar compounded the feud with ancient treasures sent over sea to the Wylfings; and how Ecgtheow swore an oath to Hrothgar, becoming thereby presumably his 'man'. And it is for this reason, says Mr Seebohm in the chapter on Beowulf in his *Tribal Custom*, that 'Beowulf appeared as the natural helper of Hrothgar. At honour's call he had come to fight the monster, thereby confirming the friendship between Geats (Goths) and Gar-Danes, requiting what Hrothgar had done for his father. And he comes to the rescue not as a Scylfing or as representing his paternal kindred, but as the thane of his maternal uncle, Hygelac, the chieftain of his mother's kindred. . . . On his return he lays all the gifts (given him by Hrothgar) at the feet of Hygelac his heofodmagus—chief of kin—whose man and kin he owns himself to be'.

Line 461, page 18

Heatholaf, among the Wylfings: The Wylfings may be the Ylfingar of the Scandinavian Sagas who inhabited East Gothland. Müllenhoff, however, places them on the south-eastern shores of the Baltic.

Line 471, page 19

I sent old treasures of the olden time back to the Wylfings: Tacitus, writing in A.D. 98, says: 'They are particularly delighted by gifts from neighbouring tribes which are sent not only by individuals but also by the State, such as choice steeds, heavy armour, trappings and neck chains'.—*Germania*, ch. xv.

Line 499, page 19

Unferth spoke: Unferth, son of Ecglaf, who here interrupts the good feeling, excited by envy and flushed with beer, was the orator of King Hrothgar. He behaves better in the sequel, as will be seen. He is, says Dr Clark Hall, 'one of the most barbaric characters in the poem'. Professor Earle thinks it 'a happy stroke of instinctive art that the poet has introduced him and has given us a quarrelsome scene where a really happy one would have been improbable. The scene, moreover, is well calculated to call up antecedent events and to bring out the strong

utterance of Beowulf's vow'. Unferth was not exactly a minstrel, but a superior in the same general line: orator, historiologer, *raconteur*.

Line 519, page 20

On the Heathoreme's land: The Heatho-raemas may be certainly identified, according to Ettmüller and Müllenhoff, with the people of Raumarike, a district in the south of Norway. They are among the peoples visited by the Traveller in the ancient poem of *Widsith*.

Line 521, page 20

The land of the Brondings: Breca and his people the Brondings are referred to in the ancient poem *Widsith* (earlier than *Beowulf*), where at line 26 it is stated: 'Breoca ruled the Brondings'. Their country may have been the modern Mecklenburg or Pomerania.

Line 549, page 21

The anger of the sea-fishes was aroused, etc.: Olaus Magnus, Archbishop of Upsala in Sweden, who died at Rome in 1568, in his *History of the Peoples of the North* devotes special attention to the horrible monsters of the coast of Norway. 'There are monstrous fish', he says, 'on the Coasts or Sea of Norway of unusual names, though they are reputed a kind of whales, and if men look long on them they will affright and amaze them. Their forms are horrible, their heads square, all set with prickles, and they have sharp and long horns round about like a tree rooted up by the roots . . . with huge eyes, red and fiery coloured, which in the dark night appears to Fishermen afar off under water as a burning fire. . . . On the Coasts of Norway most frequently both old and new monsters are seen, chiefly by reason of the inscrutable depth of the waters. Moreover, in the deep sea there are many kinds of fishes that are seldom or never seen by man'. I have illustrated this passage of *Beowulf* with a reproduction of one of the Archbishop's quaint woodcuts.

Line 552 page 21

The braided battle fence: 'Beado-hraegl broden': Literally the braided battle-rail. Braided is a poetical term for the

interweaving and interlocking of the riveted links of chain mail, and rail as a word for *dress* survived even to Addison's time.

Line 612, page 22

Wealtheow went forth, Queen of Hrothgar, mindful of courtesies, gold adorned: She belonged to the family of Helmings, a tribe which possibly settled in East Anglia. Wealtheow seems to be a genuine Anglo-Saxon name, and the German scholar Sarrazin has noted that, in the *Hrolf Saga*, Hroar [Hrothgar] is said to have married an English wife named Ögn. 'She is called in *Beowulf* the Lady of the Helmings, and may be connected, perhaps, with Helmingham in Norfolk, and the Helm who is named in the ancient poem *Widsith* ruled the Wulfings. Perhaps the Wulfings or Uffings were the same as the Helmings; if so Wealtheow was of the royal stock of East Anglia. The name of one of her sons, Hrothmund, mentioned with the other son Hrethric in *Beowulf* (line 1189), occurs in Florence of Worcester's *Genealogy of the East Anglian Kings*. Wealtheow, says Dr Clark Hall, was a type of the discreet 'peace-weaver' who was looked upon as the ideal queen of the times—courteous and hospitable. The courtesies of which she was mindful—the etiquette and custom of the court—are described in the Gnomic verses of *The Exeter Book*.

Line 623, page 23

Ring-adorned Queen: 'beag-hroden cwen': The simple translation of 'beag-hroden' is ring-adorned, but later on Wealtheow is described as going forth into the Hall 'under gyldnum beage' (line 1163), 'under the golden ring', and the meaning there is clearly a head-ring, circlet, or diadem. Perhaps this was a simple band of gold, but I think that a fifth or sixth century Danish Queen would probably have worn an elaborate piece of the beautiful goldsmith's-work of her period at a State banquet in the greatest of all royal Halls—for such the poet tells us it was. In the charming drawing of Queen Wealtheow by Mr Dadd, at page 38, archæologically accurate in every detail of costume, she is shown wearing a diadem adapted from the famous 'couronne de Tcherkask' found at that place (on the Don) and now in the Museum of the Hermitage at St Petersburg.

Line 665, page 23

The Glory of Kings had set a house-guard against Grendel: I think there can be little doubt that by the 'Glory of Kings', 'Kyninga wuldor', the poet means God. Hrothgar, we are told, left the Hall for the royal sleeping apartments in the Burgh, which was apparently a little way from the Hall, for we are told later on that the people heard the shrieking of Grendel 'from the wall'. The divinely appointed guard, therefore, must be understood as watching over King Hrothgar *in his palace in the Burgh.* In the Hall itself Beowulf was on guard against the attack of Grendel which was to be made, as before, there.

Line 681, page 25

He knows not of these noble arts: 'Nat he thara goda': That is, says Professor Earle, the more refined arts of battle which in later times were spoken of as knightly accomplishments; above all, sword exercise. Here the foe is a ruffian who knows only the rudest kind of encounter, but even so the hero will accommodate him and take no advantage of his own superior education.

Line 687, page 26

The webs of success in war: 'wig speda gewiofu': Literally 'webs of war-speed'. Here we find Christian and heathen thought mingled in the poet's mind. In Northern mythology it was the Valkyrie, the battle-maidens, who wove the woof of destiny and with them were the three Norns, of whom Wyrd, often mentioned in the poem, was the chief. In Greek mythology the three Fates span the thread of the destiny of mortals.

Line 715, page 26

The Gold Hall of men variegated with gilding: 'gold-selle gumena . . . fættum fahne': The word *fæt* means plate of metal, especially gold, and *fah* is many-coloured, of varying colour, especially of gold and bronze, in which light is refracted. In the second *Homily of Ælfric,* line 498, we read: 'he overlaid the arches with leaves of gold (gyldenum læfrum)'.

Line 768, page 27

The dwellers in the town: 'ceaster-buendum': Ceaster, the Roman castrum, a fortified place, is one of the few foreign words in *Beowulf*. As we have already seen the Danes had abandoned the Hall at night.

Line 769, page 27

There was panic: The word here translated panic is *ealu-scerwen*, 'ale dearth', terror as of dearth of ale, and so terror or panic under the figure of a mishap at an Ale-drinking when the ale suddenly gave out! a quaint and instructive illustration of the confirmed drinking habits of our race! Tacitus had observed this, for he says in his *Germania* (A.D. 98): 'To pass an entire day and night in drinking disgraces no one. Their quarrels, as might be expected with intoxicated people, are seldom fought out with mere abuse, but commonly with wounds and bloodshed'. A similar expression used also to describe a moment of terror, is found in the Anglo-Saxon poem, *Andreas*, line 1526 of Grimm's edition.

Line 874, page 30

To narrate skilful tales, to interchange words: The word *wrixlan*, to interchange, Mr Arnold thinks, seems to imply that the minstrel celebrated alternately the praises of Beowulf and the older glories of Siegmund the Waelsing. Rieger considers the passage to be a technical description of improvised alliterative verse, suggested by, and wrought out on, the spur of the moment. Earle says: 'It is a circumstance of peculiar interest in the *Beowulf* that it should thus picture its own rise and origin'.

Line 875, page 30

The Lay of Sigemund: With the Lay of Sigemund, the Waelsing or Volsung (*i.e.* the son of Waels) chanted or recited by one of the thanes, as the party of horsemen rode back to Heorot from the lonely mere, to which they had followed the blood-tracks of the vanquished demon, we are brought into contact with the great epic of the Rhineland, the *Nibelungen Lied*, and with the famous *Volsunga Saga*, of which, so far as it goes, the version in *Beowulf* is probably the oldest extant version.

But there is no mention in this Beowulfine version of Siegfried, the hero of the *Nibelungen Lied*, or of Chriemhild, or of Gunther, or of Hagen. These personages, says Arnold, in his Note on the subject, all belong to a development of the story of the Nibelung Hoard with which, so far as appears, the writer of *Beowulf* was not acquainted. The allusions refer only to two sections of the vast legendary Cycle—that which gives the story of Siegemund the Volsing, Siegfried's father, and that which introduces the Ostrogothic King Hermanric and his followers.

The writer of *Beowulf* knows of Sigemund, the Waelsing, and of his son Fitela (the Sinfiötli of the *Völsunga Saga*) and he makes the minstrel thane tell of Sigemund's deeds and wanderings ; how he and Fitela slew many monsters ; and how Sigemund alone killed the Dragon, Keeper of the Hoard, and loaded his boat with the treasures.

Then, abruptly leaving Siegmund, the minstrel goes on to sing of Heremod, an early Danish king, who was a tyrant and was driven out by his people. There seems to be no connection whatever between the two parts of the minstrel's song, and according to my view there is no connection intended. As the party of horsemen ride along, the minstrel-thane sings to them what strikes him as appropriate to the great event which has just occurred, the slaying of the Demon Grendel, and to the honour and in the praise of Beowulf. Beowulf had just slain a monster, and this suggested the subject of the slaying of the dragon 'under the grey rock' by Sigemund. Beowulf was a loyal and great-hearted man, happy and honoured, and this suggested, as a contrast, the shame and the misfortunes of Heremod, who, later on in the poem (at lines 1709–1722) is again mentioned as a bloodthirsty tyrant.

I cannot myself see any need for perplexity as to these two parts of the minstrel's song ; they are not parts of one song but are two different songs, suggested by two different thoughts, though both, of course, in honour of the heroic Goth who had just done so great a deed. Why may we not imagine the band of horsemen, who, we are told, now and then ran a race on their horses where the ground allowed, reining up to a walk to listen to the Lay of Sigemund, and when this was sung, galloping off again for another scamper, and then once more resting their nags while the minstrel

thane gave them another song, the Lay of Heremod ? I have taken this view of the matter, and have divided the song of the minstrel-thane accordingly in my translation.

Now to turn for a moment to the differences between the Lay of Sigemund as given in *Beowulf* and the later development of the great epic in which he is one of the figures. In *Beowulf* Sigemund is the slayer of the Dragon ; in the *Edda* and the *Völsunga Saga* it is his son Sigurd (Siegfried) In the *Nibelungen Lied* Sigemund appears as Siegfried's father but plays a secondary part ; but in *Beowulf* there is no mention of Siegfried at all, and Sigemund is described as 'by far the most renowned of all adventurers'. In *Beowulf*, as in the *Edda* and the *Völsunga Saga*, the Keeper of the Ring-Hoard is a dragon (the Fafnir of the *Völsunga Saga*), but in the *Nibelungen Lied* the Keepers of it are Schilbung and Nibelung, slain by Sigurd (Siegfried).

'Some light', says Arnold, 'appears to be thrown by a consideration and comparison of the different legends on the disputed question whether the Sigemund-Siegfried Saga is of Scandinavian or German origin. So far as the testimony of the author of *Beowulf* extends, the original Saga was Scandinavian. For it is impossible to doubt that the *Sources of Beowulf*, a poem describing the deeds of Danes, Geats (Goths), and Swedes, were, so far as direct communication is concerned, exclusively Scandinavian ; and we cannot suppose that the Sigemund, whose fame was extolled by the Danish minstrel, was a dweller on the Rhine or in any other part of Germany. It seems as if we came upon the primitive form of the Sigemund Saga in *Beowulf*, a form older than that which it wears in the *Edda* and *Völsunga Saga*, and, of course, far older than that highly elaborated picture which is presented to us in the *Nibelungen Lay*. . . . The absence of all mention of Siegfried in *Beowulf* suggests that at the period when the original Scandinavian poem on which *Beowulf* was founded and composed, perhaps some time in the seventh century, he had not been imported into the Saga. When that had been done in the North the character was soon taken possession of by German poets . . . until in the *Nibelungen Lied*, that is, about the beginning of the thirteenth century, Siegmund became the pale shadow that we see him. Ths supplanting of the father by the son, of the earlier by the later hero is a feature with

which those who are acquainted with the epopees of Charlemagne, of Arthur, and of Amadis are perfectly familiar'. 'It pleases me to think', says Mr Stopford Brooke in his *Early English Literature*, 'that it is in English Literature we possess the first sketch of that mighty Saga, the *Völsunga Saga*, which has for so many centuries engaged all the arts, and at last, in the art of Wagner, the art of music'.

Line 901, page 30

Heremod: In the pedigree of King Ethelwulf in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* the father of Scyld is Heremod.

Line 926, page 31

Stood on the landing of the entrance porch: 'Stod on stapole': I have not hesitated to translate the single word *stapole* by the six words, 'on the landing of the entrance porch', because I believe that *stapol* is the same as the Dutch *stoep*, and the modern American (derived from the Dutch) *stoop*, meaning an entrance porch, with steps leading up to it. The old Frisian word *stapul* means 'block', such as would be used for stepping up. Walt Whitman in his *Song of Myself* says: 'I walk up my stoop'.

'The "staples" established at different towns under the Statute of the Staple in the fourteenth century seem to have been raised wooden platforms, erected in the market-place'. —Arnold. 'The original sense of the word is prop, support, something that furnishes a firm hold, and it is derived from the strong verb *stapan*, to step, to tread firmly'.— Skeat. A collocation of the best vocabularies makes the meaning of *stapole*, *stapul*, to be 'a raised place' and 'a flight of steps'. Mr Thomas Miller, who has gone into the question thoroughly in *Anglia*, a journal of English philology, published in Halle, (vol. xii, p. 398), comes to the certain conclusion that Hrothgar here stood on the steps or on the landing at the top of them and delivered his speech from there. 'It would be the natural place', says Mr Miller, 'for an orator to choose in addressing a crowd. Both this speech and that of Beowulf are delivered from the same spot'.

We learn further, therefore, from the passage as to the structure of the Hall, that it was entered by a flight of steps

with a landing. There was probably such a porch at each end of the Hall, and if, as is likely enough, the porch was itself roofed with a high gable end (as may be seen in the illustrations which I give) it might be in the gable of the porch that Grendel's torn-off arm was fixed; or if the *stapul* was a mere landing at the top of the steps, the arm would be under the gable of the Hall and over the entrance door.

Line 999, page 32

The hinges torn away: Heorras; hinges: We have the word in Chaucer, in the *Prologue* to the *Canterbury Tales*, line 550, where it is said of the stout and brawny Miller that—

There nas no dore that he nolde heve of harre
(There was no door that he would not heave off its hinges).

Line 1009, page 33

Then was the time and moment: 'Tha wæs sæl and mæl': The phrase occurs again, later. Earle says that it 'still survives in the speech of East Anglia, where a mother will say to a boy at his start in the world: "Now mind your seals and meals", as a broad and general counsel of discretion'.

Line 1018, page 33

The people of the Scyldings wrought no deeds of guile meanwhile: 'Deeds of treachery and violence', says Professor Arnold, 'so often broke up the feasts of the Northmen that it is not without meaning that the poet assures us that no such acts marred the harmony of this particular feast'. And see what Tacitus said as to this, in the Notes to the preceding section.

Line 1021, page 33

A golden ensign a decorated shafted-standard: 'Segen gyldenne . . . hroden hilte-cumbor': Here, as at the beginning of the poem, where a golden ensign is set up in Scyld's funeral-ship, I think the *segen* is an emblem of sculptured work, on a shaft, and not a flag.

Line 1030, page 33

Round the crown-piece of the helm a roll, etc.: This is a passage which has puzzled many. Its explanation is to be found, I think, in a study of Northern antiquities. Long ago Conrad Engelhardt, the Director of the Museum of Northern Antiquities, at Flensborg, in Sleswig, described and figured in his *Denmark in the Early Iron Age*, a remarkable silver mask and crown-piece of a helmet found in the peat moss of Thorsbjerg. It shows just such a projecting roll as is here described as giving protection for the head from the outside. Many centuries later the knights of the time of Edward III wore rich wreaths of goldsmith's work round their bassinets, though these were perhaps rather for ornament than defence.

Lines 1032–33, page 33

So that no shower-hardened sword, the legacy of files, might . . . injure it: Here is shown the importance of the projecting roll or wreath round the helmet, presented by Hrothgar to Beowulf, and here also is a puzzle for the translator. The words I have rendered by 'the legacy of files' are *fela lafe*, and 'shower hardened' is *scur-heard*. Both undoubtedly refer to the process of manufacture by the sword-smith of the famous weapons of the Northern warriors—so much esteemed that they had names and were handed down as heirlooms. The passage, I think, refers simply to the finishing of the blades with the file, and the tempering of them in water. Shakespeare, who illustrates everything, helps us even to the understanding of *Beowulf*. Othello, when the crowd breaks into the room where he has murdered Desdemona, looks for a favourite sword—

> I have another weapon in this chamber;
> It is a sword of Spain—*the ice-brook's temper.*

Mr J. W. Pearce has an article upon the word *scur-heard* in *Modern Language Notes* for November 1892, in which he points out that it was a distinct habit of old English poets to speak of the sword in terms relating to its manufacture. 'Swords', he says, 'are now and perhaps always have been, hardened by being heated red-hot and dipped into cold water, and to suppose that *scur-heard* meant hardened in water would be especially appropriate for the sword

(and the word is applied where it occurs in *Andreas, Judith*, and *Beowulf*, only) to the sword alone and not to any other weapon offensive or defensive. To this it may be added that the village-blacksmith always even now prefers to have pure rain water in his slack-tub '.

Line 1035, page 33

Eight horses with cheek-plates : The words for ' cheek-plates ' are *faeted*—plated, and *hleor*—cheek. Wyatt translates : ' with bridle covered with plates of gold '. Engelhardt, in *Denmark in the Early Iron Age*, engraves a complete head-stall of leather found in the Thorsbjerg Moss. It is decorated with ornamented silver plating, forming the heads of bronze rivets. Rosettes and plates of bronze, and of silver plated with gold, forming portions of horse-gear, were also found at the same place and are shown in the same plate of Engelhardt's work, which, with the two following plates display a remarkable collection of horse furniture. From time immemorial men, and especially fighting men, have loved rich horse trappings. Mr C. H. Read, in his *Guide to the Antiquities of the Early Iron Age* (British Museum), mentions the discovery of a hoard on the Polden Hills, above Edington, in Somerset, which, he says, is perhaps the finest series of Early British antiquities in existence. In the hoard were no fewer than ' fourteen bronzed and enamelled bridle-bits ' and ' five enamelled cheek-pieces for the bridle '. At Stanwick, in Yorkshire, in another find of British antiquities, also rich in horse trappings, were ' cheek pieces for the bridle in more than one form '. The illustration on the next page of the beautiful enrichments of ancient Northern horse-gear is from Professor Hildebrand's *Arts of Scandinavia*. The objects were discovered in Gotland. ' They are all from the same tomb ', he tells us, ' of bronze, richly gilt, and their golden splendour remains untarnished after a repose of many centuries in the soil '.

Line 1054, page 34

Ordered that gold be paid for that one whom Grendel had slain : This was the *were-gild*, paid, according to Teutonic custom, by Hrothgar as the just value of the man who had

Horse-trappings

lost his life while aiding his lord. 'This practical illustration of the old Teutonic theory that every man had his price and is of a certain value, greater or less, to the society to which he belongs, is highly interesting'.—Arnold.

Line 1068, page 35

The Lay of King Finn: Finn, son of Folcwalda, was King of the North Frisians and over-lord of the Eotens—as they are called in the poem—the Euthiones, Saxones, Eucii, identified with the Jutes. Finn carried off the Danish princess, Hildeburgh, and the war that ensued is the subject of this Lay, sung by Hrothgar's minstrel at the banquet in honour of Beowulf.

Professor Wyatt says: 'The somewhat obscure Finn Episode in *Beowulf* is evidently part of a *Finn Saga*, of which only the merest fragment called *The Fight at Finnsburg* is extant. Various attempts have been made to reconstruct the Saga from these materials', and to fit the fragment into the text of *Beowulf*.

Möller gives the following outline of the story: Finn, King of the Frisians, had carried off Hildeburh, daughter of Hoc the Dane, probably with her consent. Her father seems to have pursued the fugitives and to have been slain in the fight when he overtook them. After the lapse of some twenty years Hoc's sons, Hnæf and Hengest, were old enough to undertake the duty of avenging their father's death. They make an inroad into Finn's country and a battle takes place, in which many warriors, among them Hnaef and a son of Finn, are killed. Peace is solemnly concluded and the slain warriors are burnt on the funeral pyre. As the year is too far advanced for Hengest to return home he and those of his men who survive remain for the winter in Friesland with Finn. But Hengest's thoughts dwell constantly on the death of his brother Hnaef, and he would gladly welcome any excuse to break the peace which had been sworn by both parties. His ill-concealed desire for revenge is noticed by the Frisians, who anticipate it by themselves taking the initiative and attacking Hengest and his men, whilst they are sleeping in the hall. This is the night attack described in the fragmentary poem, *The Fight at Finnsburg*. It would seem

that Hengest himself falls in the fight, at the hands of Hunlafing; but two of his retainers, Guthlaf and Oslaf, succeed in cutting their way through their enemies and in escaping to their own land. They return with fresh troops, attack and slay Finn, and carry his queen Hildeburh off with them.

Line 1070, page 35

In Frisian battle: This is the first of the references to the Frisians in *Beowulf*, and they are mentioned twice again in this *Lay of Finn*, and again twice later on when Hygelac's attack upon them—in which he was slain—is spoken of. 'Friesland, the country between the Ems and the Zuyder Sea, was often in the thoughts of the poet, partly as the scene of the stirring episode of Finn and Hnaef, but chiefly as the country where Hygelac met his death. Finn reigned over the North Frisians and also over the Eotens or Jutes, and it is uncertain whether the Eotens or Jutes were a separate people or identical with the North Frisians. The Frisians mentioned in connection with Hygelac's attack and death were the West Frisians. Müllenhoff has remarked that Teutonic legends must have generally come to England in the first place from Friesland'.—Arnold.

Line 1116, page 36

Their bodies to be placed on the pile: The word for bodies is *ban-fatu*, 'bone-vats!' 'To call the flesh the locker of the bones, the bone box, as it were; to think of the breast as the abode of thought; to speak of the ship as the steed of the waves, or the hair as the sward of the head, exhibits quaint primitive ways of thought which are not only common to Old Northern and Old English poetry, but would readily occur to early poets of all times'.—Vigfussen and Powell, *Corpus Poeticum Boreale*, ii, 447

Line 1142, page 36

The son of Hunlaf (Hunlafing) thrust into his breast a battle-gleamer, best of swords: This is one of the passages in which commentators are at variance owing to the reading of the manuscript, 'hun lafing', some taking it as Hunlafing, the son of Hunlaf, others taking Hun as a man and

Lafing as the name of a sword. It is too long and complicated a controversy to go into here. I have followed Wyatt, Clark Hall, and C. B. Tinker.

Line 1157, page 36

Whatever they could find of ornaments: The word which I have rendered by 'ornaments' is *sigla*, genitive plural of *sigle*. The word *sigl*, or *sigel*, means 'sun', and hence is believed to be derived this obscure word *sigle*, meaning a 'sun-shaped ornament', and considered to refer to what are known in archæology as Bracteates, circular pieces of gold with a loop for suspension, often actual Roman and Byzantine coins so treated, or imitations of them made by the Northern goldsmiths. A little further on in the poem (at line 1200) however, the word *sigle*, used in the description of the Collar of the Brisings, seems to mean the Collar itself, and at the end of the poem it is used with the word *beg* (rings—neck-rings or arm-rings). I daresay, therefore, that the safest translation of the word *sigle* would be, simply, 'goldsmith's work'. How elaborate and beautiful the work of the Northern goldsmiths was is attested by thousand of objects—neck- and arm-rings, finger-rings, sword and harness mountings, fibulæ or brooches for fastening the mantle, pendants, and bracteates—found in the graves and deposited in the museums of Copenhagen, Stockholm, and Christiania. Professor Worsaæ, in his *Industrial Arts of Old Denmark*, has given a long account, with interesting illustrations, of the Bracteates.

Line 1181, page 37

Hrothulf: son of Hrothgar's younger brother Halga. We have already seen that Hrothgar and Hrothulf, the King of the Danes and his nephew, were the two principal personages in the Hall who shared with their kinsmen and followers the mead-cup and the feast. Here Hrothulf is referred to by Wealtheow, Hrothgar's queen, as 'gracious', and she expresses her confidence that he will be good to her children Hrethric and Hrethmund, who were under age at the time. This is all that is said of Hrothulf in the poem. He is mentioned with Hrothgar in the ancient poem *Widsith*

(earlier than *Beowulf*): 'Hrothwulf and Hrothgar longest held peace together, uncle and nephew after they had expelled the race of Wic-ings'. Hrothulf is no less a personage than the Rolf Kraka of the Danish legendary world and the *Ynglinga Saga*. Saxo speaks of him as Rolvus, son of Helgo (the Helgi 'the good' of our poem, line 61), and thirteenth King of Denmark. Queen Wealtheow's hopes in Hrothulf do not seem to have been fulfilled, for later on we read (lines 1163–65), '*as yet* there was peace between them'.

Line 1189, page 37

Hrethric and Hrothmund, sons of Hrothgar: The name of Hrothmund is found in Florence's *Genealogy of the East Anglian Kings*, and, Professor Clark Hall says, 'gives some colour to the supposition that his mother Wealtheow was of the royal stock of East Anglia'.

Line 1193, page 39

Twisted gold: 'wunden gold': Meaning, I think, simply the twisted or coiled-up ring money.

Line 1198, page 39

Since Hama bore away to the bright burg the collar of the Brisings ('Brosinga mene') . . . He fled the cunning enmity of Eormanric: Hama is the last mentioned of the various chieftains and peoples visited by the Traveller, as told in the poem *Widsith*; he is the Heime of German legend and was one of the twelve heroes of Dietrich of Bern (Theodoric of Verona) whom, however, he deserted, and went over to Eormenric. The Collar of the Brosings is the Brisinga-mene of the *Hamarsheimt*, the 'Home-fetching of the Hammer', one of the poems of the *Elder Edda*; and Eormanric is Hermanric, King of the Ostrogoths, who appears four times in *Widsith*, the last mention of him there being as follows: 'Thence I traversed all the country of the Goths. Of journeys I ever sought the best—that was the household band of Eormanric'. In the *Edda* he is Jormunrek and is associated with Attila; in Jornandes he is Ermanaricus; in Saxo Grammaticus, Jarmeric. Confused though the chronology is, under these different names the poets and

historians refer to the great Hermanric of the fourth century, described by Gibbon in his twenty-fifth chapter, whose dominions 'extended from the Danube to the Baltic and included the native seats and the recent acquisitions of the Goths'. The narratives of the *Edda*, of Jornandes and of Saxo, agree, as Professor Arnold points out, in many details, and it cannot be doubted that the passages in *Widsith* and *Beowulf* also refer to the great Hermanric.

The 'Brisinga mene', to which the collar given by Hrothgar to Beowulf is compared, was the necklace of the goddess Freyja, and is mentioned in the *Hamarsheimt* as having broken on the goddess's neck when she swelled and trembled with fury at being asked for as wife by Thrym, the chief of the Giants. Thrym had stolen Thor's hammer and refused to return it unless Freyja consented to be his bride. In a council held by the gods Heimdall advises that Thor shall dress himself up as Freyja in bridal array, put on the Brisinga mene, go to Jotunheim, the abode of the Giants, and thus trick Thrym into giving up the hammer:

> They bound on Thor the bridal veil
> The Brising necklace too;
> A bunch of keys they hung at his side,
> As house-wife good and true.

Thrym falls into the trap, orders the hammer to be brought and laid on the lap of the 'bride'. Thor then immediately proceeds to knock out the brains of Thrym and all his race.

"The phrase 'Brosinga' or 'Brisinga men', whether we understand by *men* a 'collar' or a 'treasure', clearly connects any poem or legend where it occurs with the Breisgan, the Rhine and Germany. . . . That such a phrase should have come into use in early times will not seem strange to any one who has carefully noted the situation of Alt-Breisach, an elevated oblong rock-plateau, close to the Rhine, about two hundred feet high, precipitous on three sides, and six hundred yards long. It is not the 'Schloss' of a baron, but the 'Festung' of a tribe; on its flat top the whole nation of the Brisings, the people of the Breisgan, might have safely sojourned, and probably did so for generations. . . . The 'Treasure of the Brisings', which came to be restricted for Northern poets to the 'Collar of the Brisings', must have owed its original celebrity to Gothic

or German legends, unhappily lost, which celebrated the glories and the crimes of the reign of Hermanric ".—Arnold.

I have chosen, to illustrate the collar given by Hrothgar to Beowulf, a splendid specimen, of gold, one of three of the same type. Montelius says of them : " The most beautiful gold ornaments of this period (fifth to eighth century) yet found in the North are three large broad collars weighing from about 1 lb. 6 oz. to 1 lb. 13 oz. They consist of hollow rings (cylinders) decorated with fine filigree work, and other ornaments soldered on. At the back there is a hinge, and in front the ends of the cylinders fit inside each other, and so the whole is made secure. Two of these collars were found in Vester Gotland (Beowulf's country) and the third in Oland. No other of the kind has so far as we know been found in any other country ". The delicacy and richness of this wonderful specimen of the skill of the Northern goldsmiths amply bear out the constant allusions to precious works of art in the poem.

Line 1202, page 39

That collar had Hygelac on his last expedition : The collar presented to Beowulf by Hrothgar suggests first to the poet a comparison with the famous Collar of the Brisings, and then leads him on to an anticipatory digression as to the death of Hygelac, Beowulf's own king, to whom he gave it on his return to his own country. As we have already seen, Hygelac was slain in an expedition against the Frisians and Franks in the years between A.D. 512 and 520 ; Guizot says in 515.

Line 1208, page 39

Over the brimming sea : ' Ofer ytha ful ' : Literally ' over the cup of waves '. The sea is likened to a cup or bowl of liquor—an additional evidence of the drinking turn of mind of the Northern folk !

Line 1210, page 39

Into the grasp of the Franks ; ' In Francna faethm ' : The Franks are mentioned again, later in the poem, after the death of Beowulf. The Frank nation are here seen in their

earliest historical seat, associated with the Frisians, in the sixth century.

Line 1248, page 40

It was their custom ever to be ready for war: Tacitus (A.D. 98) tells us, in his *Germania*: 'They transact no public or private business without being armed. . . . They go armed to business, or, no less of ten, to their festal meetings.'

PART II

PART II

THE SECOND ADVENTURE: THE FIGHT WITH GRENDEL'S DEMON-MOTHER

[Lines 1251–1802]

I

THE COMING OF THE SHE-FIEND

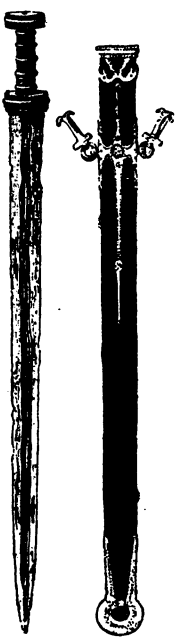
[Lines 1251–1382]

THEY sank then to sleep. One there was who paid sorely for his evening rest, just as full oft had befallen them since GRENDEL had occupied the Gold-Hall, had wrought evil, until the end came—death for his crimes!

It became evident, widely known to men, that an Avenger still lived after the enemy was dead—lived for a long time after the sorrow which that struggle caused—GRENDEL's mother, a woman, a female monster, brooded over her woe—she who was doomed to dwell amidst the Waters of Horror, cold streams, from the time when Cain became the murderer of his only brother, his father's son; he then went forth outlawed, branded with murder, to flee from human joy—dwelt in the wastes. Thence sprang many demons, shapen of old times. One of these was GRENDEL, the fierce, hateful wolf, who found at HEOROT a wakeful man awaiting the combat! There the monster was at grips with him, but he remembered his mighty strength, the abundant and lasting gift which GOD gave him, and trusted himself to the Lord's favour, comfort and help; thereby he overcame the fiend, struck down the hellish demon. Then the fiend

departed, crestfallen, bereft of joy, to see his death-place—enemy of mankind!

And now his mother, greedy and gloomy, determined to set forth on a sorrowful enterprise, to avenge her son's death. She came then to HEOROT, where the Ring-Danes were sleeping throughout the Hall. Straightway, then and there, when GRENDEL'S mother burst in, it was with the nobles as it was before; but the terror was less by just so much as is a woman's strength, a woman's war-terror, in comparison with an armed man's, what time the banded sword, forged with hammer, the sword stained with blood, trusty of edge, shears the boar crest which stands on the helm.



"The banded sword"

Then was the hard-edged sword drawn on the benches in the Hall, many a broad shield upraised firm in hand. Of helmet, of wide mail coat, no one thought when the terror had seized him. She was in haste when she was discovered and wished to get out to save her life; she had quickly clutched fast one of the nobles. Then she went to the fen. He was to HROTHGAR the best beloved of men in comradeship by the two seas, a powerful shield-warrior, a hero of firm renown—he whom she slew in his sleep. BEOWULF was not there, for other lodging had already been allotted to the noble Goth after the Treasure-giving.

There was a cry in HEOROT. Reeking in its blood, she took the well-known hand. Sorrow was renewed, arose again in the dwellings. That was not a good exchange, that they should pay on both sides with the lives of friends!

Then was the old king, the hoary warrior, sad at heart when he knew his chief thane was lifeless, the one who was nearest to him, dead! BEOWULF was fetched in haste to the bower—victory blest hero! he went at dawn of day with some of his nobles—the noble warrior himself with his followers to where the wise one awaited to know whether,

after the tidings of woe, the All-Ruler would ever work him some relief. He stepped then along the floor, the war-renowned man, with his retainers—the Hall timbers re-sounded the while—that he might speak to the wise one, the lord of the Ingwines, ask if, according to his wish, he had had a restful night.

HROTHGAR spoke, Helm of Scyldings:

"Ask thou not after my welfare! sorrow is come again upon the people of the Danes! ÆSCHERE is dead, YRMENLAF'S elder brother, my trusted counsellor and my adviser, the comrade at my shoulder when we guarded our heads in battle, when the hosts dashed together and boar-crests were hewn. Such a one should an earl be, an ever good Atheling; such was ÆSCHERE. His murderer in HEOROT was the wandering Death-demon. I know not whether the frightful monster, exulting over her prey, has returned back, rejoiced by her banquet. She has avenged the feud, in that thou didst violently slay GRENDEL yesternight with thy hard grips because too long had he wasted and destroyed my people. He fell in fight, forfeiting his life; and now another has come, a mighty and baneful destroyer who would avenge her son, and has carried the feud further against us; on account of which it may seem a heavy woe to bear for many a thane who mourns in soul for his Treasure-giver. Low now lies the hand which used to avail you for each and every desire!

"The comrade at my shoulder"

"I have heard dwellers in the country, my own people, hall-counsellors, say this: that they have seen two such mighty stalkers of the marches holding the moors—Spirits of Elsewhere. One of these, as far as they could tell with most certainty, was in the semblance of a woman; the other wretched fated being, whom in time past the people called GRENDEL, trod the ways of exile in man's form, except that

he was greater than any other man ; they know not if ever there was a father begotten for them in times past among the spirits of darkness.

" They inhabit a hidden land, wolf-haunted slopes, wind-swept headlands, perilous fen paths, where the mountain stream flows down under the mists of the cliffs—a flood beneath the earth. It is not far from here in measure by miles that lies the Mere, over which hang rimy groves ; a wood fixed by its roots overshadows the water. There, every night, may be seen a dread wonder—fire on the flood ! None of the sons of men lives so wise that he knows its depths. Though hard pressed by the hounds, the heath-stepper, the hart, strong in his horns, hunted from afar, may seek that wood, he will give up his life, his breath on the shore, rather than hide his head in it ! No pleasant place is that ! Thence, when the wind stirs up hateful storms, the surging water rises up dark to the clouds, while the air grows gloomy, the heavens weep.

" Now, once more, counsel rests in thee alone. Thou knowest not yet the spot, the savage place, where thou mayest find the much sinning creature. Seek it if thou dost dare. I will reward thee for the struggle with old time treasures as I did before—with twisted gold—if thou comest away safe ".

Ring-money, " twisted gold '

The Demon's Mere

II

BEOWULF UNDERTAKES THE NEW ADVENTURE: THE EXPEDITION TO THE MERE OF THE WATER-DEMONS

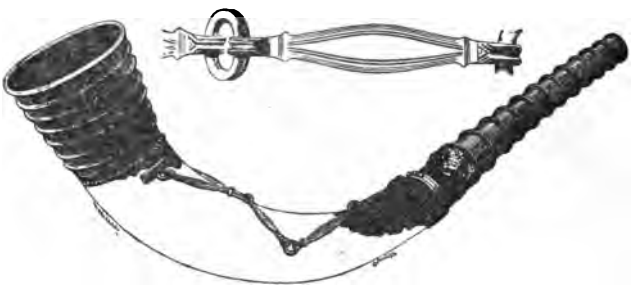
[Lines 1383–1491]

BEOWULF spoke, ECGTHEOW's son:

"Grieve not, O wise one! Better is it for each that he avenge his friend than that he mourn over-much. Each of us must abide the end of this world's life. Let him who may win glory ere death; that, when life is gone, is best for a warrior! Arise, Guardian of the Realm! Let us quickly go and examine the track of GRENDEL's dam. This I promise thee: she shall not flee for protection to the bosom of earth, nor to mountain wood, nor to ocean's depth, go where she will. Do thou have patience this day in every sorrow, as I expect from thee".

Up leaped then the old man and thanked GOD, the

Mighty Lord, for what that man had spoken. Then a horse was bridled for HROTHGAR, a steed with braided mane; stately went the wise prince; the warriors stepped onward bearing their shields. Footprints were freely seen along the forest paths, the track over the ground. She had gone straight on over the murky moor and borne with her,



"The horn sang out a ready battle-lay'

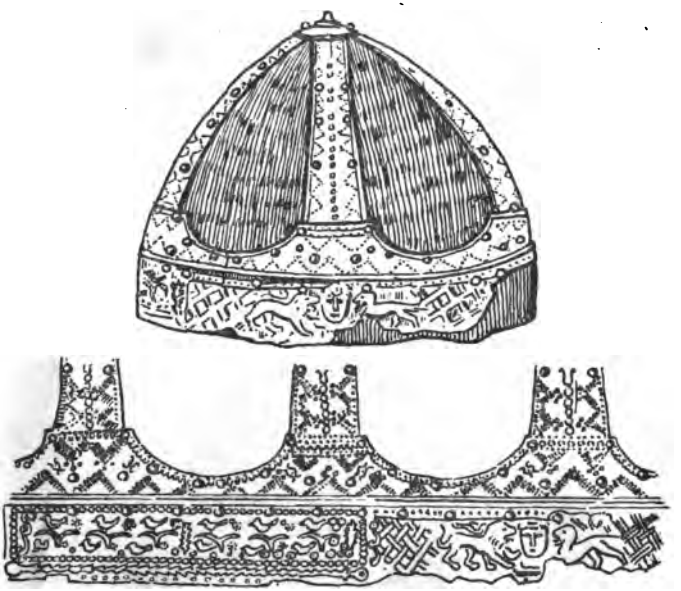
lifeless, the kinsman thane, best of those who watched over the home with HROTHGAR. And the son of Athelings went over steep stone slopes, narrow ways, strait lonely paths, steep cliffs, many homes of sea monsters—an unknown road! With a few prudent ones he went on before to view the place, until, suddenly, he found the mountain trees overhanging the grey rock—the dismal wood. The water stood below, bloody and troubled. For all the Danes, for the friends of the Scyldings, for many a thane, for each

Sea-dragon, from Gesner

one of the earls, it was bitterness of soul-sorrow to endure when, upon the sea-cliff, they came upon ÆSCHERE's head!

The water surged with blood and hot gore; the people looked upon it. At times the horn sang out a ready

battle-lay. The warriors all sat down. Then along the water they beheld many of the serpent kind, strange sea-dragons swimming the deep; sea-monsters, also, lying out upon the cliff slopes, which at morning time often take their toilsome course over the sail-road—serpents and savage beasts. They rushed away, fierce and angry—they had heard the noise, the war-horn sound. The lord of the Goths deprived one of them of life, of his wave strife, with his shafted bow so that the sharp war-arrow stood in his vitals; slower was he in swimming in the sea, for death seized him; straightway he was closely pressed upon the waves with sharp, barbed boar-spears—fiercely attacked

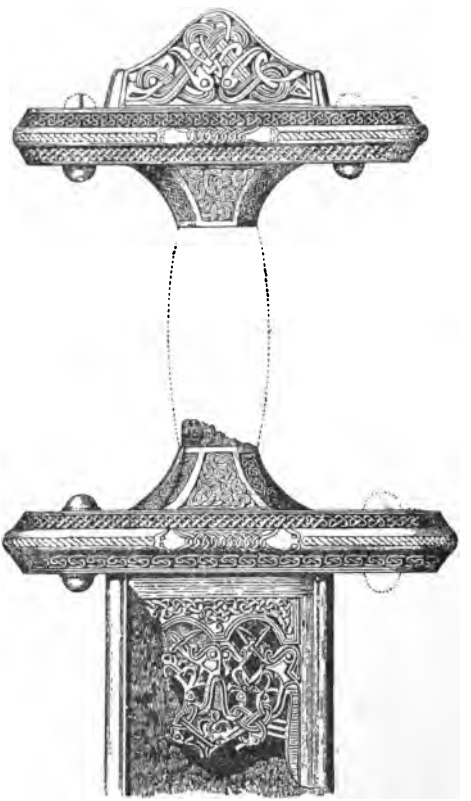


"The shining battle-helm adorned with gold, encircled with lordly bands

and dragged on to the cliff—a wondrous wave-tosser! the men gazed upon their grisly guest.

BEOWULF girded himself with lordly armour; of life he recked not at all. His war-coat of ring mail, woven by hand, ample and art adorned, was to search out the deep;

well could it protect his body so that the battle grip of the fury might not scathe his breast, her spiteful clutch his life. But his head the shining battle-helm guarded which was to plunge into the depths of the mere, seek the tumult of the waves, adorned with gold, encircled with lordly bands, just as the weapon-smith wrought it, framed it



" It was one of the chiefest of old-time treasures "

wondrously in days of old, set it about with the semblance of the boar, so that afterwards no sword or battle blade might bite upon it. Nor was that the least of mighty aids which HROTHGAR'S spokesman [UNFERTH] lent him in his

need—'Hrunting' was the name of the hafted blade. It was one of the chiefest of old-time treasures; of iron was its blade, stained with poison twigs, hardened in battle blood; never in fight did it fail any man whose hand wielded it, who dared to tread the ways of terror, the meeting-place of foes; it was not the first time that it was to do high deeds! (Truly the son of ECGLAF, strong in might, remembered not, now that he was lending the weapon to a better swordsman, what he said before when he was drunk with wine.) Himself, he durst not risk life beneath the turmoil of the waves, do heroic deeds! There lost he fame, renown for valour. Not so was it with that other when he had armed himself for the fight.

BEOWULF spoke, ECGTHEOW'S son:

"Bethink thee, now, great son of HEALFDENE, wise ruler, gold-friend of men, now that I am ready for the adventure, what we two once spoke: if at thy need I should lose my life, that thou wouldst ever be to me, when gone hence, in the stead of a father. Be thou a guardian to my kinsman-thanes, my close companions, if battle takes me off. Do thou also send to HYGELAC the treasures which thou gavest me, beloved HROTHGAR. The lord of the Goths may then understand from that gold, the son of HRETHEL may see when he gazes upon that treasure, that I found a good and generous ring-giver, and enjoyed it while I might. And do thou let UNFERTH, far-famed man, have the old heirloom, the rare, wavy-bladed sword, hard of edge. I shall gain renown for myself with 'Hrunting', or death shall take me".

III

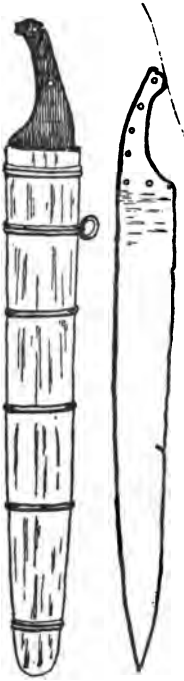
THE FIGHT BENEATH THE MERE

[Lines 1492–1617]

AFTER these words the chief of the Weder-Goths hastened boldly on; he would await no answer. The whelming water received the warrior. It was a day's space ere he could see the bottom. She who, grim and greedy, ravening for blood, had dwelt in the waters a hundred seasons, soon found that some one of human kind was seeking out from above the home of the alien beings. She grabbed out then towards him, seized the warrior in her horrid claws; none the sooner did she harm his lusty frame; the ring mail girt him round about, so that she could not pierce through the war-coat, the riveted shirt of mail, with her hateful fingers. Then, when she came to the bottom, the Sea-wolf bore the ring-clad lord to her own abode in such wise that he could not wield his weapons —brave though he was—for many monsters harassed him in the water, many a sea-beast broke the war-shirt with hostile tusks. The monsters followed him.

The earl then perceived that he was in some kind of hostile hall, where the water could in no way harm him, nor could the sudden rush of the flood reach him because of the hall's roof. He saw fire light, a brilliant flame shining brightly. Then did the brave one perceive the she-wolf of the deep, the mighty Mere-wife. He gave her a main stroke with his war sword—his hand did not keep back its swing—so that the treasure blade sang out a greedy war-song on her

head. Then the guest found that the battle-flasher would not bite, or harm her life, but its edge failed the prince in his need. Many a hand-to-hand meeting had it experienced aforetime, oft had cloven helm and war coat of the doomed; that was the first time for the precious treasure that its power had failed. Yet was HYGELAC'S kinsman steadfast, nowise slack in courage, mindful of high deeds. The angry warrior threw down, then, the banded sword, bound about with art work, strong and steel-edged, and it lay on the ground. In his strength he trusted, the hand-grip of might! Thus shall a man do when he thinks to win lasting praise in war, and cares not for his life! Recking naught of the fight, the lord of the Goths then seized GRENDEL'S mother by the shoulder; hardy in battle, all furious as he was, he threw his deadly foe so that she fell to the floor. She quickly repaid him his hand-grip with her fierce claws, and held him fast, Then, weary of spirit, he overreached himself—he, strongest of warriors and fighters on foot—so that he fell. Then sat she upon the hall-guest and drew her knife, broad and bright-edged. She would avenge her child, her only offspring! On his shoulder lay the braided breast-net; that it was that saved his life, withstood entrance against point and against edge. Then had the son of ECGTHEOW, chieftain of the Goths, perished beneath the vast ground, had not the battle-coat, the hard war-net afforded him help, and Holy GOD, the All-wise Lord, had power over victory in war. The Ruler of Heaven adjudged it right when BEOWULF stood up again. Then saw he among the war-gear a victory-blessed blade, an old Eotenish sword, strong of edge, glory of warriors; it was the choicest of weapons, but it was greater than any other man could carry into battle-play, good and splendid, the work of the Giants. He, then, warrior of the Scyldings, raging and



"And drew her knife, broad and bright-edged"

battle-fierce, seized the banded hilt, drew forth the treasure-sword; hopeless of life he struck furiously so that it held hard against her neck and broke the bone-rings; the blade went all through her doomed body; she fell on the floor. Bloody was the sword; the hero rejoiced in his work! Flame burst forth, light filled the place within, just as when the Candle of the Firmament shineth brightly from heaven. He gazed about the place; turned then by the wall. Angry and resolute, HYGELAC'S thane heaved the weapon hard by the hilt. Not worthless to the warrior was the blade, for he wished straightway to requite GRENDEL for the many war-onsets he had made on the West-Danes—oftener far than once—when he slew HROTHGAR'S hearth companions in their sleep, devoured fifteen men of the Danish people while sleeping, and carried off as many more—a hateful booty! He, fierce warrior, repaid him for that, insomuch that he saw GRENDEL lying at rest, war-weary, lifeless, maimed, as he was in the fight at HEOROT. Far bounded the body when, after death, it suffered the stroke, the strong swing of the sword. And then he cut the head off.

Soon the shrewd men who were gazing on the water with HROTHGAR saw that the surging waves were all commingled, the sea stained with blood. The grey-haired elders spoke together about the brave one—that they expected not the Atheling back—that he would come, victory exulting, to seek their great prince—for it seemed to many that the sea-wolf had torn him to pieces. Then came the ninth hour of the day; the valiant Scyldings abandoned the headland; the gold-friend of men [HROTHGAR] departed thence home. The guests sat, sick at heart, and stared on the mere; they knew not and they expected not that they might see their friend and lord again.

Then, beneath the blood of battle, that sword, the war-blade, began to waste away in icicles of war; a wondrous thing was that, that it all melted, most like to ice when the Father unlooses the bond of frost, unwinds the fetters of the flood, He Who hath the wielding of times and seasons. That is the true Creator!

The prince of the Weder-Goths took not more of treasures of wealth in those abodes, though he saw many there, but only the head, and with it the hilt, gold-inlaid; melted

already was the sword, burnt up the damascened blade, so hot was that blood, so poisonous the alien demon that had died in that place!

BEOWULF REAPPEARS VICTORIOUS

[Lines 1618–1643]

Soon was he swimming, he who had just lived through the strife, the war-onset of his foes; he dived up through the water; all cleansed were the surging waves, the wide dwellings where the alien demon quitted his life-days and this transitory state. To land then he came, stout-hearted, the Protector of seamen; rejoiced in his sea-spoil, the mighty burden that he had with him. They went then to meet him; thanked GOD; the brave band of thanes rejoiced in their chieftain, that they could see him again unhurt.

Then from the valiant one helmet and mail were quickly loosed. The lake subsided, the water under the clouds, stained with blood of battle.

Forth went they thence along the foot-paths, glad in their hearts; they measured the land-way, the well-known road—those men of kingly valour! From the sea cliff, toilsomely for each one of them, high-hearted heroes, they bore the head; four of them were required to carry with labour to the Gold-Hall the head of Grendel on a spear-shaft, until, forthwith the fourteen men of the Goths, brave and active in war, came marching to the Hall, and with them, high souled among the company, their liege-lord trod the mead-plains.

IV

BEOWULF PRESENTS THE HEAD OF GRENDEL AND THE HILT OF THE GIANT'S SWORD TO HROTHGAR

[Lines 1644–1786]

THEN, entering, came the chief of thanes, the man keen of deed, honoured with renown, the hero bold in battle, to greet HROTHGAR. GRENDEL'S head was borne then by the hair on to the floor where the people were drinking—a fearful thing before the earls and the lady with them! The warriors gazed upon the wondrous sight.

BEOWULF spoke, ECGTHEOW'S son:

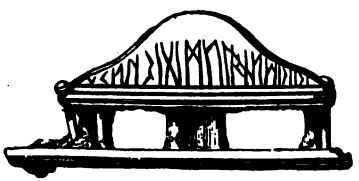
"What! With gladness have we brought thee, O son of HEALFDENE, prince of Scyldings, as a token of glory, this sea-spoil that here thou lookest upon. I came not softly with my life out of that war under water; ventured upon the task with difficulty; almost had the struggle failed, had not GOD shielded me. Naught could I do in the fight with 'Hrunting', good though that weapon be; but the Ruler of men granted to me that I saw hanging radiant on the wall an ancient, mighty sword—very often has He guided those who are friendless—so that I drew the weapon. Then slew I in that battle, as occasion favoured me, the keepers of the house. Then, as the blood sprang forth, hottest of battle-sweat, the war sword, the damascened blade burned away. I bore the hilt from the foes, avenged their foul deeds, the murder of the Danes, as it was meet.

"This, therefore, I promise thee—that thou mayest sleep in HEOROT free from care with thy warrior-band and all the thanes of thy people, high and low, that thou needest not fear for them from that direction, life-peril for thy earls as thou didst before, O lord of Scyldings".

Then was the golden hilt, ancient work of Giants, given into the hand of the old warrior, the grey war-chief. After the fall of the devils it passed into the keeping of the lord of the Danes—that work of wonder-smiths—and when the fierce-hearted being, GOD'S adversary, guilty of murder, forsook this world—and his mother also—it went into the

possession of the best of the kings of the world by the two seas, of those who dealt out money gifts in Sceden-ig.

HROTHGAR spoke; he scanned the hilt, the old heirloom on which was written the beginning of the ancient strife when the flood, the rushing deep, destroyed the race of Giants. They behaved audaciously; that was a people alien to the Eternal Lord; the Almighty gave them a final reward! Likewise on the guard of pure gold it was set forth and told, rightly marked in Runic letters, for whom that sword, choicest of weapons, with banded hilt and serpent-ornament, had first been wrought. Then spoke the wise son of HEALFDENE—all were silent:



"Marked in Runic letters . . .

"Lo! that may he say, an old guardian who works truth and right for the people and remembers all the past, that this earl was born of the better stock. BEOWULF, my friend, thy fame is exalted throughout the wide ways, over every people. Thou dost hold it all with patience, thy might with prudence of mind. I shall grant thee my friendship as we at first spoke of it. Thou shalt be for a comfort long lasting to thine own people, a help to warriors.

". . . and serpent ornament'

"Not so was HEREMOD to the children of ECGWELA, the Honour-Scyldings; not for their joy did he wax great, but for the slaughter and destruction of the Danish people.

In his swollen fury he slew his table-companions, the comrades who stood at his shoulder, until he went forth, alone—famous prince as he was—from human joys. Though Mighty GOD exalted him over all men with delights of power, with strength, yet in his heart there grew blood-fierce thoughts; he gave no treasure-rings to the Danes according to custom; joyless he dwelt, so that he suffered misery for that strife, long-continued trouble with his people. Do thou teach thyself by that; lay hold of manly virtue. Old in winters I have told this tale for thee.

"Wonder 'tis to say how Mighty GOD, through His vast spirit, deals out wisdom, land and earl-ship to mankind! He has the wielding of all things! Sometimes He lets the thought of His mind turn to the love of a man of great kindred; gives him in his hereditary estate joy of earth; a shelter-burg of men to hold; makes parts of the world, a wide realm, subject to him, so that, in his unwisdom, he himself cannot think of the end. He lives in plenty; nothing hinders him—sickness nor age; no trouble from enemies darkens his soul; nor strife nor deadly hatred anywhere appears, but all the world turns on his will. He knows no worse state until some measure of pride waxes and grows within him when the guardian, the shepherd of the soul, sleeps. Too sound is that sleep, bound up with sorrows; very near is the SLAYER, who from arrow-bow shoots spitefully. Then, as he goes beneath his helmet, he is stricken in the breast with the bitter shaft; he cannot defend himself from the crooked, strange biddings of the Accursed Spirit; what he has long held seems to him too little; angry-minded, he becomes covetous; never glories in giving of golden treasure-rings; and then he forgets and heeds not forthcoming doom, because GOD, the Wielder of Glory, has already given him a share of honours! Afterwards, at the end, it happens that the frail body wastes away, falls, fated; another succeeds who dispenses treasures without grieving—the old possession of the prince—recks not of fear. Guard thee against this baleful envy, beloved BEOWULF, thou best of men, and choose thee that better thing—eternal gain. Incline not to pride, great warrior. Now, for a while, is the fulness of thy might; soon after it shall be that sickness or sword shall deprive thee of power, or the clutch of fire, or welling of flood, or grip of

blade, or flight of spear, or dire old age, or the brightness of eyes passes away and grows dark—straightway it shall be that death o'ermasters thee, thou lord of men!

"Even so a hundred seasons have I ruled the Ring-Danes beneath the heavens, and with spears and swords protected them in war against many tribes throughout the Middle-Earth, so that I reckoned not that I had any enemy under the breadth of heaven. What! a change from this came for me in my land—sorrow after joy—since GRENDEL, my old enemy, became my invader. Much grief of mind did I constantly suffer from that persecution. Thanks be, therefore, to the Creator, the Eternal Lord, that I have lived to gaze with my eyes across that long sorrow upon this sword-gory head. Go now to thy seat; share in the feast-joy, thou, honoured in war! There shall be many treasures in common for us when morning comes".

Glad of mood was the Goth; went forthwith to take his seat as the wise one bade.

THE EVE OF DEPARTURE

[Lines 1787–1802]

THEN, afterwards as before, a fair feast was newly prepared for the Hall-company of strength-renowned heroes. The helm of night loured dark over the clansmen. The whole assembly arose, the grey-haired one, the aged Scylding would seek his bed. Beyond measure did the Goth, brave shield-warrior, yearn to rest. Forthwith the Hall-thane, he who in courtesy supplied all the needs of a thane, as at that day seafarers were wont to have, guided him forth, wearied by his adventure, the comer from afar. The great-hearted one rested; spacious and gold-adorned, the Hall towered aloft; the guest slept within, until the black raven, blithe-hearted, announced the joy of heaven.

PART II

NOTES

NOTES

Line 1251, page 89

They sank then to sleep : There is no break in the manuscript at this point except one of the sectional divisions into which the poem is divided, often in an arbitrary and even stupid manner—probably by the scribes who copied it out in the tenth century—but, as Professor Arnold points out, 'The poet seems to take a fresh departure from this point; he recapitulates shortly the foregoing events as if he were addressing himself to a fresh audience, or as if he wished to give a certain independence to the present book so that it might stand alone and tell its own story. Even the affiliation of Grendel to Cain is here insisted upon afresh'.

Line 1257, page 89

It became evident that Avenger still lived—lived for a long time : This is an inconsistency, for the interval between the fight with Grendel and the visit of his mother to the Hall is very short. 'Here', says Professor Earle, 'we have plainly an unaltered feature of the Lay in some previous condition'. And it is a point in favour of those who think that the whole episode of the fight with Grendel's mother was originally a separate poem. The reiteration of Grendel's descent from Cain which immediately follows is probably an incident to the Second Part in its original character as a Lay by itself.

Lines 1285–86, page 90

The banded sword : 'heoru bunden' : Banded, as I think, and as the illustration in the text shows (from a fifth century specimen found in the Danish Island of Fünen), round the grip with projecting rings, or gold wire, or both. Scabbards banded with richly decorated bands are also found in the graves of the period.

Line 1304, page 90

That was not a good exchange, etc. : 'These allusions', says Mr Sweet, 'to the old Germanic system of establishing

a definite pecuniary compensation for every injury, including loss of life, are common in Anglo-Saxon poetry.' Tacitus, writing of the Germanic tribes in A.D. 98, says: 'It is a duty among them to adopt the feuds as well as the friendships of a father or a kinsman. These feuds are not implacable, even homicide is expiated by the payment of a certain namber of cattle and of sheep, and the satisfaction is accepted by the entire family, greatly to the advantage of the State, since feuds are dangerous in proportion to a people's freedom'.

Line 1319, page 91

Lord of the Ingwines: The Ingurnas, friends of Ing, the first king of the East Danes. The Ingaevones of Tacitus.

Line 1345, page 91

I have heard dwellers in the country, etc.: 'This', says Professor Earle, 'is a fine piece of folklore in its oldest extant form'.

Line 1386, page 93

Each of us must abide, etc.: Professor Earle aptly compares *Æneid*, x, 467:

> Stat sua cuique dies; breve et irreparabile tempus
> Omnibus est vitæ; sed famam extendere factis
> Hoc virtutis opus.

(For each man is his appointed day; short and irreparable is the time of life for all; but to extend renown by deeds—this is the task of valour!)

Line 1411, page 94

Many homes of sea monsters: *'Nicor-husa fela'*: There are little hills in the neighbourhood of Lejre said to be still peopled, by local superstition, with fairies and spirits, and the German scholar, Sarrazin, understands by them the 'Nicor-husa' here mentioned. Sarrazin, *Beowulf Studien*, 4, quoting the Swedish writer, F. Münter.

Line 1417, page 94

The dismal wood—the water bloody and troubled: 'The picture of the weird tarn with its great grey rocks overhanging it and "mountain trees"—such as mountain ashes, pines, birches, I suppose—bending over the rocks, is finely and vigorously drawn'.—Arnold.

Line 1433, page 95

Deprived one of them of life with his shafted bow . . . the sharp war-arrow stood in his vitals : This is the first of several references in the poem to bows and arrows. The words used for arrow are 'strael' and 'flan', and for bow the compounds 'flan-boga' and 'horn-boga', horn-bow. The great finds of antiquities at Nydam and Thorsbjerg in Sleswig yielded many specimens of bows and arrows, objects of great interest to us English people because of the locality of the discoveries, the old home of the Angles, whose descendants, after their emigration to the Island which was afterwards named after them, gave so good an account of themselves with the long bow and the cloth-yard shaft. In the Nydam and Thorsbjerg finds we have the earliest known specimens of these famous English weapons, dating from a thousand years before Creçy, Poictiers, and Agincourt. Several of the yew bows and arrow shafts found at Nydam and Thorsbjerg have ornamental patterns carved upon them, and the arrow-shafts bear their owner's or maker's marks, sometimes in Runic letters.

Line 1437, page 95

Sharp barbed boar-spears : 'Eofer-spreotum' : Literally, boar-sprits. We have the word in bow-sprit and sprit-sail. Illustrations of the barbed spear-head will be found at page 62.

Line 1451, page 96

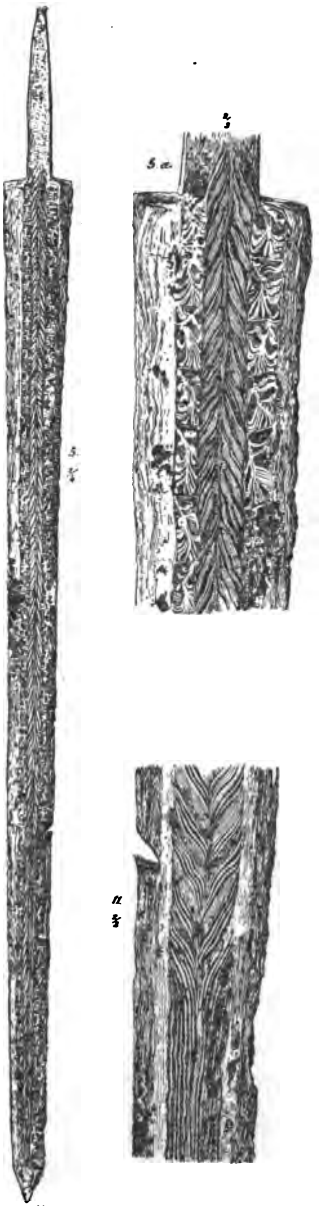
The shining battle-helm encircled with lordly bands : I have been fortunate enough to come upon an engraving of a helmet in Lindenschmidt's *Handbuch der Deutschen Alterthumskunde* which exactly illustrates this passage of the poem. It is a helmet of iron, bound with bands of bronze, formerly in the collection of the Freiherr zu Rhein, but since sold. The helmet is made of iron plates held together by handsomely decorated bands of bronze—'lordly bands'. Although it is unknown where this splendid specimen was found, it so nearly resembles two Anglo-Saxon helmets found in graves at Leckhampton in Gloucestershire and at Beaty Grange in Derbyshire in its structure, and corresponds so closely to the armour smith's work of the Merovingian period that Lindenschmidt does not hesitate to date it

between the fifth and eighth centuries. This kind of banded construction, familiar in such representations of Northern warriors as have come down to us, is, Lindenschmidt says, the most ancient method of head defence of the Northern peoples. Compare the remarkable specimen found at Thorsbjerg and engraved in Engelhardt's *Denmark in the Early Iron Age*. This type of conical helmet, reinforced by bands, was in use down to Norman times. It is clearly shown in the Bayeux Tapestry.

Line 1488, page 97

And do thou let Unferth . . . have the old heirloom, the rare, wavy-bladed sword: The words for 'wavy-bladed' sword are *waeg-sweord*. It is an epithet which has puzzled many commentators, who, not understanding it, have suggested changing 'waeg', which means 'wave', to 'wig' or 'wael', *i.e.* 'war'-sword, 'battle'-sword. But, if read with a knowledge of the actual antiquities found in the graves of the early centuries of our era in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, there is no need to doubt or to change the reading of the manuscript. For the word 'waeg' means simply the wavy *damascened* pattern of the blade. There are many such examples in the museums of Copenhagen, Stockholm, and Christiania. I give a reproduction of a beautifully damascened sword blade, found at Nydam in Sleswig, and figured in Engelhardt's *Denmark in the Early Iron Age*, and, in addition, an enlarged portion of the same sword, showing three bands of damascened work; and of another sword, from the same find, which illustrates even more precisely the epithet of the text—'wavy'. Dr Hans Hildebrand, Royal Antiquary of Sweden, says in his *Industrial Arts of Scandinavia in the Pagan Time*:—

'In working iron the ancient Scandinavians have shown a great deal of technical skill. Some hatchets are found, the edge of which is so well preserved that the finder has been able to use them after a little sharpening. Even more skill is displayed in the decorative work bestowed upon the iron weapons, as is shown in many specimens preserved in the collections; the weapons being regarded as trusty friends by the warlike Scandinavians, we cannot be astonished that so much care was given to the smallest detail of their ornamentation.



"The rare wavy-bladed sword, hard of edge"

"When the invention of damascening is, as its name suggests, referred to Damascus or its neighbourhood, and, moreover, when the introduction into Europe of damascened work is referred to the nearer relations established by the Crusaders, it must be remembered that damascened work was not uncommon in Scandinavia during the pagan time, and that the objects of iron decorated in that manner are by their shape, and other perfectly unmistakable signs, proved to be products of indigenous art. I have already shown that there once existed, during a period of some length, a continued intercourse between Mahomedan Asia and Scandinavia. To the influence of that epoch we cannot, however, attribute the introduction of damascening into the North, as damascened sword-blades have been discovered in finds belonging to the earlier Iron Age, that is, to an epoch anterior to that in which Mahomedan industry could have existed in Damascus, and when Scandinavian civilization was influenced by Roman art. The early appearance of damascened iron in Scandinavia, combined with the circumstances under

which it appears, gives strong support to the theory that damascening was known to the Romans during the time of the emperors. Damascened blades, occurring in Scandinavia, not only in the earlier Iron Age when the Roman influence was felt, but also in the later Iron Age, is in my eyes a positive proof that the art of damascening itself had become indigenous in the North. We must not expect to find the same polished surface, with the manifold windings of the patterns, which gives to Oriental damascened work its delicate beauty; the long exposure to moisture, and other destroying forces, have made the surface of the Scandinavian swords very rough, and the material that was hammered into the lengthened grooves of the blades is in most cases lost".

Not only were the blades of the Northern swords thus damascened, but their hilts also. Our poem is full of sword-epithets which show the extreme taste and skill brought to the manufacture of the swords of the Danish and Gothic warriors, and these epithets are amply and precisely borne out by the actual swords themselves and their scabbards, often in astonishing preservation, which exist in numbers in the Northern museums. Hilts, blades and scabbards are adorned with chased work, damascening, and exquisitely designed mountings of gold and silver, iron and bronze. The reader should consult the works of Worsaæ, Hildebrand, Engelhardt, Montelius, and Sophus Müller, all of whom give illustrations of the choicest specimens of the old Northerns sword-smiths which have come down to our times.

Line 1507, page 99

Then when she came to the bottom, etc.: 'This cave under the sea seems to be another of those natural phenomena of which the writer had personal knowledge and which was introduced by him into the mythical tale to give it a local colour. There are many places of this kind. Their entrance is under the lowest level of the tide'.—Stopford Brooke.

Line 1545, page 100

Drew her knife: 'hyre seax geteah': The large heavy knife called the *seax* was a favourite and well-known weapon of the Northern nations; it seems to have been universally

carried by men, women and children, and it varied in size accordingly. The warrior's seax was a heavy and formidable single-edged weapon; many specimens have been found in all the Northern lands. Two are figured, at p. 100 one of them in its original wooden sheath. They formed part of a great number of weapons and enamelled objects found at Vimose, near Odense. It is just such a weapon as this that our poet imagined the She-fiend to use while she was sitting on Beowulf and digging at his trusty coat of ring mail! There is an interesting reference to the seax in Nennius's *History of the Britons* (eighth century), where he gives an account of the treachery of Hengist. 'Hengist', says Nennius, 'under pretence of ratifying the treaty, prepared an entertainment to which he invited the king, Vortigern, the nobles and military officers, in number about three hundred. Speciously concealing his wicked intention, he ordered three hundred Saxons to conceal each a knife under his feet and to mix with the Britons; "And when", said he, "they are sufficiently inebriated, cry out 'Nimed eure seaxes!'—'Take your knives!'—then let each draw his knife and kill his man". . . . After they had eaten and drunk and were much intoxicated, Hengist suddenly, vociferated "Nimed eure seaxes!" and instantly his adherents drew their knives, and, rushing upon the Britons, each slew him that sat next to him'.

Line 1562, page 100

An old Eotenish sword . . . the work of giants: 'Eald sweord Eotenix . . . giganta geweorc': "The converted Anglo-Saxons identified, as this passage alone would suffice to prove, the giants of Græco-Roman mythology and of the Septuagint version of the Bible (Gen. vi, 4) with the Eotenas (Jötnar) of their old heathen belief".—Arnold.

Line 1567, page 101

Broke the bone-rings: 'Ban hringas bræc': These were the cervical vertebræ.

Line 1643, page 102

Trod the mead-plains: 'meodo-wongas traed': The fields among which the Burg and the Hall, where the warriors drank *mead*, were situated.

Line 1694, page 104

Likewise on the guard . . . rightly marked in Runic letters : Swords have actually been found in the graves of the early centuries of our era inscribed with runes ; the pommel of one of them, in the Brown Museum, Liverpool, illustrates the text at this passage. In the Old Play of the Wolsungs, the earliest known version of the famous *Völsunga Saga* in a dramatic form, Sigrdrifa instructs Sigfred upon charms, symbols, and talismans, the first of which is this : ' Runes of victory thou must know if thou wilt have victory ; *and thou shalt grave them on thy sword-hilt* '.

Line 1698, page 104

Banded hilt and serpent ornament : ' wreothen-hilt and wyrm-fah ' : The banded hilt and the ornamentation of interlaced serpents and dragons appear in many of the swords found in graves. The interlaced serpents were a favourite and universal ornament among the Scandinavian nations ; innumerable specimens exist in metal, wood, and stone.

Lines 1700–84, pages

Lo that may he say, etc. : This long speech by Hrothgar has been pronounced by some of the German critics to be a sermon and inappropriate, this being an epic and not a didactic poem. My own opinion is that those who think so, and are bored by Hrothgar's moralizing, have grasped neither the true inwardness of *Beowulf* nor its artistic construction. Professor Earle well says that " if a sermon can take place in an epic at all—and what is there of human practice that can be absolutely denied to an epic ?—it might perhaps be allowed in the mouth of an aged king, who had seen great trouble, addressing the young hero by whom his deliverance had been achieved. Sermon or no sermon, this is a speech fit for an old king to speak to a daring youth, towards whom he had declared a fatherly affection. . . . The speech is well placed, in my opinion, and it produces the fine effect of a moral culmination. For those who think that the *Beowulf* is a fortuitous agglomeration of patchwork, the question has but a feeble interest ; but for those who see unity of aim in the poem this passage

is of the highest interest as a perfectly natural centre-piece. For it may be said that the aim and moral of the poem as a whole is precisely this—to correct the besetting sin of the warrior. Arrogance in the hero and contempt of inferior men cancels the merit of heroism. The warrior must not despise the gentle virtues of civil life. It is only by modesty and respect for others that he will get his merits recognized and rewarded. Next to the grand example of high devotion in a great cause this is the moral of the poem, and as a matter of scheme it is fitting that this like a keystone should find its place in the centre of the work. But it may be asked, is such a moral worthy and befitting an epic poem? To this I can only answer that if any one moral can be assigned to the *Iliad* it is—as intimated in the opening lines—this very moral and no other".

Line 1722, page 105

Do thou teach thyself by that, etc.: In these words Professor Earle sees the living poet step forward out of his Hrothgar and turn his eyes to the prince for whom he made it up—a prince probably of the Mercian Court (in central England) in the middle of the seventh century.

Line 1743, page 105

Very near is the Slayer, etc.: Compare with this passage Psalm lxvi: 'Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked . . . who whet their tongues like a sword and bend their bows to shoot their arrows . . . that they may shoot in secret . . . suddenly do they shoot at him. . . .'

PART III

Clinker-built, 28-oared boat of the fourth century, 75 feet long, 10½ feet long beam, discovered at Nydam, Sleswig

PART III

BEOWULF'S RETURN TO GOTHLAND

[Lines 1802–2199]

I

BEOWULF'S FAREWELL TO HROTHGAR

[Lines 1802–1887]

THEN the bright sun came gliding over the land. The warriors hastened; the Athelings were eager to go back to their people; the high-hearted guest would go far thence, seek his ship. The hardy one bade the son of ECGLAF (UNFERTH) gird on 'Hrunting', bade him take his sword, beloved weapon; spoke his thanks to him for the lending, said he reckoned the war-friend a good one, strong in battle; in no wise did he blame in words the blade's edge. A high souled man was that!

And when the warriors were ready in their armour for

the march, the Atheling, honoured by the Danes, went to the High-seat where the other was. The battle-brave hero greeted HROTHGAR. BEOWULF spoke, ECGTHEOW's son:

"Now do we, sea-farers, comers from afar, wish to say that we purpose to go to HYGELAC. Well have we been cared for here, according to our will; well hast thou served us. If, then, I may gain for myself here on earth one whit

"The high-hearted guest would go far thence, seek his ship"

more of thy heart's love than I have yet done, O ruler of men, I will be ready forthwith for deeds of war. If over the extent of the sea I learn this, that those around thee oppress thee with terror, as, hating thee, they did erewhile, I shall bring a thousand thanes, heroes, to thy help.

"As to HYGELAC, lord of Goths, shepherd of his people, young though he be, I know that he will aid me by words and works that I may well support thee, and bear to thy aid the shafted spear, the help of my might, if thou hast

need of men. If, therefore, HRETHRIC, the King's son, comes to treat at the courts of the Goths, he may find many friends there. Far countries are the better sought out by him who is himself of good worth".

HROTHGAR spoke to him in answer:

"These sayings the Wise Lord has sent into thy mind. Never heard I any man speak more wisely at so youthful an age: strong art thou of might, and old in mind, wise in speech. I count it likely, if it should happen that spear, or sword-savage battle, sickness, or iron take off the son of HRETHEL, thy chieftain, shepherd of the people, and thou hast thy life, the SEA-GOTHS will not have any better man than thee to choose for king, hoard-keeper for warriors, if thou be willing to rule the kingdom of thy kin. Me thy character pleases more and more, beloved BEOWULF. Thou hast brought it to pass that to these peoples now—the peoples of the Goths and the Spear-Danes—there shall be peace in common and strife shall cease—the guileful enmities which erewhile they endured; treasures in common shall there be while I rule the wide realm; many a man shall greet another with good things across the gannet's bath; over the sea shall the ringed ship bring presents and love tokens. I know the peoples are steadfast towards foe and towards friend, in every way blameless after the old custom'.

Then the son of HEALFDENE, Protector of earls, gave him twelve more treasure-gifts, bade him with these gifts go in health to his own dear people and quickly come back. Then the king, noble of lineage, lord of the Scyldings, kissed the best of thanes and clasped him by the neck; tears fell from him, the grey-haired one. For him, old as he was and wise, there was hope of two things, but rather of this that they might see each other again, brave men in council. So beloved by him was that man that he could not restrain his bosom's heaving, but in his breast, fast bound in his heart, there burned through his blood a hidden longing for the dear man.

Then BEOWULF, a warrior proud in gold, exulting in treasure, trod the grassy earth; the sea-goer which rode at anchor awaited her lord and master. Often, by the way, was HROTHGAR'S gift praised. That was a king blameless in every way until old age—which has often oppressed many—took from him the joys of might.

II

THE HOMEWARD VOYAGE

[Lines 1888–1930]

THEY came then to the sea, the band of bravest liege men; they wore the ring-net—shirts of riveted mail. The Coast-guard beheld the return of the nobles as he did before; nor with insult did he greet the guests from the brow of the cliff, but rode towards them; said that the people of the Weders, the shining-coated warriors, were welcome on their way to the ship. Then on the sand was the spacious, ring-prowed vessel, laden with war-gear, with horses and treasure; high rose the mast over HROTHGAR'S hoard-wealth. BEOWULF gave to the boat-guard a sword bound with gold, so that thenceforth, because of that treasure, a costly heirloom, he was the more honoured at the mead-bench.

On his boat he went to stir the deep water, left the land of the Danes. Then a sail, one of the sea-cloths, was made fast by a rope to the mast; the sea-timber thundered; the wind over the billows did not hinder the wave-floater in her course; the sea-goer put forth; forth over the flood floated she, foamy-necked, over the sea-streams, with wreathed prow, until they could make out the cliffs of the Goths—the well-known headlands! Up shot the keel, wind-driven, and stood on the shore. Straightway the harbour-warden was ready at the sea, he who had for a long time been gazing from the beach afar, longing for the beloved men. He made the broad-bosomed ship fast to the sand with anchor ropes, lest the strength of the waves should carry away the winsome craft. Then he bade carry up the princely possessions, chased and gold-wrought. They had not far to go thence to seek the Dispenser of treasure, HYGELAC son of HRETHEL, where he dwelt in his home, himself with his followers, near the sea wall. Splendid was the building, a renowned lord the king, noble in Hall. HYGD was very young, wise, well grown, though HAERETH'S daughter had dwelt few winters within the locks of the Burg, nevertheless she was not mean nor too sparing of gifts of treasure-wealth to the people of the Goths.

THE STORY OF THRYTHO, WIFE OF OFFA, KING OF THE ANGLES

[Lines 1931–1962]

THRYTHO, fierce Queen of people, showed moody pride, terrible violence. There was no one who dared, no brave one of the beloved comrades ventured to look on her with eyes by day, save her lord; else might he count upon death bonds woven by hand as his lot! Straightway after his seizure the knife was appointed for him, that the inlaid blade must decide it, make known the baleful murder. No queenly usage is it for a woman to practise, beautiful though she be, that a Peace-weaver should beset the life of a beloved man because of pretended insult! But HEMMING'S kinsman [OFFA] hindered that. Men at ale-drinking said otherwise: that she brought less harm upon the people, less malicious enmity, since first she was given, gold-adorned, to the young warrior, dear and of high ancestry, when by her father's advice she made the journey over the dark waters to seek the Court of OFFA. There, afterwards, famous for good, she enjoyed her life destiny upon the Ruler's seat, held high love for the lord of heroes, who, as I have heard, was the best of the human race between the two seas. Wherefore OFFA, spear-keen man, was widely renowned for gifts and wars; with wisdom ruled he his native land. From him EOMER sprang for a help to heroes, kinsman of HEMMING, grandson of GARMUND, strong in war.

III

BEOWULF'S RECEPTION BY HYGELAC AT THE BURGH OF THE GOTHS—HE NARRATES HIS ADVENTURES IN DENMARK

[Lines 1963–2143]

THEN went the hardy one with his followers, himself over the sand, treading the sea beach, the wide shores. The world's candle shone—the southward-sloping sun. They kept on their way, went in their might to where they heard the Protector of Earls, Slayer of ONGENTHEOW, the good young war-king, was dealing forth treasure-rings within the Burgh. Quickly was BEOWULF's voyage made known to HYGELAC, that there, into the House-place, the Protector of warriors, his shield-companion, was come alive, hale from the battle-play, going to the court. Forthwith the Hall was made ready within for the guests afoot as the ruler bade. Then he who had escaped in battle sat facing [HYGELAC] himself—kinsman facing kinsman—when the lord of men had greeted the loyal one with courtly speech, with mighty words. Round the Hall, pouring out mead, went the daughter of HAERETH; she loved the people and bore the drinking-cups to heroes' hands.

HYGELAC began courteously to question his comrade in the high Hall—curiosity tormented him—what were the adventures of the SEA-GOTHS:

"How did it befall you on your journey, beloved BEOWULF, when thou didst suddenly determine to seek strife far away over the salt water—battle at HEOROT? And hast thou lessened at all for HROTHGAR, the famous prince, his wide-known woe? On that account I seethed in moody care, in waves of sorrow; I mistrusted the journey of my beloved liegeman. Long did I pray thee that on no account shouldst thou confront that deadly guest, but let the SOUTH-DANES themselves decide their strife with GRENDEL. To GOD I give thanks that I am suffered to see thee safe".

BEOWULF spake forth, ECGTHEOW's son:

"Well known to many men, lord HYGELAC, is that mighty meeting, what a battle-time that was for GRENDEL and me in the place where he had wrought very many sorrows,

lasting misery for the VICTOR-SCYLDINGS. I avenged all that so that none of GRENDEL'S kin on earth can boast of that twilight battle-din—not he who shall live longest of the loathsome race, encompassed by fens. There came I first to the Ring Hall to greet HROTHGAR. After he knew the purpose of my mind the famous son of HEALFDENE straightway assigned me a seat by his own son. The company was joyous; never in my life have I seen under heaven's vault greater joy at mead among those who sit in Hall. At times the great Queen—the peace-bond of peoples—passed along throughout the Hall, cheered the spirits of the youths; often did she give a ring-band to a warrior ere she went to her seat. At times HROTHGAR'S daughter bore the ale cup before the nobles from end to end, she whom I heard the sitters in Hall name Freawaru as she gave the studded treasure-cup to the heroes".

THE EPISODE OF FREAWARU, DAUGHTER OF HROTHGAR AS RELATED BY BEOWULF

[Lines 2024–2069]

"YOUNG, gold-adorned, she is promised to the glad son of FRODA [INGELD]. This has seemed good to the Friend of Scyldings, Shepherd of the Kingdom, [HROTHGAR], and he accounts it good policy, that by means of that woman he may appease many deadly feuds and quarrels. Often it is, not seldom anywhere, that after a prince's fall the deadly spear lies idle but for a little while, good though the bride may be.

This then [for instance] may well displease the lord of the Heathobards [FRODA] and every thane of that people, when he goes to Hall with the lady, that his high lords should attend upon a noble son of the Danes on whom gleam—hard and ring-mailed, heirlooms of their fathers—the treasure of the Heathobards while they could still wield those weapons, until they led astray into the shield-play their dear companions and their own lives.

Then at the beer-drinking one who sees the treasure speaks—some old spear-warrior who remembers all—the spear death of men—grim is his mind! Sad at heart, he begins to test the spirit of the young warrior through the thought of his breast—to awaken war-fury—and he speaks this word: "Canst thou, my friend, recognize the sword which thy father bore into the fight under his battle-mask for the last time—the beloved iron!—

when Danes, brave Scyldings, slew him—were masters of the battlefield—when WITHERGYLD lay low after the fall of heroes? Now some son or other of those murderers walks here in Hall exulting in his trappings, boasts of the murder, and wears the adornments which of right thou shouldst possess." Thus with galling words he urges and reminds, time and again, until the time comes that for the deeds of his father the lady's thane, forfeiting his life, sleeps blood-stained after bite of sword. The other makes off thence, alive, for he knows the land well.

Then, on both sides, the oath of the chieftains is broken, when deadly hatred wells up in INGELD and his love of his wife becomes cooler because of overwhelming care.

Therefore, I account not the faith of the Heathobards, their share in the tribal-peace with the Danes unguileful, their friendship fast.

BEOWULF RESUMES HIS NARRATIVE

[Lines 2070-2151]

"I SHALL speak on again about GRENDEL, that thou mayest fully know, O Giver of treasure, to what issue came the grappling of champions. After heaven's gem glided over the earth the furious Demon came, the terrible Evening-enemy, to find us out, where, unharmed as yet, we guarded the Hall. For HONDSCIO there was battle impending, violent death for a doomed man! He, girded warrior, fell the first; for him, our famous kinsman-thane, GRENDEL was as a mouth-murderer; he devoured the beloved man's entire body! None the sooner for that would the bloody-toothed Slayer, bent on destruction, go out from the Gold-Hall empty handed, but, mighty in strength, he made trial of me, grappled me with eager hand. His pouch hung down, wide and wondrous, made fast with curious bands; it was all cunningly contrived with craft of devil and skin of dragon. He thought to put me in it, unsinning as I was, one of many—the dire doer of deeds! It might not so be when in my wrath I stood upright! Too long is it to tell how to this enemy of the people I paid a hand-reward for every evil. There, my lord, I honoured thy people by deeds! He got away, enjoyed the pleasure of life a little while, but his right hand marked his track at HEOROT and,

in woeful mood, he fell abject thence to the bottom of the mere.

"For that deadly struggle the Friend of Scyldings [HROTHGAR] largely rewarded me with beaten gold and many treasures when morning came and we had sat down to the feast. There was song and glee. The aged Scylding asking many things, told tales of old times. At times a warrior touched the harp, wood of mirth, singing the while a lay, true and sad; at times the large-hearted king would relate aright a strange tale; then, after a while, an old warrior, in the bonds of age, began to lament his youth, his battle-strength; his breast swelled within him as he, old in winters, called many things to mind.

"Thus did we take our pleasure therein all day long, until another night came unto men. Then, afterwards, GRENDEL'S mother was quickly ready for revenge; sorrowful she journeyed; death and the war-hate of the Weders had taken off her son. The woman-monster avenged her child; boldly slew a warrior; from ÆSCHERE, wise old counsellor, was life parted there. Nor when morning was come could the Danish people burn him, spent by death with fire, nor lay the beloved man on the funeral pile; she bore that body away in her fiendish clutch under the mountain stream. That was for HROTHGAR the bitterest sorrow of those which had long befallen the people's chieftain. Then the prince besought me by thy own life that I would do a deed of earl-ship in the whirl of waters, venture my life, achieve glory. He promised me reward.

"Then, as is widely known, I found the grim and grisly guardian of the depths of the surge. Awhile we were hand to hand there; the water welled up with blood, and in that deep hall I cut off the head of GRENDEL'S mother with a mighty sword. Not easily did I get away from there with life—I was not yet doomed!—but the Protector of warriors, son of HEALFDENE, afterwards gave me many treasures.

"Thus according to the customs lived the people's king; in no wise had I lacked rewards, the meed of might, but he, the son of HEALFDENE, gave me treasures at my own choice, which I will bring thee, O King of heroes, gladly offer. All favours still depend from thee; save thee, O HYGELAC, I have few near kinsmen."

IV

BEOWULF PRESENTS TO HYGELAC AND HYGD THE GIFTS OF HROTHGAR

[Lines 2152–2199]

THEN bade he bear in the boar, the head crest, the battle towering helm, the grey coat of mail, the splendid war-sword ; and uttered speech :

" To me did HROTHGAR, the wise prince, give this battle-gear ; bade me in express words that first I should tell thee of his favour. He said that King HIOROGAR, lord of the Scyldings, possessed it a long time ; yet would he not for all that give this breast armour to his son, brave HEOROWEARD, true though he was to him. Do thou enjoy it all well ".

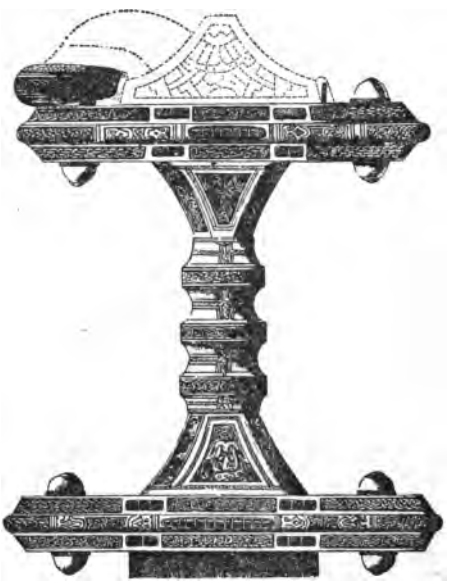
I heard that four dappled horses, exactly alike, followed the armour. He graciously gave into his possession horses and treasures. So shall a kinsman do—by no means weave a cunning net for another, prepare death with secret craft for a close comrade. To HYGELAC, brave in battle, his nephew was most loyal and each was mindful of the other's gain.

I heard that he gave to HYGD the neck ring, the curiously wrought wonder-treasure which WEALTHEOW, king's daughter, gave him, together with three slender, bright-saddled horses. Ever after that treasure-giving was her breast worthily adorned !

Thus bravely did ECGTHEOW's son bear himself, a man known in war and for good deeds ; he lived rightly ; never slew his hearth-companions when drunk ; no cruel mind was his, but he among mankind with greatest ability held fast the ample gifts which GOD had bestowed on him—brave warrior ! Long was he contemned while the sons of the Goths had not accounted him of worth, nor would the lord of the war-hosts do him much honour on the mead bench ; they strongly suspected that he was slack—an unpromising Atheling. A reversal of every slight came to the glory-blessed man !

Then the Protector of earls, war-famous king, bade fetch

in the gold-wrought heirloom of HRETHEL; there was not at that time among the Goths a greater treasure in the way of swords. That did he lay on BEOWULF's lap and gave him seven thousand [pieces of gold], a house and ruler's seat. To both of them alike in that nation there belonged inherited land, a home and hereditary right; to the other [HYGELAC] belonged the wide realm, and in that he was there the greater.



'There was not . . . a greater treasure in the way of swords"

PART III

NOTES

NOTES

Line 1812, page 122

A high souled man was that! 'The magnanimity of Beowulf is brought to light by his generous applause of the sword that had not served his need, and towards Unferth, of all men, whose nature was grudging of praise to others'—Earle.

Line 1826, page 122

Now do we seafarers, etc.: Compare with this the farewell of Æneas on parting with Helenus and Andromache in the *Æneid*, iii, 500.

Line 1861, page 123

The gannet's bath: 'ganotes baeth': "A just and beautiful designation which evinces a true observation of Nature. The gannet is a great diver, plunging down into the sea from a considerable height, such as forty feet, and therefore the sea is very graphically called 'the gannet's bath'".—Earle. This same epithet for the sea occurs twice in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* under the year 975, in the elegy upon King Edgar, and here, too, is another epithet for the sea, 'the whale's country', which reminds us of Beowulf's 'whale's road'. The passage in the *Chronicle* runs: 'And then was eke driven away the beloved hero Oslac from the land over the billows' roll, over the gannet's bath, hoary-locked hero, wise and eloquent, over the waters' throng, over the whale's country (hwaeles ethel), of home bereft'. And again: 'Over the gannet's bath kings remote, greatly honoured, to the king submitted'.

Line 1885, page 123

That was a king blameless in every way: This is in keeping with the whole pourtrayal of Hrothgar. He is a perfect king over a perfect court, exhibited in all the chief lights of circumstance—in prosperity, in adversity, and in the happiness of restored peace.

Line 1900, page 125

A sword bound with gold: a sword of which either the grip was bound with gold wire, or the scabbard banded with gold bands. Actual specimens exist of both.

Line 1905, page 125

Then a sail, one of the sea-cloths, was made fast, etc.: Earle compares the passage in the *Iliad*, i, 480–6: "They set up their mast and spread the white sails forth, and the wind filled the sail, and the dark wave sang loud about the stem as the ship made way and sped across the wave. . . . So, when they were come to the wide camp of the Achaians, they drew up their black ship to land high upon the sands". They are two notable sea pictures, these of the Greek and the Anglo-Saxon, and, as Earle says, can spring only from "the simple and true description of the incidents most prominent in the voyage and beaching of a ship in ancient times". And nearly fifteen hundred years separate the two authors! We miss, however, in Homer the endearing epithets for ships which are so remarkable in *Beowulf*.

Line 1926, page 125

Hygd: daughter of Haereth, and wife (? second wife) of Hygelac. The mention of her fine character suggests to the poet the episode of Thrytho, the violent queen of Offa, abruptly inserted for the sake of the contrast.

Line 1931, page 126

Thrytho wife of Offa (King of the Angles): "It is only in this Episode of Thrytho", says Professor Arnold, "that names occur which, though not directly referring to England or to natives of England, yet belonged to persons living in Anglen, between the Jutes and the Germans, whose descendants, there is every reason to believe, migrated to England towards the end of the sixth century". In the Mercian genealogy of 626, which ascends from Penda, the famous King of Mercia, to Woden, occur the names of Eomaer, Offa and Warmund (Garmund) mentioned in this passage of *Beowulf*. In the ancient poem *Widsith* this same Offa is mentioned as a king of the Angles, and he appears to have

reigned in the fifth century. A faint further light, says Arnold, is thrown on the story of Offa, as told in *Beowulf*, by the *Lives of the Two Offas*, a biography printed with the works of Matthew Paris. The earlier Offa is made the hero of wonderful adventures, with hardly a trace in them of historical substance. He met a maiden who became his queen under romantic circumstances ; she is gentle and good, and quite unlike the fierce Thrytho. But in the story of the second Offa, the historical Offa, son of Thingferth, Charlemagne's contemporary (758–796) we meet with the following story :—A woman of royal Frankish lineage, Drida by name, having committed a crime, is condemned to death, but on account of her high birth her life is spared, and she is put on board a boat without oars or sails, and sent adrift on the sea. The boat reaches the shores of England. Offa makes her his queen. Some years afterwards she murders the young Albert, king of East Anglia, who was about to marry her daughter.

The theory of many German critics is that the story of Thrytho, which belongs to the first Offa, has, by one of those shiftings which are incidental to folklore, been transferred to the second ; and that in Drida crossing the sea in an oarless boat and landing in the kingdom of Offa, king of Mercia, we have a distorted image of the real Thrytho, seeking Offa's court in Anglen 'over the dark waters', as told in *Beowulf*.

Line 1942, page 126

Peace-weaver : 'freothu-webbe' : "The queens and other noble women form quite an interesting feature in the poem. The men are fighters—rough and forceful ; it is to the women that refinement and delicacy belong. Their importance is well shown by the sketches of Wealtheow, Hygd, Hildeburg, and Thrytho. They were the 'Peace-weavers' by clever speech, by fitting gift, and gracious ministry. It was especially for them to know the etiquette of court, and one may well suppose their presence at the banquets to have had a softening influence".—Dr Clark Hall.

Line 1965, page 127

Treading . . . the wide shores : 'wide warothas' : The word *waroth*, for shore, occurs also in the earlier part of the poem when the Coast Warden rides down to meet

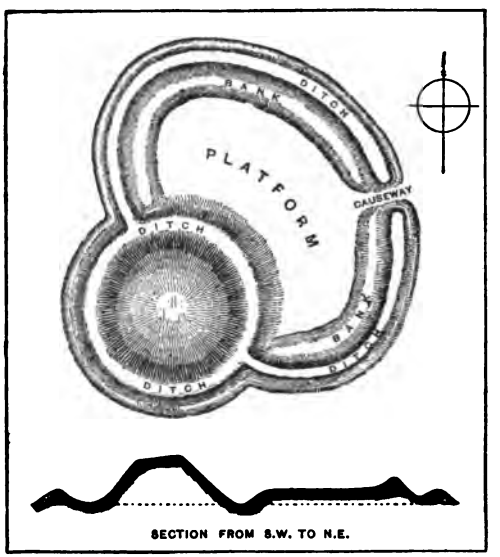
Beowulf's band. The word seems to have lingered in the language, for the shore in the parish of Wick St Lawrence, near Weston-super-Mare, is known as 'The Warth.'—Earle.

Line 1968, page 127

Ongentheow : His story appears more fully in the next part of the poem. See the Note on him there.

Line 1968, page 127

The Burgh of Hygelac : I have already given a summary of the evidence which would seem to locate Hygelac's chief



The Anglo-Saxon Burgh at Laughton-en-le-Morthen, Yorks

seat at Kongelf, on the Gota-Elf. In the passage describing Beowulf's landing on his native shore on his return from Denmark (lines 1920–30 and 1968) we have further details about the Burgh of Hygelac. It was 'not far' from the landing-place, it was 'hard by the sea wall'; there Hygelac 'dealt out treasure-rings within the burgh' and his young

wife Hygd 'had dwelt few winters under the locks of the burgh'—burh locan '—*i.e.* within the castle walls. We must not picture Hygelac's or Hrothgar's burghs as stone-built and battlemented mediæval castles, but as great earthworks surmounted by walls of earth and timber and surrounded by ditches. We have in England, at Laughton-en-le-Morthen, in Yorkshire, a very complete burgh of the eleventh century, complete, that is, as regards the earthworks and ditches, the whole of the timber buildings and walls having long ago disappeared. I give a plan and section of it from Mr G. T. Clark's *Mediæval Military Architecture in England*. Such a burgh as this, as regards its main features (although many centuries later in date than the period of *Beowulf*, and of the author of the poem) I believe the Northern burghs were from early historical times even down to the eleventh century.

On a much larger scale, and very much earlier in date, but still typical of the early Northern fortress, are the grand earthworks of Old Sarum in Wiltshire.

The construction of an Anglo-Saxon burgh is thus described by Mr G. T. Clark in the introductory part of his *Mediæval Military Architecture in England*:

"First was cast up a truncated cone of earth standing at its natural slope from twelve to even fifty or sixty feet in height. This mound, motte, or burh, the 'Mota' of our records, was formed from the contents of a broad and deep circumscribing ditch. Berkhampstead is a fine example of such a mound with the original ditch. . . . Connected with the mound is usually a Base Court or enclosure, sometimes circular, more commonly oval or horse-shoe shaped. This enclosure had also its bank and ditch on its outward faces, its rear resting on the ditch of the mound, and the area was often further strengthened by a bank along the crest of the scarp of the ditch. . . . On the whole, it is most usual to see the Mound on the edge of the Court, so that it forms part of the general enceinte of the place. . . . The Mound and Base Court, though the principal parts, were not always the whole work. Often there was on the outside of the Court and applied to it a second enclosure, also with its bank and ditch, frequently of larger area than the Main Court, though not so strongly defended. It was intended to shelter the flocks and herds of the tenants in case of an

attack. . . . The group of works of which the Mound was the principal feature constituted a Burh. The Burh was always fortified, and each inhabitant of the surrounding township was bound to aid in the repair of the works, almost always of timber, a material which the Saxons, like other German nations, appear usually to have preferred for building purposes to stone ".

Briefly described, then, the Burh was a ' moated mound with a table top, a Base Court, also moated, either appended to one side of it or within which it stands '. The Burh was generally the ' caput ' or centre of an estate. These mounds, where they have descended to us and have undergone no change at the hands of the Norman architect, are mere green hillocks, clear indeed in their simplicity, though having lost by time the sharpness of their profile, and more or less of their height and of the depth of their ditches. No masonry has ever been observed upon them which could by any possibility be attributed to their founders. It is evident, however, that the earthwork was only the support of some additional defence. On the mound was certainly a residence, and both its crest and base as well as the appended courts must have been encircled by some sort of barrier besides the earthbank. Upon a Burh or upon an artificial earthwork of any height masonry of any kind was obviously out of the question. Timber, and timber alone, was the proper material. Timber was always at hand. The Burh of which I give an illustration from Mr Clark's work, is that of Laughton-en-le-Morthen, in Yorkshire, which was the chief seat of Edwin, Earl of Mercia, Lord of Strafford Wopentake, and it is a typical specimen. We may imagine Hrothgar's and Hygelac's Burhs to have been of the same type, but probably much larger, as they were royal burghs moated with walls of earth and timber surmounting their earthern banks, and massive palisades surmounting the walls. Within the walls would be the timber-built dwelling-houses, the bowers or chambers of the king and queen and the whole court, the stables, etc., and a great timber-built tower would rise above all on the mound forming the citadel.

For those who wish to know further of the fortified places of the early centuries of our era, I would recommend a careful perusal of the first five chapters of M. Viollet le-duc's interesting work, *L'Histoire d'une Forteresse.*

Line 1972, page 127

To the Court : ' On worthig ' : "The word seems to have meant a farming settlement. The old name for Derby was ' North-weordig ' ".—Arnold.

Line 2022, page 128

Freawaru : Daughter of Hrothgar, the Danish king, married to Ingeld, son of Froda, king of the Heathobards, in order to assure peace between the two peoples, as told in the episode in lines 2020–69 of the poem. The mention of Freawaru by Beowulf, when he is narrating his adventures to Hygelac, after his return from Denmark, suggests to him this digression about her betrothal to Ingeld, of which he had heard at the Danish Court ; it is a digression in the nature of a prophecy. Dr Clark Hall thus summarizes it : Hrothgar thinks by the match between his daughter Freawaru, and Ingeld, the Heathobard, to put an end to the feud. Such schemes however, says Beowulf, often fail of their purpose. In this case, for instance, it would be natural that the Heathobards should have no friendly feelings towards the young and noble Danish courtier who attended upon Freawaru, and who wore armour captured in war from their ancestors. An old Heathobard warrior might draw the attention of Ingeld to the sword which the young Dane wore in Hall and remind him that it was the one with which his father, Froda, was slain. Thus he goads Ingeld, whose love for Freawaru grows cold, into avenging his father's death on the young courtier, notwithstanding the treaty between the Heathobards and Danes. So it cannot be expected that peace will last long between the two tribes.

" In this episode may be recognized the main features of the story of Ingellus, Starkad and the sons of Swerting, as sketched by Saxo Grammaticus (Book vi). The differences are accounted for by the great interval of time between the two versions. . . . In comparison with the laboured narrative of Saxo, the *Beowulf* version is primitive and probable. That an Anglo-Saxon poet, writing in the eighth century [say rather the seventh century], should show such knowledge of—such a warm interest in—the affairs of an obscure tribe (the Heathobards) once seated in the Danish

island of Zealand is surely, even if we suppose him to have had an original Old Norse poem before him, a most interesting fact. It points to a conclusion which the study of *Beowulf* fortifies in many other ways, that the Teutonic settlers of Britain, though established there for more than two centuries, had a far clearer and more affectionate consciousness of the ties which bound them to the kindred peoples on the Continent than the readers of Beda, Alcuin, or *The Saxon Chronicle* would be apt to suppose."—Arnold.

It is intimated in the poem that Hrothgar's great Hall of Heorot was doomed to destruction by fire (at lines 82 and 781). Professor Arnold thinks that this probably happened in this fighting between the Danes and Heathobards, and that soon afterwards Hrothgar died, and Hrothulf (Rolfkraka) founded Lejre, near to or on the site of the burned Hall, for, according to Saxo Grammaticus, Lejre was built and magnificently adorned by Hrothulf. The feud between the Heathobards and Danes is pronounced by the scholars Müllenhoff and Sarrazin to have been historical. The issue of the war seems to be told us in the poem *Widsith* (older than *Beowulf*): 'Hrothwulf and Hrothgar longest held peace together after they had expelled the race of Wickings, and had humbled Ingeld's sword and slaughtered at Heorot the host of the Heathobards'.

Line 2051, page 129

When Withergyld lay low: The MS. has 'wither gyld', and Herne renders 'when vengeance failed'. But we have Withergield as a proper name in the poem *Widsith* (at line 124) and it should probably be so here.

Line 2067, page 129

Therefore I account not the faith of the Heathobards: Later events justified Beowulf's suspicion, or, as it really is, a prophetic vision of the future, which the poet puts into his mind.

Line 2126, page 130

The funeral pile: 'bael': The word is still used in Scotland for a bonfire. Scott has it in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel:* 'On Penchryst glows a bale of fire'.

Line 2158, page 131

Heorogar : Elder brother of Hrothgar, king of the Danes, already mentioned in the first part of the poem as a leader of bands, *weoroda raeswa*, and Hrothgar mentions him as his predecessor in the ' treasure burg of heroes ' and as being a better man than he. Here Heorogar is again mentioned as bequeathing his armour to his brother Hrothgar and not to his son Heoroweard. By Hrothgar this Danish heirloom of fighting gear was presented to Beowulf, who, as a loyal thane, handed it over to his own over-lord, Hygelac, on the walls of whose great Hall no doubt it was hung.

Line 2177, page 131

Thus bravely did Ecgtheow's son bear himself : etc. : "This is the culminating point of Beowulf's youthful manhood, and it is characterized by appropriate marks. The combination of valour with gentleness which is the very ideal of the best age of chivalry is the first part of his character. Then it is observed that the greatness in him had long been unsuspected and he had passed for a very ordinary lad till things took a turn. Now comes the crowning ceremony of the poem, and, it may be added, a ceremony than which ancient kings had no greater distinction to bestow, the ceremony of presenting a sword of honour, which, in the present instance, is enhanced to the utmost by the historic quality of the blade ".—Earle. " The boy was at first slothful, and the Geats thought him an unwarlike prince and long despised him. Then, like many a lazy third son in the folk-tales, a change came ; he suddenly showed wonderful daring and was passionate for adventure ". —Stopford Brooke.

Line 2192, page 132

There was not at that time among the Goths a greater treasure in the way of swords : I am glad to be able to illustrate this passage with the reproduction of a sword, than which it may be said there is not a greater treasure in the way of swords in any of the Northern museums. It is figured by Professor Montelius in his *Civilization in Sweden*, and he says of it, and of the other splendid military antiquities found with it : " One of the most remarkable finds of this

period (fifth to eighth century) is one made in 1855 in a barrow at Ultuna near the river Fyris, south of Upsala. In this barrow were found the mouldering but yet visible remains of a large boat in which a man had been buried with his weapons and horses. . . . By the side of the unburned body lay a sword. The blade was of iron, and the beautiful hilt of gilded bronze with very graceful interlacing ornaments. Traces were also found of the wooden sheath and its gilded chape (metal end). There were, besides these, an iron helmet with a crest of silver-plated bronze, and the boss of a shield with beautiful bronze plating'. I have also used the pommel of this sword to illustrate the serpent-ornament spoken of at page 104.

Line 2195, page 132

And gave him seven thousand [pieces of gold]: The text reads 'and gave him seven of thousands'. Some commentators think the meaning is seven thousand hides of land. Earle renders: 'A vast Honour of seven thousand hides'. Others say that *sceattas* are meant, the sceat being one-fourth of a pening and one-twentieth of a scylling.

In the ancient Anglo-Saxon poem *Widsith*, so illuminative of *Beowulf*, to which I have so often referred, we read: 'And I was with Eormanric, all which time the Goths' king treated me well there. He, lord of burg-dwellers, gave me a treasure-ring, on which six hundred sceats of beaten gold were scored, in scillings reckoned'.

PART IV

PART IV

THE THIRD ADVENTURE: BEOWULF AND THE DRAGON

[Lines 2200–3182]

I

THE DRAGON AND THE TREASURE-HOARD

[Lines 2200–2354]

BEOWULF SUCCEEDS TO THE KINGDOM OF THE WEDER GOTHS AFTER THE DEATH OF HYGELAC AND HEARDRED

[Lines 2200–2208]

AFTERWARDS, in later days, it happened in the crash of battle, when HYGELAC had fallen and the war-swords were fatal to HEARDRED beneath the cover of his shield, when the War-Scylfings [Swedes], hardy war-wolves, sought him out among his fighting men, assailed with war the nephew of HERERIC [HEARDRED]—it was then that the wide realm came into the hand of BEOWULF.

THE HISTORY OF THE TREASURE-HOARD

[Lines 2209–2270]

HE held it well for fifty winters—an aged king he was, old guardian of the land—until a Certain One began to hold sway on dark nights—a Dragon, who kept watch over a hoard in a high burial mound, a steep stone hill; beneath it was a path unknown to man.

Into that place went a man, I know not who [here there are six imperfect lines, of which, however, enough remains to show that they described the plundering by the man of a precious cup from the hoard while the Dragon slept]. Nowise of his own free will and purpose did he seek out the abundance of the Dragon's hoard—he who brought sore trouble on himself—but from dire need he, the slave of some one of the sons of men, fled from vengeful blows, a homeless beggar, and blundered into it—a sin-perplexed soul. Soon it happened that dread terror seized upon the intruder [three more imperfect lines here]. While the terror held him he saw the treasure-cup.

There, in that earth-house, were many such treasures of old time as some man, I know not who, in days of yore, with thoughtful purpose had hidden there; the beloved possessions, the vast legacy of a noble race. Death had carried them all off in bygone times, and, at the last, the one of the peoples' chieftains who tarried there longest became gloomy at the loss of friends, hoped to live on for this—that he might enjoy for a little while the long possessed treasures. The mound stood there, ready to hand on the plain, near the ocean waves, hard by the headland, made safe by secret craft; into it then the treasure-owner bore a heavy share of the princely wealth of wrought gold, and said these few words:

'Hold thou, now, O earth—now that heroes may not—the possession of noble men. What! it was in thee that brave men found it of old; death in battle has taken them, cruel slaughter, every man of my people, who has yielded up this life;—they had seen joy in Hall! None have I to wield sword or to burnish gold-plated beaker, cherished drinking cup; the warrior-heroes are departed elsewhere. The hard helm, decked with gold, must be stripped of its adornment; they sleep who brightened it, they who had to burnish the battle-masks! And so the war-coat, which was proof against the bite of swords in battle, amid the crash of shields, moulders as doth the warrior; nor may the ringed mail make far journeys with the war-chief by the heroes' side! There is no joy of harp, no delight of the glee-wood; no good hawk swings through the Hall; no swift steed paws the castle yard! Bale of death has banished hence many of mankind!'—Thus, sad-hearted, he

Sepulchral Mound at Uby, Denmark

mourned his sorrows, sole survivor of all; wept, unhappy, by day and by night, until the surge of Death touched at his heart.

HOW THE DRAGON FOUND THE HOARD, AND HOW IT WAS ROBBED BY AN OUTLAW

[Lines 2271–2286]

THE old twilight-foe found the joy-giving hoard standing open, he who flaming haunts the barrows, the naked dragon-foe who flies by night, wrapped in flame; sorely do the land-dwellers dread him! It is his wont to seek out some hoard in the earth where, old in winters, he must guard heathen gold; nor is he a whit the better for it!

So for three hundred winters the scourge of the people held on earth one of the vast and rich treasure-houses, until a certain man turned his mood to wrath, bore away to his lord a gold-plated cup, and begged his lord for a covenant of peace. Then was the hoard plundered, the hoard of treasure-rings carried off; the boon was granted to the wretched man. The lord beheld for the first the ancient work of men.

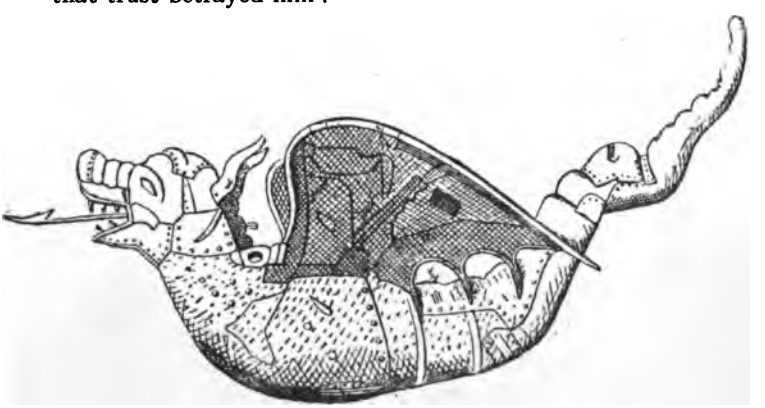
THE DRAGON'S VENGEANCE

[Lines 2287–2323]

WHEN the Dragon awoke strife was renewed; forthwith he sniffed along the stone; the stark-hearted one found the enemy's foot-tracks; in his stealthy craft he had gone on too near the Dragon's head. Thus may an undoomed man easily escape harm and banishment, one who retains the favour of the Almighty. The hoard-keeper searched eagerly along the ground; he wanted to find the man who had wrought him mischief in his sleep; hot and in raging mood he often circled all around outside the mound; no man was there on that waste. Yet did he rejoice in thought of conflict, in the work of battle; at times he turned back to the mound and sought for the treasure-cup; he soon discovered that some one of men folk had found out the

gold, the splendid treasures. The hoard-keeper waited impatiently until evening came; swollen with fury was the keeper of the mound; the loathly one wished to requite with fire the costly and beloved drinking cup. Then day departed as the Dragon wished; not long was he minded to abide within his rampart, but went flaming forth furnished with fire. Frightful to the people in the land was the beginning of it, even as it was quickly and sorely ended with their bounteous lord [BEOWULF].

Then began the fiend to spew forth coals of fire, to burn the bright dwellings; the fire-gleam stood out, a terror to men; the loathly air-flyer meant to leave nothing there alive. The Dragon's warfare was widely seen, the vengeance of the deadly foe far and near, how the destroyer hated and harmed the people of the Goths. Ere it was day he shot back to his hoard, his secret lordly hall, he had encompassed the land-folk with fire, with flame and burning, he put trust in his mound, his warfare and his rampart; that trust betrayed him!



BEOWULF'S MANSION IS DESTROYED—HE MAKES READY TO FIGHT THE DRAGON

[Lines 2324–2354]

THEN was the horror made known to BEOWULF speedily and truthfully that his own home, best of dwellings, the gift-seat of the Goths was melting away in fire-waves. That

was for the brave man a grief to his heart, greatest of mind-sorrows; the wise chief thought that against the ancient law he had sorely angered the Almighty, the Everlasting

"The gift-seat was melting away in fire-waves

Lord; his breast heaved within with gloomy thoughts as was not his wont. The Fire-drake had destroyed with flames the stronghold of the people, water washed from without, the earthern bulwark. For this the war-king, the lord of the Weders, devised vengeance. Then the Protector of warriors, Chief of earls, bade be made for him a wondrous battle-shield all of iron; well

he knew that wood of the forest could not help him—linden wood against flame! The ever-good prince was doomed to abide the end of the fleeting days of this world's life, and the Dragon with him, though he had long held the hoarded wealth. Then did the lord of rings scorn to seek out the Wide-flyer with a warrior-band, a numerous army; he dreaded not the combat for himself, nor did he account for aught the Dragon's fighting power, strength and courage, forasmuch as aforetime, daring in difficulty, he had passed through many contests, battle crashes, since he, victory-blessed hero, had purged HROTHGAR'S Hall and had grappled in war with the kin of GRENDEL, loathsome race.

II

A RETROSPECT OF BEOWULF'S LIFE SINCE HIS ADVENTURES IN DENMARK

THE DEATH OF HYGELAC AND HEARDRED

[Lines 2355–2396]

NOR was that the least of hand-to-hand encounters when they slew HYGELAC, what time the King of the Goths, kind lord of the people, son of HRETHEL, struck down by the sword in the rush of battle, died a bloody death in Friesland. Thence BEOWULF came off by his own craft, used his swimming-power; he had on his arm, he alone, thirty war equipments when he went down to the sea. The HETWARAS who bore shield over against him had no cause to exult in that fight on foot; few came away from that wolf of battle to visit their home! ECGTHEOW's son, wretched and alone, swam then over the expanse of waters back to his people. There HYGD offered him wealth and realm, the treasure-rings and the royal throne—she trusted not in the child [HEARDRED, the heir] that he could hold the ancestral seats against foreign bands now that HYGELAC was dead. Yet none the sooner might the bereaved people prevail with the prince on any conditions that he should become HEARDRED's lord or be willing to accept the kingdom. Nevertheless he upheld him among the people with friendly counsel, with kindness and honour, until he grew older and ruled the Weder-Goths.

(Heardred) Him did banished men from over the sea, the sons of OHTHERE [EANMUND and EADGILS] seek out; they had rebelled against the Protector of Scylfings [ONELA] the best of sea-kings who gave out treasure in Sweorice [Sweden]—a great prince. That was the limit [of his career] for him [HEARDRED]; he, the son of HYGELAC, destitute there, received the allotted death wound by stroke of sword [slain by ONELA]. And the son of ONGENTHEOW [ONELA] returned to his home after HEARDRED lay low and let BEOWULF hold the royal throne and rule over the Goths. That was a good king! In later days he [BEOWULF] was mindful

of retribution for the prince's downfall; he became a friend to the unhappy EADGILS, he supported the son of OHTHERE with an army over the wide sea—with warriors and with weapons. Afterwards he [EADGILS] wreaked his vengeance by cold and painful marches and deprived the king [ONELA] of life.

III

THE CHALLENGE

[Lines 2397–2565]

BEOWULF SETS OUT FOR THE DRAGON'S DEN

[Lines 2397–2416]

THUS had the son of ECGTHEOW [BEOWULF] come safe out of attacks from every quarter, fierce battles, heroic deeds, until that selfsame day when he must do battle with the Dragon. The lord of the Goths went then, swollen with rage, one of twelve, to look upon the Dragon; he had then learned whence the feud arose, that baleful hate for men—the famous treasure-cup had come into his keeping from the finder's hand. He who caused the beginning of that strife was the thirteenth man in that band; a sad heart had he; abject, he had to show the way to the spot. Against his will he went to where he knew of that earth chamber, the cavern under ground, near to the sea surge, the strife of waters, which was full within of ornaments of wrought work and wire work. The monstrous warder, a ready fighter, held the golden treasures under the earth. No easy bargain was it for any man to go in!

BEOWULF'S SPEECH BEFORE THE FIGHT

[Lines 2417–2537]

THEN the king, hardy in war, sat on the headland, while he, the gold-friend of the Goths, bade farewell to his hearth companions. Sad was his soul, restless and death-foreboding—close at hand the Fate which must greet the aged man, seek the treasure of his soul, part asunder life from body. Not for long then was the prince's soul enwrapped in flesh.

BEOWULF spake, ECGTHEOW's son:

"Many battle-rushes, many hours of strife did I pass

through in my youth ; I remember all that. I was seven winters old when the lord of treasures, the gracious friend of the people, King HRETHEL, took me from my father, maintained and retained me, gave me pay and food, was mindful of kinship. Never through life was I a whit more unpleasing to him as a retainer in his burgh than his own sons, HEREBEALD and HAETHCYN, or my HYGELAC. For the eldest born a murderous bed was unseemly strewn by a kinsman's deed, when HAETHCYN struck him down, his lord and friend, with a shaft from his bow of horn ; he missed the mark and shot down his kinsman—one brother the other —with bloody shaft. That was a deed of violence direfully done, past compensation—soul sickening ; yet for all that the prince had to depart from life unavenged. So sad is it for an old man to live to see his son swing in his youth on the gallows. Then may he utter a dirge, a doleful lay, while his son hangs for the benefit of the raven and he, old and stricken in years, cannot help him, do anything for him. Always, every morning, he is reminded of the passing away of his son ; he cares not to await another heir within his burgh when that one has made proof of his deeds through the compulsion of death. Careworn with sorrow he sees in his son's dwelling the Wine-hall lie waste, a resting-place for the winds, bereft of revelry ; the riders, the heroes, sleep in the grave ; no sound of harp is there, no pastime in the courts as once there was. Then he takes to his bed, sings a sad lay, the one in memory of the other. All seems too spacious for him—the fields and the homestead.

" Even so did the Protector of the Weders endure seething sorrow of heart on account of HEREBEALD ; in no wise could he avenge that feud upon the murderer ; none the sooner with hostile deeds could he treat the warrior as an enemy though he was not dear to him. Then, because of that sorrow which so sorely befel him, he gave up the joys of men ; he chose the light of GOD ; left to his sons, as a wealthy man does, land and the peoples' burg, when he departed from life.

" Then after HRETHEL died was sin and strife of Swedes and Goths over the wide water, mutual blame, the harsh hatred of armies ; and for them ONGENTHEOW's sons were keen and active amid the war hosts, did not wish to keep peace over the water, but often devised terrible and

treacherous inroads around HREOSNABURG. That, as was well known, my kinsmen friends avenged—the feud and the violence; though one of them bought it with his life—a hard bargain; to HAETHCYN, lord of the Goths, the war was fatal. But I heard that, in the morning, when ONGENTHEOW met with EAFOR, brother avenged brother upon the murderer with edge of sword; the battle helmet was split asunder; the aged Scylfing [ONGENTHEOW] fell pale in death; the hand remembered feuds enough—it withheld not the death-blow! I requited him [HYGELAC] the

"The embossed ornaments, breast-decorations

treasures that he had given me by fighting [for him] as it was granted me with my bright sword; he gave me land, a dwelling-place, home-joy. No need was there for him to seek among the Gifthas, or the Spear-Danes, or in the Swedish realm a worse warrior, purchase him with money. Ever for him would I be to the fore in the host, alone in the front, and so through life shall do battle while this sword lasts which has often served me early and late since in my valour I slew hand to hand DAEGHREFN, champion of the Hugas. He could not bring the embossed ornaments, breast-decorations, to the Frisian king, for he fell in the battle, the guardian of the ensign, a noble in valour; it

was not sword that slew him, but the war grip crushed the throbbing of his heart and his bones. Now shall the edge of the blade, the hand and the hard sword do battle for the Hoard ".

BEOWULF spake, uttered for the last time words of vaunting promise :

" I ventured on many battles in my youth ; once more will I, aged guardian of my people, go into the fight and do gloriously if the fell destroyer will come forth to me out of his earth chamber ".

Then did he greet each of the men, brave wearers of helmet, his close companions, for the last time :

" I would not bear sword or weapon against the Reptile if I knew how else against the monster I might with boast come to grips, as I did of old with GRENDEL ; but there I look for hot battle-fire, snorting and venom ; therefore have I upon me shield and coat of mail. I will not flee a foot's length from the Keeper of the Mound, but it shall be for us at the rampart as Fate [WYRD], the Allotter of every man, decrees for us. I am eager in mind so that I forbear boasting against the War-flyer. Await ye on the Mound, clad in your mail coats, ye men in your battle gear, which of us two can best survive wounds after the deadly onslaught. It is not your adventure, nor of any man, save mine alone, to measure strength with the monster, do deeds of earlship. I shall win the gold with valour ; or war, dread bane of life, shall take your lord ".

THE CHALLENGE

[Lines 2538–2565]

UP rose then, with his shield, the renowned champion, stern beneath his helmet ; he bore his battle-mail under the stony cliffs ; he trusted in the strength of a single man. Such is not a coward's way ! Then he, the great in virtues, who had survived very many combats and battle shocks, when armies clash together—saw by the rampart an arch of stone standing, from which a stream burst forth from the mound ; the surge of that stream was hot with deadly

fire ; near the Hoard he could not for any time survive the fire-stream unburned, because of the Dragon's flame. Then the lord of the Weder-Goths, bursting with rage as he was, let forth word out of his breast ; the stout heart stormed ; his voice, resounding battle-clear, went in under the hoary stone. Hate was aroused. The Hoard-Keeper recognized the speech of man. No more time was there to seek for peace ! First came forth out of the rock the monster's breath—hot battle-reek ; the earth resounded. Beneath the mound the hero, lord of Goths, swung his shield against his grisly guest ; then was the heart of the Ring-coiled-one incited to seek battle. Already had the brave war-king drawn his sword—ancient heirloom, not slow of edge ; in each of them, bent on destruction, there was terror at the other.

IV

THE FIGHT

[Lines 2566–2723]

THE FIRST ATTACK

[Lines 2566–2591]

STOUT-HEARTED, the Prince of friends stood to his upright shield, while the Reptile swiftly coiled himself together. He waited in his armour. Then the Flaming One, curved like a bow, began to advance, hastening to his fate. The shield well protected the life and body of the great prince for a shorter time than his hope had expected, if he at that time, early in the day (but as Fate did not will it) was to command victory in the fight. The lord of the Goths raised high his hand, stuck the grisly terror with the heirloom of ING, so that the burnished edge failed on the bone, bit less firmly than its warrior-king, hard pressed by dangers, had need of. Then was the Keeper of the mound, after that battle stroke, furious in spirit; threw out deadly fire; far and wide sprang the battle flames. Of victory the gold-friend of the Goths boasted not; the naked war-sword failed in the fight, as a prime blade should not have done. No pleasant journey was it that the great son of ECGTHEOW should have to leave the earth, against his will inhabit a dwelling elsewhere. So must every man give up allotted days!

BEOWULF'S MEN HANG BACK

[Lines 2592–2599]

IT was not long ere the fighters again closed. The Hoard-guardian took heart; his breast heaved with breathing once again. He who once ruled a people endured distress, encompassed by fire. In no wise did his own comrades, sons of athelings, stand around him in a band with battle-courage, but they fled into the wood—saved their lives!

WIGLAF TO THE RESCUE

[Lines 2600–2610]

IN one of them alone did his heart surge with sorrows. Never a whit can Kinship be turned aside in him who thinks aright! He was called WIGLAF, son of WEOHSTAN, a beloved shield-warrior, a lord of Scylfings, kinsman of ÆLFHERE. He saw his liege lord suffering heat beneath his battle-mask; then called he to mind the honour which he had bestowed upon him in time past, the rich dwelling-place of the Waegmundings, every folk-right as his father had possessed it. Then could he not forbear; his hand grasped the shield, the yellow linden wood, drew the ancient sword.

WIGLAF'S SWORD

[Lines 2611–2630]

KNOWN among men was that as the heirloom of EANMUND, son of OTHERE, of whom, when a friendless exile, WEOHSTAN was the slayer in fight with the sword's edge, and bore away from his kinsmen the burnished and varied helm, the ringed mail coat, the old Eotenish sword which ONELA had given him—his kinsman's battle-gear—a battle-outfit ready to his hand. He spake not about the feud although he (WEOHSTAN) had killed his brother's son. He held the treasures many years—sword and coal of mail—until his son could achieve earl-ship as his father had done before him. Then, when he passed away from life on his way hence, full of years, he gave him among the Goths war-gear of every kind without number.

That was the first time that the young warrior was to go through the rush of battle with his liege lord; nor did his heart melt, nor his kinsman's heirloom fail him in the strife. That the Dragon found when they had come together.

WIGLAF REBUKES THE COWARDS

[Lines 2631–2660]

WIGLAF spake many fitting words—his soul was sad; said he to his companions:

"I remember that time when we drank mead, when, in the beer-hall, we promised our lord, who gave us these rings, that we would repay him for these war equipments, helms and hard swords, if need such as this befel him. He who of his own will chose us among the host for this adventure reminded us of honour, and gave me these precious things, because he accounted us good spear-fighters, keen helm bearers, although he, our lord, shepherd of the people, purposed to achieve this mighty work alone, because he among men has done most famous exploits and desperate deeds.

"His kinsman's heirloom"

"Now is the day come that our liege lord has need of the might of good fighting men. Forward, then! let us go to help the war lord while the heat be, grim fiery terror. GOD knows it of me that I would much rather that fire should enwrap my body with my gold-giver. It is not becoming, methinks, that we should carry back our shields to our home unless we may first strike down the foe, shield the life of the lord of the Weders. Well I know that his old merits are not such that he alone of the nobles of the Goths should suffer sorrow, sink in the fight. For us two shall sword, and helm, coat of mail, and shield-defence be in common".

WIGLAF JOINS IN THE FIGHT

[Lines 2661–2668]

THEN through the deadly reek he waded, bore his battle-helm to his lord's aid, said these few words:

"Beloved BEOWULF, do thy best all round, as thou didst say of yore in thy youthful days that in thy life thou wouldst not let thy honour fade. Now, O Atheling of the single heart, famous for deeds, must thou defend thy life with all thy might! I will help thee."

THE DRAGON ATTACKS BOTH THE HEROES—BEOWULF RECEIVES A MORTAL WOUND

[Lines 2669–2693]

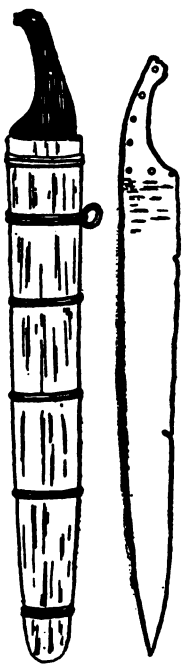
AFTER these words the Dragon, dread malignant monster, flashing with surging fire, came furiously on a second time to meet his enemies, those hated men. WIGLAF'S shield was burned up to the boss by the fire waves; the mail-coat could afford no aid to the youthful spear-fighter; but the young man went bravely on under his kinsman's shield when his own was destroyed by the flames. Then once more the war-king remembered his renown; struck with main strength with his battle-sword so that it stood fast in the head, driven in with hostile force. 'Naegling' snapped asunder—BEOWULF'S sword, ancient and grey-marked, failed in fight! It was not granted to him that edges of iron should help him in the strife. Too strong was the hand which, as I have heard, overtaxed every sword with its swing; it was no whit the better for him when he took into battle a weapon wondrous hard.

Then for the third time was the Destroyer of people, the dread Fire-drake, mindful of the feud, he rushed upon the hero, when he yielded room to him; hot and battle-fierce he enclosed his whole neck with his sharp teeth. He was all bloodied over with life gore; the war-sweat welled forth in streams.

WIGLAF AND BEOWULF SLAY THE DRAGON

[Lines 2694–2711]

THEN, as I have heard, in the need of the people's king the hero showed unceasing courage, skill, and keenness, as was natural to him; he heeded not the head — albeit the brave man's hand was burned while he helped his kinsman—but he struck the evil beast a little lower down — man-at-arms that he was!—so that the shining and gold-adorned sword plunged in, and the fire began to abate forthwith. Then, once more, the king himself got possession of his senses, drew the slaying-knife, keen and battle-sharp, which he wore on his coat-of-mail. The Weders' Protector cut through the Dragon in the middle.



They felled the foe: their might drove forth his life, and they two, the kinsmen-nobles, had then destroyed him. Such should a man be, a thane at need! That was for the prince the last of triumph-days: by his own deeds of his worldly work.

BEOWULF'S DEATH-WOUND

[Lines 2712–2723]

THEN the wound that the Earth-drake had just made upon him began to burn and swell; he soon found that deadly injury was welling venom from within. Then the Atheling went on until he sat, his mind still clear, on a seat by the rampart, looked on the work of giants, how the everlasting earth dwelling contained within stone arches, fast on pillars.

Him, then—the famous prince, bloody with battling, his friend and lord—the infinitely good thane bathed with his hands with water, battle-weary as he was, and unloosed his helm.

V

THE DEATH OF BEOWULF

[Lines 2724–2891]

HIS LAST WORDS AND HIS BEQUEST TO HIS PEOPLE

[Lines 2724–2751]

BEOWULF spoke—spoke after his hurt, the deadly livid wound. Full well he knew that he had lived through his days of earthly joy; that then all the number of his days had passed away; that death was nigh at hand:

"Now should I have wished to give to my son my war-gear, if it had been so granted me that any heir born of my body should come after me. Fifty winters have I ruled this people; no peoples'-king of those dwelling around, not any of them, durst meet me with his war-friends, oppress me with terror. In my home I abided time's shaping; held my own well; sought no treacherous quarrels nor swore many oaths unrightly. In all this, sick as I am with mortal wounds, I may have comfort, because the Ruler of men cannot upbraid me with the murder of kinsmén when my life parts from my body. Now go thou quickly, beloved WIGLAF, to view the Hoard beneath the hoary rock, now the Dragon lies low, sleeps, sorely wounded, bereft of treasure. Do thou make haste that I may see the ancient wealth, the golden possessions, may well survey the bright curious gems; that because of the treasure-wealth I may more calmly leave my life and lordship which I have long held".

WIGLAF GOES INTO THE MOUND—THE WONDERS OF THE TREASURE HOARD

[Lines 2752–2782]

THEN, as I have heard, after these words, the son of WEOHSTAN quickly obeyed his wounded, battle-sick lord, went in his ring-net, the woven battle shirt, under the roof of

the Mound. There, exulting in victory, the brave kinsman-thane, as he went by the seat, saw many treasure-jewels, glittering gold lying on the ground, wonders on the walls, and the den of the Dragon, the old Twilight-flyer; beakers standing, vessels of bygone men, wanting the furbisher, their adornments fallen away. There was many a helm, old and rusty, many an arm-ring curiously twined. Treasure, gold in the earth, may easily turn the head of any one of mankind, hide it who will! Likewise he saw, standing high over the Hoard, an ensign, all golden, greatest of hand-wrought wonders, riveted together with handcraft; from it there stood out a ray, so that he could see the floor, inspect the treasures throughout. No sign of the Dragon was there, for the sword had done away with him. Thus, as I have heard, one man rifled the Hoard in the Mound, the old work of giants; at his own will loaded into his lap cups and dishes; the ensign also he took, brightest of beacons, for the sword of the old lord (iron was its edge) had now scathed him who was a long while Keeper of the treasures. Hot for the Hoard, he waged terror of fire, fiercely surging at midnight, until he died by slaughter!

BEOWULF'S LAST WORDS, AND DEATH

[Lines 2783–2845]

THE messenger was in haste, eager to return, hurried forward by [the possession of] the precious objects; anxiety tormented him as to whether he, the high-minded one, should find the lord of the Weders alive in the open place where he had just left him exhausted. Then, bearing the treasures, he found the famous prince, his lord, bleeding, at the end of his life; again he began to sprinkle him with water until the beginning of a speech broke forth from the store-house of his bosom.

BEOWULF spake—in pain the aged one gazed upon the gold:

"I speak in words my thanks to the Ruler of all, the King of Glory, the Everlasting Lord, for the treasures which I here gaze upon, for that I have been able to win such things

for my people ere my death-day. Now that for the Hoard of treasure I have sold the laying-down of my old life, fulfil ye now the people's need ; here can I be no more. Bid the warlike brave raise a mound, bright with funeral fire at the headland of the sea ; it shall tower high on Whale's Ness as a memorial for my people, so that seafarers who drive tall ships from afar over the mists of ocean may call it in after time, ' BEOWULF'S MOUND '."

The brave-hearted prince took off from his neck the golden ring ; gave to the thane, the young spear-fighter, his gold-adorned helm, ring and coat-of-mail ; bade him use them well.

" Thou art the last remnant of our race of the Waegmundings. Fate has swept away all my kinsmen, earls in valour, to the appointed doom. I must after them ".

That was the old king's last word from the thoughts of his breast ere he sought the funeral pile, the hot, destroying flames. His soul departed from his bosom to seek the doom of the righteous.

THEN went it hard with the young man that he saw on the earth him whom he loved best, at the end of life, suffering miserably. His Destroyer, likewise, the terrible Earth-drake lay low, of life bereft, crushed down by ruin. No longer might the crook-bowed Reptile control treasure-hoards ; but iron edges, hard, battle-dinted legacies of the hammer had taken him off, so that the Wide-flyer, stilled by wounds, had fallen to earth near the Hoard-house. No more did he wheel sporting through the air at midnight, show his form, proud of his rich possessions ; but he fell to earth by the hand work of the war-chief. Indeed, as I have heard, this has thriven with few men in the world, possessing might though they were, daring in every deed, namely that they rushed against the breath of a poisonous destroyer or disturbed with hands a treasure chamber if they found the waking guardian dwelling in the Mound. By BEOWULF his share of lordly treasures was paid for with death. Both had reached the end of fleeting life.

THE COWARDS COME OUT—DEATH IS BETTER FOR EVERY MAN THAN A LIFE OF DISGRACE

[Lines 2846–2891]

It was not long after that the battle-laggards left the wood, unwarlike troth-breakers, ten of them together, who but now had not dared to brandish their spears in their liege-lord's great need; but now, in shame, they bore shields and war-gear to where the aged one lay. They looked upon Wiglaf. He sat wearied—he the active champion—near his lord's shoulder, refreshed him with water. It availed him nothing; could not keep life in the chieftain on earth, though well he wished it, nor change in aught the Almighty's will. GOD'S doom must needs rule the deeds of every man, even as now still it doth!

Then was a grim answer straightway forthcoming for those who had just lost their courage.

Wiglaf spoke, son of Weohstan:

"That, look you, may he say who wishes to speak truth—that the liege-lord who gave you those treasures, the battle gear that you stand in there, what time on the ale-bench he, the prince, often gave to his thanes, sitters in Hall, helm and coat of mail, to such as were the bravest that he might find anywhere, far or near—that he utterly, miserably, squandered the war-equipments when war overtook him. Nowise did the people's king need to boast of his comrades in arms! Yet did GOD, Ruler of Victories, grant to him that he,—he, alone, with his sword—should avenge himself when there was need to him of valour. Little life-defence could I give him in the conflict, and yet I attempted what was beyond my power—to help my kinsman. Whenever with my sword I struck the deadly foe he was the weaker for it; the fire gushed forth less fiercely from his head. Defenders too few thronged around their prince when his time came! Now shall receiving of treasure and gifts of swords, all rights of home and subsistence, cease from your kindred! Every man of your kin-burgh will have to wander deprived of land rights as soon as the Athelings shall hear from afar of your flight, your inglorious deed! Better is death for every one of noble birth than a life of shame!"

VI

THE MESSENGER OF DEATH

[Lines 2892–3030]

A WARRIOR IS SENT TO THE CAMP ON THE CLIFF

[Lines 2852–2910]

THEN he bade the battle-deed be made known at the Camp, up over the sea-cliff, where the shield-bearing band of nobles sat, sad at heart, the morning long, in expectation either of the death-day or the coming back of the beloved man.

Little did he keep silence of the new tidings who rode over the headland, but he said truthfully before them all:

"Now is the joy-giver of the people of the Weders, the lord of the Goths, fast in the bed of death, lies low in slaughter-rest by the Dragon's doings. Beside him lies his life-winner sick with knife wounds;—he could not in any way inflict a wound upon the monster with his sword. WIGLAF, son of WEOHSTAN, is sitting over BEOWULF—one hero over another lifeless one; keeps head-watch with weary heart over friend and foe".

THE MESSENGER'S FOREBODINGS OF MISFORTUNE

[Lines 2911–2921]

"Now is there likelihood of a time of war for the people, as soon as the king's fall becomes widely known among the Franks and the Frisians. There was cruel strife made against the Hugas what time HYGELAC came faring with a ship-army to Frisian land; there the Hetwaras vanquished him in battle bravely and with superior force; they brought to pass that the ring-mailed warrior had to bow down; he fell amid his host; no spoils did the prince give to his nobles. Ever since then the favour of the Merovingian has been denied to us.

THE MESSENGER RELATES THE EPISODE OF THE BATTLE OF RAVENSWOOD

[Lines 2922–3030]

"NOR do I anywise expect peace or faith from the Swedish people, for it was widely known that ONGENTHEOW deprived HAETHCYN, son of HRETHEL, of life, near the Raven's Wood, when the War-Scylfings in their pride first invaded the people of the Goths. Forthwith the aged father of OHTHERE [ONGENTHEOW], old and terrible, gave him a back stroke, slew the sea-king [HAETHCYN], freed the bride; the old man rescued his spouse, bereft of gold, the mother of ONELA and OHTHERE; and then followed his deadly foes until they escaped with difficulty into Raven's Wood, deprived of their lord. Then with a great army he [ONGENTHEOW] beset those whom the sword had left, wearied by their wounds; often the live-long night did he promise woe to the hapless band, said he would get them in the morning, some for the edge of the sword, some for the gallows-tree as a sport for the birds. With daybreak comfort afterwards came for the heavy-hearted ones when they heard the sound of HYGELAC'S horns and trumpets, when the hero came with the might of his people, marching on their track. Far and wide was the bloody path of Swedes and Goths seen—the deadly rush of men—how the people had stirred up the feud. Then the good chief [ONGENTHEOW] old and exceeding sad, went with his comrades to seek out a fastness, the lord ONGENTHEOW turned off towards higher ground; he had heard of HYGELAC'S warfare, of the proud one's war-craft; he trusted not in resistance, that he could withstand the seamen, defend treasure, children and bride from the ocean farers. The old man drew back thence under an earth-wall. Then was chase given to the Swedish people; the standards of HYGELAC moved forth over the peace-plain until the Hrethlings [the Goths] thronged up to the enclosure. There was ONGENTHEOW, the grey-haired, driven to bay with swords' edges, so that he, nation's king, had to submit to the doom of EOFOR alone. WULF, son of WONRED, angrily reached him with his weapon, so that at its swing the blood sprang forth from the veins beneath his hair. Yet was he not daunted—the aged Scylfing—but quickly paid back the deadly onslaught with a worse exchange, when he, the nation's king, turned upon him. The quick son of WONRED [EOFOR] could not give a return-blow to the old man, for he [ONGENTHEOW] had before cloven the helm on his head, so that, stained with blood, he had to bow; he fell to earth; yet was he not doomed, but he raised himself, though the wound had touched him close. Then the hardy thane of HYGELAC [EOFOR] let his broad blade—an old Eotenish

sword—and his giant-wrought helm break over the shield-wall where his brother lay. Then the king bowed down, the shepherd of the people was mortally stricken. Then were there many who bound up [the wounds of] his kinsman [WULF] raised him quickly up when the place was cleared for them so that they could control the battle-field. Meanwhile, the one warrior stripped the other, took from ONGENTHEOW his iron coat of mail, his strong-hillted sword, and his helm also; bore to HYGELAC the old man's armour. He received the war-gear, and honourably promised him rewards before his people, and even so performed; the lord of the Goths [HYGELAC], son of HRETHEL, when he came to his home requited to EOFOR and to WULF that battle-rush with very rich treasures, gave to each of them a hundred thousand in land and locked rings, nor did any man on Middle-earth need to reproach him for those rewards, since they had won glory in fight. And then he gave to EOFOR his only daughter for an adornment to his home, a pledge of favour.

"That is the feud and the enmity, the deadly hate of men, for which, as I have no doubt, the people of the Swedes will attack us as soon as they have learned our lord is lifeless, he who formerly upheld treasure and realm against enemies after the fall of heroes, brave Scyldings [*see* Note]; wrought the people's good and still further achieved earl-ship.

"Now we had best hasten to look upon the people's king there, and bring him, who gave us treasure-rings, on his way to the funeral-pyre. Nor shall a part only melt away [in the flames] with the brave one, for there is a hoard of treasures, untold gold grimly purchased; and now at the last he has bought treasure-rings with his own life; there shall the fire devour, the flames cover; no warrior shall wear ornament for memorial, no fair maid have on her neck a ring-gift in honour, but, sad at heart, bereft of gold, shall often, and not once only, tread alien land, now the army leader has laid aside laughter, sport, and the joy of song. Therefore shall many a spear, cold in the morning, be grasped by fingers raised in hand; no sound of harp wake the warrior, but the wan raven, eager over the death-doomed, shall have much to talk about—say to the eagle how he fared at the feast, when, with the wolf, he stripped the slain".

Thus did the brave youth keep telling hateful tidings; he erred not much in events or words.

VII

THE FUNERAL OF BEOWULF

[Lines 3031–3182]

THE WARRIOR BAND GOES TO THE SCENE OF THE FIGHT

[Lines 3031–3075]

ALL the band arose; sadly, with welling tears, they went beneath the Eagle's Ness to look upon the wonder. They found there, lifeless, on the sand, keeping his helpless bed, him who gave them treasure-rings in times gone by; gone then was the hero's last day in which the war-king, the Weder's lord, had died a wondrous death. First they saw there a more wondrous creature—the Dragon on the plain, lying there, loathsome, over against them. The Fire-drake, the grim horror, was scorched with flames. He was fifty foot-measures long as he lay. Awhile by night he possessed joy of the sky; then slanted down to visit his den; there he was, fast in death; he had enjoyed the last of earth-caves!

By him stood cups and flagons; dishes lay, and precious swords, rusty, eaten through, as if they had rested there, in earth's bosom, a thousand winters; for that immense heritage, the gold of bygone men, was encircled by enchantment, so that that treasure-hall no man might touch, save as GOD Himself, King of Victories, should grant to whom He would—He is the Guardian of men—to open the Hoard—even to such a man as seemed meet to Him.

Then was it evident that the way did not prosper for those who had unrightly hidden the treasure under the Mound. The keeper of it had at first slain some few; then the feud was wrathfully avenged.

It is ever a wonder when an earl, famous for courage, reaches the end of his destined days, when he may no longer occupy the Mead-hall with his kinsmen. So was it with BEOWULF when he sought out the Keeper of the Mound and deadly strife; he himself knew not through what his parting from the world was to happen! Thus the mighty princes who placed that [treasure] there laid a deep curse upon it until doomsday, that the man who plundered

that place should be guilty of sin, confined in idol-temples, fast in hell-bonds, punished with plague-spots. He (BEOWULF) was not gold-greedy; rather had he looked first for the favour of the Owner (GOD).

WIGLAF ADDRESSES THE BAND AND BEGINS THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE FUNERAL

[Lines 3076–3136]

WIGLAF spoke, son of WEOHSTAN:

"Often must many an earl suffer misery through the will of one, as has befallen us! We could not teach our dear prince, shepherd of the realm, any counsel, that he should not challenge the guardian of the gold but let him lie where he had long been—inhabit his dwelling till the world's end. He held to his high destiny—the Hoard is looked upon, grimly gotten! That boon was too strong that enticed the people's king thither!

"I was in there and looked it all over—the treasures of the chamber, when it was opened for me; not pleasantly was the passage permitted in under the earth wall! In haste I seized with my hands a great and mighty burden of Hoard-treasures, bore them out hither to my king; he was then still alive, wise and conscious. Very many things did the aged one say in anguish, and bade greet you, bade that you would build upon the place of the pyre a high mound, great and glorious, according to the deeds of your friend, as he was of men the worthiest warrior throughout the wide earth while he might enjoy wealth in the burg.

"Let us hasten now to see and to seek the heap of cunningly wrought treasures, the wonder beneath the Mound. I will guide you, so that you may see near enough the treasure-rings and broad gold.

"Let the bier be quickly made ready when we come out, and then let us bear our lord, beloved man, where he shall long tarry in the Almighty's keeping".

The son of WEOHSTAN, the hero bold in battle, commanded that orders be given to many warriors, owners of homes, that they should bring from afar, folk-owning men as they were, wood for the pyre to where the brave one lay:

"Now shall fire devour—what time the wan flame waxes

great—the strong one of warriors, him who oft awaited the iron-shower, when storm of arrows driven by strings flew over the shield wall; the shaft did its duty, eager with feather-gear it followed and helped the barb".

Forthwith the wise son of WEOHSTAN called forth from the band king's thanes, seven together, the best among them; went himself, the eighth, under the hostile roof; one of the warriors, who went in front, bore in his hand a fire brand. It was not then allotted who should despoil that Hoard, when the warriors saw any part of it remaining unguarded in the chamber, lying wasting away; little did any mourn that they were to bear out the costly treasures in all haste! Also they shoved the Dragon, the reptile, over the cliff wall, let the wave take him, the flood swallow up the Keeper of treasures.

There, laden on the waggon, was twisted gold of every kind past counting; and the Atheling borne, the hoary warrior, to Whale-Ness.

THE FUNERAL PYRE

[Lines 3137–3182]

FOR him then the people of the Goths prepared on the ground a firm funeral pyre, hung with helms, war-shields, bright coats of mail, as he had asked. Then in the midst the warriors, the heroes laid the great prince, their beloved lord, lamenting. The warrior then began to kindle on the hill the greatest of funeral pyre; the wood reek mounted up black above the burning pile, the roaring flame mingled with the sound of weeping when the tumult of the wind ceased until, glowing within, it had destroyed the corpse.

Sad at heart, care-laden in mind, they mourned their liege-lord's death. [Six mutilated lines follow, of which, however, enough remains to reconstruct the meaning as follows:—] Likewise the wife of aforetime, with hair bound up, sang a mournful lay for BEOWULF, often said that she sorely feared evil days for herself, much slaughter, terror of warriors, humiliation and captivity.

Heaven swallowed up the smoke; then the people of the Weders made a Mound on the cliff; high it was and broad, seen far and wide by seafarers, and for ten days they built the war-hero's beacon. The remains of the

burning they surrounded with a wall as skilled men could most worthily devise. In the mound they placed rings and jewels, all such adornments as the war-minded men had before taken from the Hoard. They left the treasure of earls to the earth to hold—the gold in the ground—where now it yet remains, as useless to men as it was before!

"Bid the warlike brave raise a mound at the headland of the sea'

Then around the funeral Mound rode twelve battle-brave Athelings, sons of earls; they would lament their [loss], mourn their king, utter the word-lay and speak of the hero. They praised his nobleness and greatly extolled his heroic deed.

So is it meet that man should praise his friend and lord with words, love him in heart, when he must fare forth from the fleeting body.

THUS DID THE PEOPLE OF THE GOTHS, COMPANIONS OF HIS HEARTH, MOURN THE FALL OF THEIR LORD; SAID THAT HE WAS A WORLD-KING, MILDEST OF MEN AND KINDEST; TO HIS PEOPLE MOST GRACIOUS, AND OF PRAISE MOST DESIROUS

PART IV

NOTES

NOTES

Line 2202, page 147

Heardred : son of Hygelac and Hygd. His reign, after the death of Hygelac, seems to have been a short one. He was slain by Onela, as is told later on.

Line 2209, page 147

He held it fifty winters : Hygelac was slain in his Frisian expedition about A.D. ~~515,~~ and if we assume three years as the duration of Heardred's reign, we shall get A.D. 568 as the approximate date of the death of Beowulf.

Line 2211, page 147

A Dragon who kept watch over a Hoard in a high burial Mound : From remote antiquity down to a comparatively recent period the belief in the existence of dragons was widespread, and with it was also the belief that the special function, and special pleasure of the dragon was to guard treasures. We have dragon and treasure in the ancient legends of Jason and the Golden Fleece and the Garden of the Hesperides. One of the latest writers on Monsters, Mr John Vinycomb, says of the dragon that, " long anterior to the dawn of civilization in the West of Europe, even in far-off China and Japan, in the extreme East of Asia, we find the dragon delineated in very much the same form in which it appears in heraldry. The ancients conceived it as the embodiment of malignant and destructive power, and with attributes of the most terrible kind. It is often argued that the monsters of tradition are but the personification of solar influences, storms, the desert wind, the great deeps, rivers inundating their banks, or other violent phenomena of Nature, and so no doubt they are, and have been ; but the strange fact remains that the same draconic form, with slight modifications, constantly appears as the type most dreaded ; and instead of melting into an abstraction and dying out of view, it has remained from age to age in form distinctly a ferocious flying reptile. It is surprising to find that the popular conception of the dragon—founded

on tradition, passed on through hundreds of generations—not only retains its identity, but bears a startling resemblance to the original antediluvian saurians whose fossil remains now come to light through geological research, almost proving the marvellous power of tradition and the veracity of those who passed it on". Mr Moncure Conway, in *Demonology, or Devil Lore*, says that "the opinion has steadily gained that the conventional dragon is the traditional form of some huge saurian. It has been suggested that some of those extinct saurians may have been contemporaneous with the earliest men, and that traditions of conflicts with them, transmitted orally and pictorially, have resulted in preserving their forms in fable proximately. We are told by Moses in Scripture of fiery serpents, and by Isaiah of a fiery flying serpent. Euripides described a dragon or snake breathing forth fire and slaughter—just as does our Beowulfine dragon of a thousand years later—and rowing its way with wings. Looking at the widespread belief in dragons there seems little doubt that the semi-myth of to-day is the traditional successor of a really once existent animal, whose huge size, snake-like appearance, and dangerous powers of offence made him so terrible that the earlier races of mankind adopted him unanimously as the most fearful embodiment of animal ferocity to be found".

I have spoken of the association of dragons with treasures and treasure-hoards and their peculiar propensity to assume the guardianship of such wealth. The writers on natural history, even down to the sixteenth century — Gesner, Aldrovandus, Topsell and others—speak of this, and perpetuate the ancient tradition, which at the time of the composition of the *Beowulf* was of course in full force. It is referred to in the version of the 'Lay of Sigemund' in the poem, where Sigemund (Siegfried in the later version) slays 'the Dragon, Keeper of the Hoard, under the grey rock'. In the *Völsunga Saga* we are told how Fafnir, having slain his father Hreidmar for the sake of the gold of Andvari's Hoard, begrudged any share in the wealth to any man and, having transformed himself into a vast Dragon, 'became the worst of Worms (*Wyrm* is Old English for serpent) and ever now lies brooding upon that treasure'. Topsell in his English version of the works of Gesner and Aldrovandus, says, in his account of the Dragon: 'The

Grecians call it *Drakos*; the derivation of the Greek word some think to be from *Derkein*, because of their vigilant eyesight, and therefore it is feigned that they had the custody not only of the Golden Fleece but also of many other treasures'.

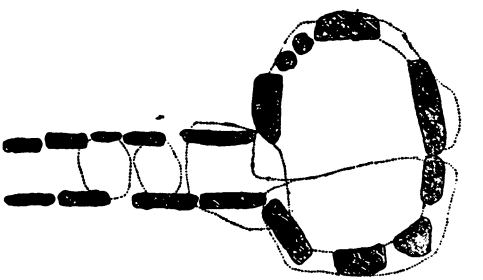
The old naturalists seem to have imagined several species of dragons—the simple serpent-form, with a sort of beard hanging beneath the jaws and with or without wings; a horned and winged dragon with two legs; and a more complete monster with wings, four legs, and barbed tongue and tail. It is the two-legged form—the 'Wyvern' of heraldry—that is used as the standard of Harold in the Bayeux Tapestry, and that was probably the kind of dragon in the mind of the poet of *Beowulf*.

One of the most interesting features of the Dragon episode in *Beowulf* is the selection by the monster of a funeral mound, evidently one of those great tumuli or barrows of the Stone Age, covering what are known as passage-graves, of which so many exist all over Europe, and of which there are some fine specimens in Beowulf's own country, the south-western part of Sweden, the districts of Vestergotland and of Bohuslan. 'In the name Bohuslan', says Professor Arnold in *Notes on Beowulf*, 'by which the coast province south of Gote-borg is known at the present day, some speculative minds have believed that the name of Beowulf is concealed. Holmberg, a Swedish writer, states that in this province, near Uddevalla, there is a ruined monastery called Dragsmark, and, not far off, a mountain called Skälberg, where, according to existing folklore, a dragon is perpetually on the watch guarding a silver bowl'.

But the den of the Beowulfine dragon is a passage-grave in a *sepulchral mound*—always an object of fear and a superstition to the people—near the sea, evidently one of those vast 'passage-graves', of which one of the most interesting is that at Uby in Denmark. The diameter of this remarkable relic of the Stone Age is 100 feet, and its height 14 feet. The sepulchral chamber is lined as usual with great slabs of stone, the spaces between which are filled with pebbles, and the roof is formed by two stones cut from a huge block; the chamber measures 13½ feet long, by 7½ feet high and wide; the entrance passage is 18 feet long, 2½ feet wide, and 5½ feet high. It is these passages,

to which allusion is made in the poem in the words (at line 2213) 'beneath it (*i.e.* beneath the Mound) was a path unknown to man'. It was explored later by Wiglaf and some of Beowulf's men.

Another remarkable grave, which illustrates still better the tumulus occupied by the Dragon in *Beowulf*, is the passage-grave on Axvalla Heath, near Lake Venern, in Vester-gotland, Sweden, Beowulf's own country where, it is interesting to know, there are many similar examples. It is, in fact, precisely in the district of Sweden where the final



Plan of a passage-grave near Falköping, West Gothland

scene of *Beowulf* is laid, that the examples of such sepulchral mounds as the one described in the poem as the Dragon's treasure-chamber, and that which was raised over Beowulf himself, are found in the greatest number and the best preservation—a circumstance which seems to show the familiarity of the author with the neighbourhood. The Axvalla grave-chamber is no less than 32 feet long, by 9 broad. In it the dead were found sitting along the walls, each within a stone cell. At Karlely, also in Vestergotland, is one of the largest of the passage-graves, the chamber being 52 feet long and the length of the passage 40 feet, with a height of 6 feet. The chamber contained sixty skeletons. The illustrations which I give of these great passage-graves, taken from Du Chaillu's *Viking Age* and Montelius, amply elucidate and explain every detail of the Dragon's den as described in *Beowulf*. It is a point of obvious importance which, strangely enough, has not been brought out by former editors of the poem.

Line 2231, page 148

There in that earth-house were many such treasures of old time, etc.: The passage, lines 2231 to 2270, is one of the most striking of the poem. The antiquity of the treasures deposited in the Mound by the last survivor of a noble race is more than once insisted upon, here and later, and the Mound itself, ready to hand, is more ancient still, the 'work of giants', as it is called later on in the poem. And here it is interesting to note that the great passage-graves of south-western Sweden are still called 'Giants' chambers'.

Line 2247, page 148

Hold thou now, O earth: This lament of the lonely survivor of his clan is hardly to be excelled in Anglo-Saxon poetry.

Line 2273, page 150

The naked dragon foe who flies by night wrapped in flame: Thus in Milton (*Samson Agonistes*, 1690):

> His fiery virtue roused
> From under ashes into sudden flame
> And, as an evening dragon, came.

and in Shakespeare:

> . . . this must be done with haste
> For night's swift dragons cut the clouds full fast.
> —*Midsummer Night's Dream*, III, ii.
>
> Inspire us with the spleen of fiery dragons.
> —*Richard III*, V, iii.
>
> Swift, swift, you dragons of the night!
> —*Cymbeline*, II, ii.
>
> . . . though I go alone
> Like to a lonely dragon, that his fen
> Makes feared and talked of more than seen.
> —*Coriolanus*, IV, i.
>
> Come not between the dragon and his wrath.
> —*King Lear*, I, i.

Line 2334, page 152

The stronghold of the people, water-washed from without: In a previous note I have referred to this passage. The text is 'leoda fæsten ea-lond utan', and the meaning is 'the

maritime frontage of the people's fastness'. We have in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, anno 897: 'Hie ne mehton Suth Seaxne lond utan berowan' ('They could not row round the land of the South Saxons').

Lines 2379–96, page 155

Him did banished men from over the sea the sons of Ohthere seek out, etc.: The sons of Ohthere (who was son of the Swedish king Ongentheow) were Eanmund and Eadgils. Commenting on the historical narrative in this passage Professor Wyatt says: "What is told of the brothers Eadgils and Eanmund in the poem, as in the case of the other allusions and episodes, must have been originally intended for hearers who were supposed to know all about them. For us the order and nature of the events referred to are sometimes by no means clear, especially when we can get little help from external sources. In this particular instance, however, it is not difficult to read between the lines and put together a complete story, and we have the Scandinavian accounts to help us. Eanmund and Eadgils are banished from Sweden for rebellion and take refuge at the court of the Geat [Gothic] King Heardred [son of Hygelac]. The fact of their finding an asylum with his hereditary foes seems to have so enraged the Swedish king, Onela [brother of Ohthere], their uncle, that he invades Geatland and slays Heardred, but allows Beowulf to succeed to Heardred's throne unmolested. Heardred is the second Geat [Gothic] king who had fallen by the hand of the Swedes [Haethcyn, brother of Hygelac, fell by the hand of Ongentheow as is told later] and Beowulf [their kinsman, and, by his mother, Ecgtheow, kinsman also to the Swedish dynasty] balances the feud by supporting Eadgils in his subsequent invasion of Sweden, in which Eadgils slew the king, his uncle Onela. This version of the story is confirmed by reference to the Norse accounts in which Athils (*i.e.* Eadgils) slays Ali (*i.e.* Onela) on the ice of Lake Wener.

Line 2383, page 155

Sweorice : the Swedish realm : rice (the 'c' is hard like 'k')—German, *reich*. The name of Sweden to this day is Svea-rike.

Line 2412, page 157

Full within of ornaments of wrought-work and wire-work : 'wraetta ond wira' : The wire-work here referred to is the filigree work, in which the Northern goldsmiths were most skilful. There are many examples in the museums of Stockholm and Copenhagen ; one of the most notable is the golden collar found in Oland, of which an illustration is given at page 39. It was in the Earlier Iron Age that the filigree work was at its best, and it is clearly to the ancient examples that our poet refers when speaking of the treasures stored in the barrow guarded by the Dragon.

Line 2434, page 158

My Hygelac : Note the affectionate loyalty of this 'my'.

Line 2460, page 158

Sings a sad lay, the one in memory of the other : 'an aefter anum' : Aefter—'in memory of'. We find this word used precisely in this sense in the Runic dedication of the great Cross at Bewcastle : 'This slender beacon of victory, Hwaetred, Wothgar, Olwfwolthu set up, in memory of Alchfrith ("aft Alchfrithu") once king, also son of Oswy'. The cross was set up in A.D. 670, and the Runic inscriptions upon it are the earliest known specimen of Anglian script. If, as is probable, the date of the composition of *Beowulf* is A.D. 660–680, we arrive at the interesting presumption that the sculptures and the script of that unique monument were contemporary with the composition of the earliest epic of the Germanic race.

Line 2472, page 158

Strife of Swedes and Goths over the wide water : The 'wide water' is that of the immense lakes Wener and Wetter, which lie between the territories of the two peoples.

Line 2577, page 163

The heirloom of Ing : The MS. reads 'incgelafe'. Some translators think the unknown word *incge* to be related to *icge*, gold, and hence 'costly', others render *incgelafe* 'by edge of the sword', or 'mighty sword'. Others again,

Thorpe for instance, read ' Incges lafe ', ' with Inge's relic ', and Mr Clark Hall renders it ' with Ing's heirloom '. The Danes are mentioned in the poem, lines 1044 and 1319, as Ingwine friends of Ing, Ingaevones. Ing was the first mythic king of the East Danes, ' the divine root of the Ynglings, as well as the Scyldings of the Angles, as well as of the Danes ', says Mr Stopford Brooke. It seems to me probable that the poet has in mind here one of the ancient treasure swords, given to Beowulf by the Danish king Hrothgar as a reward for his exploits against Grendel and the she-demon his mother, and with which the name of the mythic king might well be associated. Over and over again is the antiquity, the pedigree, so to speak, of swords mentioned in the poem as enhancing their value ; they are priceless relics and heirlooms.

Line 2602, page 164

Wiglaf son of Weohstan, a lord of Scylfings, kinsman of Ælfhere : Wiglaf was a Swede (Scylfing), nephew of Ecgtheow, Beowulf's mother, and therefore cousin of Beowulf. Both were descended from Waegmund. He is a fine example of the young noble of the times ; note especially his faithfulness and loyalty in an apparently hopeless situation, his impassioned denunciation of the cowardly followers and the severe penalties with which he threatened them. " For every true noble ", he says, " death is better than inglorious life ".

Line 2611, page 164

Wiglaf's sword : ' heirloom of Eanmund, son of Ohthere, of whom Weohstan was slayer ' : Here, in describing Wiglaf's sword, the poet gives us another incidental piece of history and genealogy. In the note on lines 2379–96, at page 188, I have referred to the banishment of Eanmund and his brother Eadgils from the court of Onela, the Swedish king. Here we learn that Eanmund was slain by Weohstan, father of Wiglaf, and stripped of the armour given him by Onela before his rebellion. At line 1558 of the poem the sword which Beowulf sees on the wall is described as an ancient Eotenish sword—' eald sweord eotenisc ' ; the very same epithet is given here to Wiglaf's sword, and we have it,

for the third time (line 2979) in a description of the sword with which Eofor slew Ongentheow. It would seem to mean gigantic, titanic, a work of the giants of old.

Line 2646, page 165

Now is the day come when our liege lord has need of the might of good fighting men : In this and the other speeches made by the gallant and loyal Wiglaf to the cowards, we are reminded of what Tacitus wrote in his *Germania* (ch. xiv): " When they go into battle it is a disgrace for the chief to be surpassed in valour, a disgrace for his followers not to equal the valour of their chief. And it is an infamy and a reproach for life to have survived the chief and returned from the field ".

Line 2680, page 166

' Naegling ' snapped asunder : ' Naegling ' is the name of Beowulf's sword, ' legacy of Ing '. The choice examples of the work of the ancient swordsmiths were, as we know from *Beowulf* and the Sagas, handed down from generation to generation, and their possessor gave them names. Here we have ' Naegling ', which means ' son of the nail ', from its driving like a nail into the enemy (?). Unferth's sword was ' Hrunting '. Sigurd's sword in the *Völsunga Saga* is ' Gram '. The epithet " grey-marked " in this passage refers, I think, to the *damascened* blade.

Line 2703, page 167

The knife keen and battle-sharp : This was the seax, a single-edged, heavy knife. I have given an illustration of actual specimens at page 167.

Line 2767, page 170

Standing high over the Hoard an ensign all golden, greatest of hand-wrought wonders, riveted together with hand craft : The words are : ' Segn eall-gylden, heah ofer horde, hond wundra maest, gelocen leodo-craeftum ' ; and they have been the cause of much perplexity to translators. The word Segn has been rendered by sign, ensign, banner, standard ; and gelocen leodo-craeftum by the following :—

with limb-craft belocked ;
wrought with hand craft ;
woven by skill of hand ;
locked by arts of song ;
woven with the power of charms ;
linked with lacets.

The simple translation is : " A sign all golden, high over the Hoard, greatest of hand-wonders locked with limb-craft ", and I do not see how any part of the phrase can apply to a banner or flag. It is, in fact, the rendering of the word ' segn ' in that sense that leads to the confusion. As I pointed out in my note upon the ' Segen gyldenne ', the ' golden sign ' erected over Scyld's body in the funeral ship (lines 47–48) the word ' segn ' means rather an emblem on a staff, like the Roman *insignia*, than a flag or banner, and though there the translation by flag or banner might perhaps be justified, it is, I think, out of the question in the present passage. A flag all golden is scarcely to be understood and the word *gelocen*—locked—seems to point most unmistakably to the art of the metal-smith. Further, we have on the Bewcastle cross this same word ' segn ', descriptive of a tall slender shaft surmounted by a cross, and the inscription was cut upon it about the very time that *Beowulf* was probably composed. I think, therefore, that the ' segn eall-gylden ' of this passage means an emblem of metal-work on a shaft, hand-wrought and riveted or fitted together ('gelocen ') by the skilful hand of the metal smith, and, as we are told immediately, glittering and sending out a ray (a strange thing in the case of a flag) which lighted up the gloom of the stone-built chamber of the Mound in which the ancient treasures were hoarded.

Line 2802, page 171

Bid the warlike brave raise a Mound . . . it shall tower high on Whale's Ness : This passage is among those which remind us of Homer. " The diction of *Beowulf* resembles in several points the Homeric ", Professor Arnold says, " in the paucity of articles, the descriptions of arms, houses clothes, etc., the delight in the mention of everything used by man ". And in these noble and simple words of the dying hero the Homeric note rings out again, that note

which sounds loudest and clearest perhaps whenever the sea and the sailor are in the poet's mind: 'It shall tower high on Whale's Ness as a memorial for my people, so that seafarers who drive tall ships from afar over the mists of ocean may call it in after time "Beowulf's Mound."' The scholar Grein believed the 'Whale's Ness' of *Beowulf* to be a small rocky island which is encircled by the stream of the northern branch of the Gota-Elf (river) near Kongelf, and he states that whales are not seldom seen off that point. The illustration at page 180 (from Du Chaillu's *Viking Age*) is of a sepulchral cairn in Bohuslan (Beowulf's country) the district richest in these memorials in all Sweden.

Line 2884, page 172

Now shall receiving of treasure . . . all rights of home . . . cease from your kindred: This phrase and that which follows are interesting as showing that the whole band are regarded as being of one clan. Tacitus wrote in his *Germania* (ch. vii) nearly five centuries before: 'What most stimulates their courage is that their squadrons or battalions instead of being formed by chance or by a fortuitous gathering are composed of families and clans'. Unfortunately in this instance the courage of Beowulf's men was not upheld by the thought of kinship or the common kin-burg ('maeg-burg'), with the consequence that they lost the land-right and were *ipse facto* degraded to the ranks of the Unfree, and that not only they but their whole 'maeg-burg' forfeited the rights of citizenship. The names of hundreds of towns and villages in England explain what a 'maeg burg', the 'burg of a kindred or clan' was. Reading, Barking, Roding, Eatington, etc., mean the settlement after the Anglo-Saxon conquest of Britain by the maegthas, or clans of the Raedingas, Barc-ingas, and Rodingas, and the town of the Eatingas.

Line 2890, page 172

Better is death, etc.: Tacitus says in *Germania* (ch. vi): 'To abandon their shields is the basest of crimes; nor may a man thus disgraced be present at the sacred rites, or enter their council; many indeed, after escaping from battle have ended their infamy with the halter'.

Line 2892, page 173

At the camp : 'to hagan' : 'Hagan' means haw, hedge, enclosure, and so, entrenchment. It means here the fortified enceinte of the burg of Beowulf, probably great earthworks surmounted by timber walls and towers, and encircled by deep ditches.

Lines 2900–3027, page 173

Now is there likelihood, etc. : This part of the messenger's speech, from here to the end, is for some reason pronounced by some commentators to be an interpolation ; but, says Professor P. Fahlbeck, 'Why must there never occur anything in an ancient poem that we should now count a mistake in point of form ?', and he insists upon the perfectly historical character in regard to Sweden of the matters introduced as narrative.

Lines 2922, etc., page 174

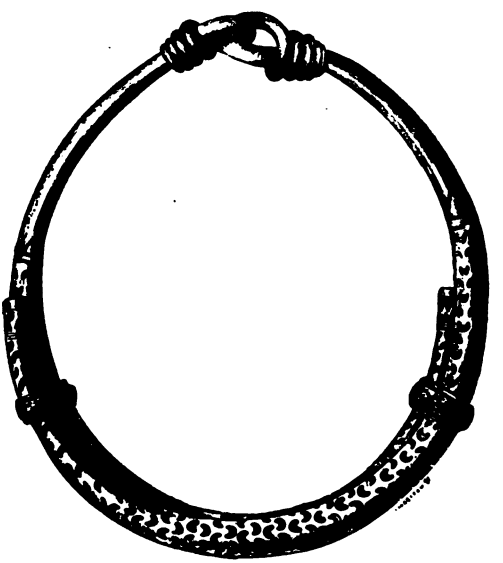
Battle of Ravenswood : The early strife between the Swedes and Goths which centres round the name of Ongentheow has been told before in lines 2472 and following (page 158), and is now told again more fully. In retaliation for the marauding invasions of Onela and Ohthere, sons of Ongentheow, Haethcyn, brother of Hygelac, invades Sweden and takes Ongentheow's queen (conjectured to be the Queen Elan of the restored line 62 of the poem) prisoner. Ongentheow in turn invades the country of the Goths, slays Haethcyn, rescues his wife, and drives the Goths into the Raven's Wood. Hygelac, however, comes to their relief, and Ongentheow entrenches himself under an earth wall. 'Here', says Earle, 'we distinctly see the living use of those green and silent hill forts which are so familiar to the explorer of English soil'. The entrenched position of Ongentheow in Gothland, though probably hastily constructed (unless, indeed, there was an existing ancient hill-fort in the neighbourhood in which he found refuge) was no doubt similar to our 'green and silent' examples. The Goths under Hygelac assaulted the position, carried it by storm, and Ongentheow fell by the hand of Eofor, son of Wonred, afterwards son-in-law of Hygelac.

Line 2959, page 174

Over the peace-plain : 'freotho-wong' : This is a puzzling expression. What was the peace-plain or peace-field? Does it mean the open space to be traversed before the attacking army reached the earthwork and palisade of Ongentheow, or is it the proper name of some well-known field : the 'Field of Peace'?

Line 2995, page 175

Locked rings : 'locenra beaga' : The primary meaning of 'lucan' (whence 'locenra') is to 'lock', and so 'interlock', and 'weave'. What 'locked rings' can mean is hard to understand unless some such collar of gold as is



shown in the accompanying illustration is intended. It was found in Södermanland, the district west of Stockholm and south of the Mälar Lake. Montelius, speaking of the gold ornaments (of the period of the poem) says : 'A glance at the beautiful golden ornaments of the Later Iron Age

preserved in the National Museum (Stockholm) is enough to show how rich in gold Sweden must then have been. Gold rings of about 2 lb. in weight or more have often been found. The largest hoard of gold yet found in Sweden, and one of the largest ever found in the whole of Europe, was that discovered in 1774, at Thureholm, in Södermanland, near Trosa. The hoard altogether weighed more than 27 lb. We have still preserved from it, in the National Museum, a large and beautiful collar of fine gold weighing 2 lb. 3 oz'. It is the collar here figured as a 'locked ring'. Possibly, however, 'locenra' may mean interlocked or twisted, and in that case there are many actual specimens in the Northern Museum to answer the description.

Line 3005, page 175

After the fall of heroes brave Scyldings: The word in the MS. is *Scyldingas*. The whole line is a repetition of line 2052, and it is difficult to understand what it means. Many translators omit it in their translations. This may be a case where the meaning, hidden from us, may have been quite intelligible to the hearers of the poem when it was recited.

Line 3016, page 175

No fair maid have on her neck a ring gift: No fair maid—'ne maegth scyne': *scyne* is 'sheen,' well-formed, beautiful. It is the Dutch *schoon* and German *schön*. We find the word used, as here in *Beowulf*, in the mediæval romance of *Ipomydon*, line 2126: 'With me went my mayden shene'.

Line 3052, page 177

Encircled by enchantment: 'galdre bewunden': Enchantment, says Earle, supplied a mechanism to Romantic poetry somewhat as the intrigues and contentions of Olympian gods had done in the Greek epic. Gibbon has described in his narrative of the funerals of Alaric the Goth and Attila the Hun the extraordinary pains taken to prevent the despoiling of sepulchral treasures.

Line 3072, page 178

Confined in idol temples: hergum, from *herh, hearh*—temple. The word is extant probably in the place-name, Harrow.

Line 3169, page 180

Then around the funeral Mound rode twelve battle-brave Athelings: So at the funeral of Attila: 'His body was solemnly exposed in the midst of the plain under a silken pavilion, and the chosen squadrons of the Huns wheeling round in measured evolutions chanted a funeral song to the memory of a hero, glorious in his life, invincible in his death, the father of his people, the scourge of his enemies, and the terror of the world'.—Gibbon, ch. xxxv. The death and funeral of Attila are described by Jornandes in the forty-ninth chapter of his *History of the Goths*.

Line 3180, page 180

Said that he was a world-king, etc.: Professor Earle draws attention to the eulogy of Lancelot, at the close of Mallory's *Morte d'Arthur*, which, he says, seems like an expansion of these closing lines of the *Beowulf*: 'There thou liest, thou that wert never matched of earthly knight's hand; and thou wert the courtliest knight that ever bare shield . . . and thou wert the kindest man that ever strake with sword . . . and the sternest knight to thy mortal foe that ever put spear in rest'.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

THE FIGHT AT FINN'S BURGH

IN the Archiepiscopal Library of Lambeth there once existed a single leaf of parchment upon which was written a portion of an Anglo-Saxon poem. The leaf, once, no doubt, part of a volume which contained an entire poem, did duty as the cover of a volume of MS. Homilies. It was discovered by Dr George Hickes, Dean of Worcester (the famous Non-juror, who was deprived of his deanery in 1689), and published by him in his great work—'that stupendous monument of learning and industry'—the *Linguarum Veterum Septentrionalium Thesaurus*—(the *Treasury of the Ancient Northern Languages*) 1705—in which is also found the first mention of the existence of the manuscript of *Beowulf*.

The Lambeth fragment consisted of forty-six entire and two mutilated lines of an Anglo-Saxon poem relating to the Fight at the Burgh of Finn, King of the Frisians, during the feud which ensued in consequence of the carrying off by Finn of the Danish princess Hildeburh; and it is evidently part of a Finn Saga of which the Episode of Finn in *Beowulf* (lines 1068–1159) is another part. It describes how Hnaef, the Dane, and sixty of his warriors defended themselves in a Hall against the attack of Finn. Thus it belongs to the first part of the Saga, before Hnaef had fallen and the leadership of the Danes had devolved upon Hengest. The episode in *Beowulf* deals with the latter part of the story. It is probable that the Lambeth fragment was part of the very Saga of which the author of *Beowulf* thus made use.

'There was no doubt a Finn Saga', says Stopford Brooke, 'sung all over the coasts of the Northern Sea, with many stories built into it, and some of these may have been, in variant forms, carried on into later Sagas. I do not think that this English fragment is a part of this larger Saga, but that it is a separate Lay, of which we have lost the beginning and the end'. Ten Brink says on this point that this epic fragment belongs with *Beowulf* to the

Saga-cycle of the North and Baltic Coast region. Stopford Brooke says it is much of the same date as the early lays of *Beowulf*.

Unfortunately, the precious fragment exists no longer, for at some time after Hickes had seen and copied it, the volume of which it formed part was sent to be rebound, and, owing to the incredible ignorance or carelessness of those who were responsible, the fragment disappeared; 'it probably perished', says Thorpe, 'under the hands of an ignorant workman in rebinding the volume', and, he might have added, in consequence of absence of all instructions to preserve it. But that was a time in which, save Hickes himself and a few others, no one cared about the ancient literature of England. Had the Lambeth fragment been portion of an ancient transcript of some Greek or Latin classic it would, no doubt, have been preserved with the greatest reverence. As it is, Hickes's transcript is the only form in which it survives, and, as printed in the *Thesaurus*, it contains many errors, whether of the ancient scribe or Hickes's copyist it is impossible to decide. But it is matter for thankfulness that we have it at all, 'a happy fortune', as Stopford Brooke says, 'which has selected so vigorous and picturesque an episode for preservation . . . and we ought to have some pride when we think that verse of this direct and passionate character was written by men of our own race so many years ago. . . . It is but the outline of a story, but it is of that quality in the events which is capable of fresh development as singer after singer took up the theme. The situations are passionate, and every singer could refit them as he pleased and create new ones'. In his *Early English Literature*, Bernhard Ten Brink says: 'The fragment takes us into the midst of the struggle at Finn's Burgh, whose issue and results are related in *Beowulf*. The narrative is extraordinarily poetical, vigorous and animated'.

An adequate translation of this grand battle song can hardly be arrived at. The errors in the printed text of Hickes are many, and the obscurities great. I have used the text given by Mr Wyatt as an Appendix to his edition of *Beowulf* (Cambridge University Press) 1901. He has no fewer than sixteen variations from the text of Hickes.

THE FIGHT AT FINN'S BURGH

The fragment begins with the half line

' . . . . . nas byrna naefre '.

which Wyatt restores [hor] nas byrnad naefre ? making it the end of a question, asked by presumably one of the persons in the Hall, in which were Hnaef, Hengest, and their Danes in the Burgh of Finn, about to be surprised and besieged by Finn and his Frisian warriors, and probably to be translated :

' [These] are never gable-horns burning ? '

The poem then goes on :

Then spake out the King [(?) Hnaef] young in war :

' No dawning is this from the east, nor here does any dragon fly, nor here do the gable-horns of this Hall burn ; but they are carrying forth the boar-crest ; the birds [of battle—(?) the ravens] sing ; the grey garment [the ringed shirt of mail] clashes ; the war-wood rattles ; shield answers to shaft ! Now shines the moon full beneath the welkin ; now evil deeds arise which will give shape to the hatred of this people. But awake ye now, my warriors ! take hold of your shields, think on hero-deeds, fight in the forefront, be stout of heart ! '

Then arose many a gold-laden thane, girded him with his sword. Then to the doors went the noble warriors, Sigeferth and Eaha, drew their swords ; and at the other doors Ordlaf and Guthlaf, and Hengest himself—he strode in their footsteps. Then, further Garulf urged Guthere that he should not at the first attack bear so noble a life to the Hall doors in arms, now that a man hardy in war was minded to take it. But he, brave of mood, asked openly over all : ' Who held the door ? '

' Sigeferth is my name ', quoth he, ' I am lord of the Secgas, a rover widely known ; many woes have I endured, hard battles. For thee is still here decreed whatever thou thyself dost seek upon me ! '

Then in the Hall there was din of deadly slaughter ; the hollow shield, the bone protector, was to split in heroes' hands. The burgh-floor resounded, till in the fight Garulf lay prone, he, the first of all the earth-dwellers, Guthlaf's

son; and around him many brave men . . . the raven wandered, swart and sallow-brown; the sword-gleam stood out, as though all Finn's Burgh were on fire! Never have I heard of sixty victor-heroes bearing themselves better, more worthily, in strife of men; nor ever youths better paying for the sweet mead than did his house carles yield their due to Hnaef. They fought five days, and of their followers fell not one; but they held the doors.

Then the hero went, going his way, wounded. He said that his mail-coat was torn—his war-garb unavailing—and his helm also pierced.

Then quickly the shepherd of the people asked him how the warriors were surviving their wounds, or which of the youths . . . . . .

NOTES

Line 39, page 203

Around him many brave men: 'ymbe hyne godra fela': After these words, those that follow stand in Hickes' transcript thus: 'Hwaerflacra hraer hraefen', which are unintelligible. There have been emendations and corrections and guesses at their meaning. The latest edition by Adolf Socin of the text as given by Moritz Heyne (1903) reads 'Hwearf [f]lacra hraew hraefen', and the translation given in the glossary is 'der unstete Rabe kreiste um die Leichen' ('the restless raven circled around the corpses').

I have not attempted a reading or a translation.

Line 7, page 204

But they held the doors: Stopford Brooke says: 'The few lines which follow seem to tell that their chief was at last wounded to the death. But no name is here mentioned, and we should not have known what happened were it not for the singer (in *Beowulf*) in Hrothgar's Hall [see pp. 35–6]. He has taken up the story at the very point where the fragment of *The Fight at Finn's Burgh* drops it. We hear that it was Hnaef who was slain, and that Hengest, succeeding him, fought on till nearly all the men of Finn were

slain, among them Finn's sons by Hildeburh. It is a tragic position such as is frequent in these Northern stories, and the woman dominates it. Hildeburh has lost her brother Hnaef at her husband's hands, and she has lost her sons, who had fought against her brother. Peace is made between Hengest and Finn, pledges and blood-money taken; but the central point of passion in the singer's song is the grief of Hildeburh and the burning on one pyre of her brother's body with that of her son '.

EDITIONS AND TRANSLATIONS

EDITIONS AND TRANSLATIONS

In its various homes, in presumably almost perfect condition before 1731, and in scorched and charred condition after that date, the unique manuscript of *Beowulf* lay awaiting an editor. When at last an editor came he was, appropriately enough, a native of the Land of the Sagas, an Icelander.

The Editio Princeps of *Beowulf*, printed at Copenhagen in 1815, is entitled :—

'De Danorum Rebus Gestis Secul III. and IV. Poema Danicum Dialecto Anglosaxonica ex Bibliotheca Cottoniana Musaei Britannici edidit versione lat. et indicibus auxit Grim. Johnson Thorkelin, Dr J. V.' [And then follow his many titles and honours].

It is dedicated to Johann de Bülow, whom Thorkelin addresses as 'Mæcenas optime'. The whole poem is printed, with a Latin translation, in parallel columns. Thorkelin's theory as to the poem was that it was an Anglo-Saxon translation, made in the time of King Alfred, from an ancient Danish original, by a poet who was contemporary with his heroes in the third and fourth centuries. J. M. Kemble, when, twenty years later, he was preparing an edition of the poem, made some severe comments on Thorkelin's efforts. 'I am most reluctantly compelled to state', he says, 'that not five lines of Thorkelin's edition can be found in succession in which some gross fault, either in the transcript or the translation, does not betray the editor's utter ignorance of the Anglo-Saxon language'. The critical apparatus for the knowledge of the text of *Beowulf*—thanks again mainly to *foreign* scholars—was more complete in Kemble's time, and these remarks are rather harsh. Professor Earle, in our own time, is more generous: 'Enough for us now to say that in the present state of our knowledge (1892) this First Edition is chiefly valuable as a historical monument and a literary curiosity'. The real and abiding influence which Thorkelin's work exercised was in inspiring others with a desire to study the poem of *Beowulf*.

GRUNDTVIG'S EDITION

PROFESSOR EARLE gives the following interesting account of the next editor and edition of *Beowulf* after that of Thorkelin in 1815:—'The work of elucidating the new discovery fell next to the lot of Pastor Grundtvig (of Copenhagen, afterwards a Bishop). As soon as the poem was published he addressed himself to the study of it, and in the same year (1815) produced a series of critiques which appeared in a periodical called *The Copenhagen Sketch-Book*, and among the rest a poetical translation of the Prologue. Grundtvig's work divided the learned world of Copenhagen into two hostile camps. It is touching at this date (1892), when time has quieted the agitation, to take a glance back at the extinct volcanoes of those passions which then blazed round the *Beowulf*. Thorkelin was furious against the young and daring pretender, and as for the shipping of Scyld's dead body off to sea (in the Prologue of the Poem) as it appeared in Grundtvig's lines he pronounced it all mere invention and a gratuitous fabrication of the translator's own. [Thorkelin completely missed the whole meaning of Scyld's Sea-Funeral—one of the most striking and interesting passages of the Poem.] But when Privy Councillor Bülow, the Mecænas of that time, saw Grundtvig's work, he thought otherwise. He at once made liberal proposals to the ardent young scholar, and induced him to devote himself to this poem with a view to produce a complete poetical version of it in the Danish language. The generous action of this eminent personage played an important part in the early history of our poem. Now, again, it was the munificence of Bülow that procured for this mysterious text its second exploration'.

Grundtvig says in the preface to his translation, which appeared at Copenhagen in 1820 under the title of 'Bjowulfs Drape—a Gothic Hero-Poem of a Thousand Years ago from the Anglo-Saxon into Danish Rhyme:—'I owed it to the Danish nobleman, who opposed the prevailing clamour and honoured me with his sympathy, to justify his favourable opinion by every means in my power. So I set myself to the study of Anglo-Saxon as if I would qualify myself for Professor in that language, and my task proceeded but

slowly. Indeed it was a work of time. I often grew weary though without a thought of giving up—hold out I must until I had exhausted all the sources of instruction to which I had access '.

Here, then, was the spirit and the temper of the true scholar. In our own days, as Professor Earle says, it is comparatively easy to master this poem, ' but the facilities which now exist for the student have been almost all provided since the days of Grundtvig, and those facilities are due in no small degree to the labours and suggestions of this undaunted scholar. Grundtvig's Anglo-Saxon library was to our present apprehension ludicrously inadequate. Yet with constant study of such limited and imperfect sources he accomplished wonders. By means of the faulty *Beowulf* text of Thorkelin, aided by the generally trustworthy text of Junius's *Caedmon*, already printed in Grundtvig's time, he made himself so effectively master of the old poetic language as to correct Thorkelin in a large number of places, and his emendations were often in the very words and forms of the Manuscript which he had never seen. It was to his patient eye that many of the *dramatis personæ* first became visible. . . . When in later years Grundtvig visited England and was hospitably welcomed at Oxford, his emendations were talked of with the effect of making scholars who had been nurtured upon foreign classics begin to wonder whether there might not be more in the treasury of their own mother tongue than they had hitherto apprehended '

SHARON TURNER. 1807–1823

In the first edition of his *History of the Anglo-Saxons* (1799–1805) Sharon Turner speaks of the volume ' Vitellius A.XV.' of the Cottonian Library as containing ' the most interesting remains of the Anglo-Saxon poetry which time has suffered to reach us ', and he refers to Wanley's mention of it (just one hundred years before) as describing the wars of one Beowulf, a Dane, against the reguli of Sweden. ' But this account ', he says, ' of the contents of the Manuscript is incorrect ; it is a composition more curious and important. It is a narration of the attempt of Beowulf to

wreck (wreak) the faehthe or deadly feud on Hrothgar for a homicide which he had committed' (!)—a description wider of the mark than Wanley's. But in the fourth edition of his *History* (1823) Sharon Turner had become better acquainted with the poem, and translates (to the best of his ability) considerable portions of it. He says of the poem that its author in several places speaks as if he had been a contemporary of the events he describes, but that this may be considered as a poetical licence, especially if it be historically true that Beowulf fell in Jutland in the year 340. Saxo Grammaticus, the Danish historian, has identified Beowulf to his own satisfaction with the Bous, son of Odin, who fell in battle about that date, and Suhm, another Danish historian, Thorkelin, and Sharon Turner followed suit. Neither Sharon Turner nor his predecessors were familiar with the *poetical* diction of Anglo-Saxon, although more at home in the prose, and thus their versions of *Beowulf* are full of inaccuracies.

J. J. CONYBEARE. 1826

THE next English translator and commentator was the Rev J. J. Conybeare, Professor of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford, who produced in 1826 a volume of *Illustrations of Anglo-Saxon Poetry*. He translated portions of the poem into English blank verse, connected by a summary of the narrative, and gave also the original text of his verse extracts, with a translation in Latin. Conybeare's estimate of 'the singular and interesting poem', as he calls it, shows that appreciation of it was spreading among scholars. As a specimen of language and composition, he says, as a picture of manners and opinions, and in some measure even as a historical document, it possesses claims upon the notice of the scholar and the antiquary far beyond those which can be advanced by any other relique hitherto discovered of the same age and description. He thinks that 'it is as an antiquarian document that *Beowulf* has the most indisputable claim upon our attention', and he hopes that someone competent to the task might be induced to republish the whole in such a manner as to render it fully accessible to the general reader.

J. M. KEMBLE. 1833–1837

THE wish was shortly realized, for in 1833 J. M. Kemble brought out the first English edition of the complete text of *Beowulf*, with a preface and a glossary. Kemble was one of the first exponents of comparative philology, and did much to throw light upon the study of the Anglo-Saxon language, and particularly of the poetical language, an adequate knowledge of which was lacking in his predecessors. In the preface to his edition of 1833 he makes a minute inquiry into the place and date of the poem, and the nationality of Beowulf. His conclusion is that the original poem was 'shaped upon Angle legends, celebrates an Angle hero, and was in all probability both written in Angeln [now Schleswig-Holstein, the original seat of the English] and brought hither by some of the earliest Anglo-Saxon chieftains who settled upon our shores'. In the preface to the translation of the poem issued in one volume in 1837, Kemble refers to his first preface accompanying the text as having rested on a false basis. 'With an insight expanded by a far more close acquaintance with the mystic history of the North', he says, 'I cannot suffer the erroneous views developed in my preface to continue as my recorded opinion uncorrected and unrefuted'—an honest and straightforward declaration worthy of a gentleman and a scholar. This 1837 volume of Kemble's is a landmark in the literary history of *Beowulf*; 'it lifted the study of it into its modern era, and its glossary', says Professor Earle, 'became the chief luminary of Anglo-Saxon poetry, and continued so to be until it was superseded by Grein's *Sprachschatz*, which took Kemble's work for its base and starting-point'. Kemble's translation, he says, is a literal one. 'I was bound to give word for word the original in all its roughness'. Since Kemble's time the close and earnest study of the text, and increasing familiarity with Anglo-Saxon poetical diction and the application of comparative philology have made clearer passages which even he was not able fully to understand, but his translation was not only the first to give a full idea of the poem, but remains still the standard translation for simplicity and directness. 'I might have made it smoother', he says, 'but I purposely avoided doing so, because had the Saxo-

poet thought as we think and expressed his thoughts as we express our thoughts, I might have spared myself the trouble of editing or translating his poem '.

The English and American translations of *Beowulf* since Kemble's time are as follows :—

A. D. WACKERBARTH, Professor of Anglo-Saxon at the College of Our Ladye of Oscott. Ballad Measures. 1849.

B. THORPE. Literal, line for line. 1855.

THOMAS ARNOLD, of University College, Oxford. Prose. 1876.

Lieut.-Col. H. W. LUMSDEN. Ballad measures. 1881.

J. M. GARNETT, formerly Professor of English Language and Literature in the University of Virginia. Literal, line for line. 1882.

Rev. JOHN EARLE, Rawlinsonian Professor of Anglo-Saxon in the University of Oxford. Prose. 1892.

J. LESSLIE HALL, late Professor in the College of William and Mary, U.S. Imitative measures. 1892.

WILLIAM MORRIS and A. J. WYATT. Imitative measures. 1895.

J. R. CLARK HALL. Prose. 1901.

C. B. TINKER, Yale University, U.S. Prose. 1902.

Besides his translation Mr Thomas Arnold published in 1898 a small but valuable volume entitled *Notes on Beowulf*. This, and his translation, and the translation by J. R. Clark Hall represent, perhaps, the high-water mark among English scholars in the study of the poem. The publication by the Early English Text Society in 1882 of the complete Facsimile of the Manuscript of *Beowulf*, edited by Professor Julius Zupitza, to which I have already referred, had a most important effect in promoting the study of the poem. In 1894 Mr A. J. Wyatt produced his edition of the text, issued by the Cambridge University Press, and in 1898 a second and corrected edition, reprinted in 1901.

CONTINENTAL EDITORS AND COMMENTATORS

SHORTLY after the publication of Kemble's translation, German scholars were more and more attracted to the study of *Beowulf*. It was Professor Massmann of Munich,

indeed, who first directed the attention of Kemble himself to *Beowulf*, but now a long succession of German critics and scholars took it up. Professor Leo of Halle was the first, in 1839, and his conclusions were that the poem originated in Angeln, the old home of the English [Schleswig-Holstein], that it was composed about A.D. 580, and transplanted to Britain with the latest of the settlers who left Angeln, and it is for that reason that the poem is so well preserved, having been so early detached from the soil of its growth. It became fixed, like the Northern Sagas in Iceland. After Leo came Ettmüller, of Zurich, the first translator of *Beowulf* into German, and the first to set the fashion, a thoroughly German fashion, of looking upon *Beowulf* not as an organic whole composed by a single poet, but as separate lays which in process of time were combined into one whole. Then came C. W. M. Grein, of Cassell, 1857–1867, with his monumental *Bibliothek der Angelsächsischen Poesie* and *Sprachsatz* (Glossary) *der Angelsächsischen Dichter*. Grein came to the conclusion that *Beowulf* as we have it is the connected work of a single poet, an opinion which was fiercely combated by Lachmann and Müllenhof. Additions to our knowledge of the poem were provided by the studies of Grundtvig, Schaldemose (Danes), Dietrich of Marburg, Bugge of Christiania, Ronning (another Dane), Ten Brink, Simrock, M. Heyne, Moeller, Müllenhoff, Rieger, Sievers, Sarrazin, A. Holder, and, in quite recent years, by Schuecking, Paul Vogt, Trautman, and others. *Beowulf* has indeed been a most prolific subject of scholarship, and from time to time of squabbling, on the Continent, the main ground of contention, in which Müllenhoff was the leading spirit, being the authorship of the poem. Professor Earle has summarized the matter for us in the introduction to his own edition. 'Long ingrained notions', he says, 'about the fortuitous growth of Epics, grounded upon the authority of Wolff and Lachmann, had prepared in the German learned mind a welcome for the *Beowulf*, and at the same time a foregone sentence upon the nature of its composition. That great works in early literature were not made by art and device, but that they grew spontaneously and blindly—this was that imagination in the air which attended the first entertainment of *Beowulf* in the Fatherland . . . to me it appears entirely

fanciful and artificial, the product of a mind [Müllenhoff's] possessed with intense devotion for a venerable theory which had hardened into an inveterate scholastic dogma. But all this straining after the impossible has been useful for the elucidation of the text in so far as zeal for theory has wonderfully sharpened the keen eye of observation . . . the chief value of Müllenhoff's work lies in his occasional and incidental contributions to the elucidation of the poem '.

The principal foreign translations of the poem are the following :—

F. S. GRUNDTVIG. First Danish translation, or rather, paraphrase. 1822.

L. ETTÜMLLER. First German translation. Imitative measures. 1840.

F. SCHALDEMOSE. Second Danish translation. Literal. 1851.

C. W. M. GREIN. Second German translation. Imitative measures. Still the standard literal translation in Germany. 1857.

K. SIMROCK. Third German translation. Imitative measures. 1859.

MORITZ HEYNE. Fourth German translation. Unrhymed iambics. 1863.

L. BOTKINE. First French translation. Prose. 1877.

G. GRION. First Italian translation. Imitative measures. 1883.

R. WICKBERG. First Swedish translation. Imitative measures. 1889.

L. SIMONS. First Dutch translation. Iambic Pentameter. 1896.

PRINTED BY M'LAREN AND CO., LTD., EDINBURGH

. BEOWULF

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