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UNIFORM WITH BEOWULF

THE SONG OF ROLAND

Done into English in the Original Measure by

CHARLES SCOTT MONCRIEFF

With an Introduction by G. K. CHESTERTON and a Note on
Technique by GEORGE SAINTSBURY.

(Second Impression).

SOME CRITICAL OPINIONS.

Mr. Frederic Harrison, in *The Fortnightly Review*: "I take a lively interest in the new translation of the grand mediæval Epic—*Chanson de Roland*. . . . It is a bold and successful venture. . . . I advise all who care for mediæval history and for primitive epics to study the original side by side with Captain Scott Moncrieff's translation."

Mr. Edmund Gosse, C.B., in *The Sunday Times*: "There have in the past been made efforts to render the *Song of Roland* into English, but they have not hitherto been very successful. . . . Captain Scott Moncrieff has approached this rough epic in exactly the right spirit; having read his version carefully, and having accustomed my ear to his treatment of the assonance, I feel that his success is very considerable indeed."

Mr. G. K. Chesterton ("At the Sign of the World's End") in *The New Witness*: "The horn of Roland, unlike the horns of elfland, really does roll from soul to soul, and grow for ever and for ever. The enthusiasm of a rising and very critical critic like Mr. Scott Moncrieff is a type of its renewal. There is something of immortal moment about that image of the king and his court riding home in triumph, and hearing from the dark pass behind them the dreadful note of doom. Indeed, it is very like our present position; when our rulers are supposed to have triumphed and made peace, and through the chorus of praise come wild unaccountable voices from Poland and Italy, and the intolerable irony of Ireland. However it be explained or applied, there remains arrested for ever the pageant of that halted march."

Mr. James Douglas, in *The Star* and in *The Nottingham Journal*: "The war has bred many poets, and now it has bestowed upon us a noble translation of a noble poem, a translation which is itself a fresh grace and glory of our English tongue. . . . Knowing nothing of the Song, as I read this translation I felt like Keats

as he read Chapman's "Homer." It was like a door opening and letting out great music. . . . Not being a great scholar like Professor Saintsbury, I can bestow on this translation only the praise of instinctive delight in a masterpiece of English—a thing comparable with FitzGerald's "Omar" or Urquhart's "Rabelais." It has the savour of genius in its marvellous resurrection of a lost time and a forgotten faith. . . . If a poetry be a means of escape from the petty dust of one's environment, surely this thing is a liberation and enlargement. Our day will pass, and men will see the heroic element in it to which we are blind. I can imagine a scholar a hundred years hence citing this translation as a proof that our soldiers were heroic."

Professor Robert Nichols, in *The Observer*: "So adequate is Captain Scott Moncrieff's translation that it can but take its place with the classics in this sort—with Florio's "Montaigne," Fitzgerald's "Omar," Watts-cum-Pusey's "St. Augustine," Urquhart's "Rabelais," and Burton's "Arabian Nights." The work has that considerable accuracy with the maximum of the original flavour which amounts to a recreation, and which alone makes a translation worthy of the text translated. Such a recreation is in all cases an uncommon feat; in this case it amounts to a triumph."

B.S., in *The Manchester Guardian*: "There are other translations of the "Chanson de Roland," of course, but we doubt if they have been widely read. The virtue of Captain Moncrieff's version is that it popularises for us one of those great works literature which contain and summarise an epoch. No one who once fairly begins to read his "Song of Roland" will want to put the book down till he has finished it. This is perhaps the most remarkable aspect of a very remarkable achievement."

H.O., in *The Athenæum*: "Our author revels in the battle-pieces, the vigour of which has surely never been surpassed; he can be tender at the right moment; nor does he ever miss the spirit of pure religious faith and the fervent note of patriotism that inform the whole."

The Tablet: "We feel that the translation will prove most useful to those who may be teaching English literature or history in our Catholic schools. . . . The Catholic atmosphere of the poem, its Catholic setting, and its religious feeling can be grasped only by one who still professes the same faith."

The Christian Science Monitor: "'The Song of Roland' is one of the greatest pagan epics, if not the greatest, in the world's literature. It is full of every splendid nobleness to which humanity is heir, except that particular nobleness which was taught and practised by the Founder of Christianity. . . ."

"There can be little but praise for the way in which Captain Scott Moncrieff has carried out the superlatively difficult task of rendering the great epic into English. The combination of rugged dignity and breathless speed which is characteristic of the original has been reproduced with astonishing success."

The Saturday Westminster Gazette: "We cannot commend the experiment. . . . The book is the most literal translation that we know. It is not poetry."

The Pall Mall Gazette: "The experiment, we think, is a real success. It is only a true craftsman who can handle such a thing and be judged not to have dimmed its brightness."

The Liverpool Post: "The reviewer's first feeling was one of vain regret—'How useful this might have been to me once!' And one still feels . . . that the work will prove mainly useful for educational purposes, or, if one prefers to put it so, as an undergraduate's crib."

The Times Literary Supplement: "'The Chanson de Roland' is 'abrupt and barbarous'; if its effect as a poem is to be felt in English the translation, while keeping faithfully to the meaning, must reproduce the abruptness and barbarity of the French *laissez*. That is what Mr. Moncrieff, unlike the other translators of this poem, has done. . . ."

"The enthusiasm, the flash of one poet catching almost intuitively the emotion of another long dead, the thrill of reading an intelligent transcript of a great poem—these are the valuable things in this book."

The Morning Post: "We took up this volume with a certain sense of disappointment. It seemed to us that Captain Scott Moncrieff might have given us a more modern epic . . . not of Roland, but of Tommy Atkins. But our ingratitude was short-lived. . . ."

"This Song not only sings of triumph, but is in itself a wonderful triumph for our mother tongue."

The Glasgow Herald: "The blessing of Mr. Saintsbury . . . should suffice the most scholarly. For ourselves, we can imagine no finer gift for the right kind of boy. Every noble element of romance leaps into life in the tale of the fight and the horn-blowing, and no braver teaching will be found in mortal story than in the last meeting of Roland and Oliver."

"Peter Bell," in *Land and Water*: "To have translated this work is to have performed a service to English readers; and to have translated it in the original measure with so much success as here is to have achieved a notable feat of dexterity."

Country Life: "Captain Scott Moncrieff writes from the very heart and centre of his theme. . . . 'A version done divinely well' we may surely call this, in the words that Tennyson applied to Fitzgerald's 'Omar.'"

The Nation: "Captain Moncrieff met the 'Chanson de Roland' by accident, but it was really a pre-determined conjunction of affinities, a translator's Roland for the original's Oliver, so wonderfully do these twin literary spirits match each other. That explains the translator's 'word for word'; he had no other alternative, but we can imagine what a hash of it an equally gifted man of letters—who was not Captain Moncrieff

—would have made of it. As it is, we have the singular and indeed unique pleasure of reading this grand old epic not so very differently as its contemporaries heard it sung to them by the *jongleurs*.

“It is indeed good work, rough as an uncut diamond, but full of pathos and fierce power.”

The Cambridge Magazine (largest circulation of any University Weekly in Great Britain): “Warriors have, as a rule, expressed such a horror of war poems!”

John O’London’s Weekly: “Fame is a queer thing.”

The London Mercury (in a review of four pages): “Epics need so many particular and favourable circumstances for their production that they are scarce and highly individual, and every literature ought to have a sufficient rendering of each of them. Mr. Scott Moncrieff . . . has produced a fine original English poem, and one can safely assert that he has also reproduced the spirit of the original, because the poem’s characteristics which he derives from the original, the social system implied, the psychology and general treatment harmonise excellently with the characteristics which are due to himself, namely, the spirit and dress of the verse which he has employed.

“Mr. Moncrieff proposes, by using M. Léon Gautier’s final edition of the ‘Song of Roland,’ to increase the poem by some four hundred lines. We regret this, though we admire his courage and his loyalty to his original.

The Count Rollanz has never loved cowards,
Nor arrogant, nor men of evil heart,
Nor chevalier that was not good vassal.

Surely he would love Mr. Moncrieff.”

The Outlook: “In his translation of ‘The Song of Roland,’ Captain Scott Moncrieff has given us many good gifts above and beyond the superb quality of the translation itself. One of these, and we confess to finding it singularly touching, is the quiet description of how the work came to be done. . . . Another good gift is G. K. Chesterton’s introduction, which will always remain one of the small perfect essays in the language. . . . Then we have George Saintsbury’s Note on Technique.

“Captain Scott Moncrieff . . . can write on an individual note if ever a writer could; but we owe an eternal debt of gratitude to him that he has been entirely concerned with the ‘Song of Roland’ and not at all with the song of Captain Scott Moncrieff.”

“Mr. Belloc, lecturing on ‘The Song of Roland,’ in Glasgow, paid a high compliment to the recent translation by Captain Scott Moncrieff, who, he said, followed the literary meaning and diction, type of assonance and metre of the original.” (*The Glasgow Herald*, March 1, 1920).

Mr. Masfield, lecturing on “The Song of Roland” in London said he did not think it was possible to translate “The Song of Roland.”

The Scotsman, December 8, 1919: “There is no more to say.”

Widsith

BEOWULF

Finnsburgh • Waldere • Deor

Widsith
BEOWULF
Finnsburgh · Waldere · Deor

Done into common English
after the old manner

by

CHARLES SCOTT MONCRIEFF

With an Introduction by
VISCOUNT NORTHCLIFFE

NEW YORK :
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Introduction

IT is characteristic of the modesty of the English people that our oldest epic, or, rather, the one Old English epic that has survived, should contain not a word about England. Indeed, the greater part of its story takes place in the country of the Danes, who had been England's most cruel and destructive enemies for some two centuries before the existing manuscript of *Beowulf* was written. So, too, in a later age, when our drama came to be written, pride of place was given to, and has since been held by, the Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark. But the preservation of *Beowulf* as an English epic is justified by the embodiment in its hero of many traits of character which we are still proud to recognise among our fellow-countrymen. Higher criticism may reduce Grendel and his mother to the symbolical dimensions of epidemics, due to an over-populated settlement on the marshy and misty shore of a tideless sea ; but the courage of the young captain and his small company, facing unknown perils in a foreign country, and the renewed courage of the veteran, after more than a generation of peaceful government, arming himself to fight and die alone in the defence of his people, are facts with which, happily, we are still familiar.

How many thousand *Beowulfs* have we not sent out in the last seven years from these islands to face subtleties of horror as incredible as Grendel, fire as scathing as the Worm's, sea-monsters against which no armament was proof? Some have come back in triumph ; others, like Hondscio and Aeschere, have fallen, mangled and murdered, whose fame is preserved only in memory for so long as their friends survive them.

Some, like Beowulf in his youth, had no good said of them, were accounted of little worth by the captains of warriors, who "shrewdly reckoned that slack they were." Yet to them, as to Beowulf, "atonement came for all their troubles."

Perhaps it would be better to sing the troubles and triumphs of even one of these, our contemporaries, than to revive a momentary interest in an old and harshly worded poem from a forgotten dialect. But I welcome this version of *Beowulf* because I find in its hero what I lament in countless men who have fallen in the field, simple courage, untiring endurance, stainless honour.

NORTHCLIFFE.

Translator's Preface

IT is as difficult to find an excuse for adding to what Mr. Wyatt, in his admirable *Anglo-Saxon Reader*,* describes as "a whole library of books dealing with *Beowulf*," as it is rash for a young adventurer to challenge so powerful a competitor (to name no others) as William Morris. But this translation follows logically after that of the *Chanson de Roland*, which I have already published, and was inspired by the suggestion that I should attempt to do for the English epic what I had done for the French.†

So many slighting references have been made to *Beowulf* and its admirers lately, in the press of this country, that I am obliged to conclude that a considerable interest, one way and the other, is felt in the poem, even by some of the many critics who have never read it. As I said in my former volume, this "is not a work of scholarship, nor yet of imagination"; but I hope that it may prove useful to a few of the hundreds of students who have to acquire some knowledge of the original in order to graduate in English Literature in our various Universities, and that, at the same time, it may interest others who are compelled and content to remain in ignorance of the austere beauties of the Old English language.

The history of the poem is fairly well known; it seems to have been composed, in the Anglian dialect, about the year 700, nearly a century before, in Beorhtric's day, as the Chronicle tells us,‡ "came the first three ships, and the reeve

* Cambridge University Press, 1919.

† For, as is well-known,

Ne sont que trois matières à nul home attendant,
De France et de Bretagne et de Rome la grant.

‡ Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, year 787.

rode thereto, and would drive them to that King's town because he knew not what they were ; and one slew him. Those were the first ships of Danish men that sought the land of the Angle-kin." About the end of the tenth century, when the Danish men were again harrying England, two nameless scribes copied for us, in the dialect of Wessex, the one manuscript of *Beowulf* which has survived. From that time it must have remained in its monastic library, unread and increasingly unintelligible, until, after the Dissolution, it passed into the collection of Sir Robert Bruce Cotton, now absorbed in the library of the British Museum. Here it was discovered in 1700 by Humfrey Wanley, who describes it in his catalogue as "Tractatus nobilissimus poetice scriptus," in which there seemed to be, for he could not have translated it, "descripta bella quae Beowulfus, quidam Danus ex regio Scyldingorum stirpe ortus, gessit contra Sueciae Regulos." In 1731 a great part of the Cottonian library was destroyed by a fire at Ashburnham House in Westminster, in which the Government had recently placed it for safety. The volume, Vitellius A 15, in which *Beowulf* is bound, escaped with serious injury. In 1786 Thorkelin of Copenhagen transcribed the manuscript, for the second time, perhaps, since his Danish ancestors came to England exactly a thousand years earlier ; by a belated act of retaliation the materials for his edition were destroyed by an English fleet, in the bombardment of Copenhagen, and *Beowulf* did not appear in print until 1815. Finally, in 1882, an autotype facsimile was prepared for the Early English Text Society, with a literal transcription, by Professor Zupitza, while a more accessible text is that edited by Messrs. A. J. Wyatt and R. W. Chambers, and published by the Cambridge University Press in 1914.

In the manuscript the poem is written

continuously, as it were prose, but in forty-three divisions, forty of which are headed with numbers. The opening lines bear no number; then come twenty-eight divisions of about seventy lines each, numbered I to XXVIII. The next gap, after line 2038, and in the middle of a sentence, has no number; then come XXXI to XXXVIII, one more unnumbered, and XL to XLIII. These divisions do not at all correspond to the natural breaks in the poem.

The story opens as though it were intended to be in praise of another Beowulf, the son of Shield of the Sheaf, and an ancestral King of the Danes or Shieldings. To Shield is ascribed the mythical origin, as a child sent forth alone in a boat from an unknown haven, which later Chroniclers gave to a certain Sheaf, who, by another story, was born in the Ark, the son of Noah. But at the hundredth line the tone of the poem changes; the Danish Beowulf has flourished and died. Hrothgar, his grandson, having at length succeeded, orders a hall to be built him, the mightiest on earth, and calls its name Heorot, or Hart. While he is feasting with his court, Grendel, a monster from the fens and moors, descended from the exiled offspring of Cain, invades Heorot, and snatches from it thirty of Hrothgar's thegns; the court is scattered in terror, and for twelve years the hall remains deserted.

It will be seen that the Danes, whose prowess is so extravagantly lauded in the opening lines, have already ceased to be the heroes of the story. In line 194 we first hear of "Higelac's thegn," in line 262 he tells us that he is the son of Ecgtheow, and in line 343 he names himself to the Danes as Beowulf; henceforward the story is of him. Beowulf, like Roland and a hundred other heroes of epic and romance, was the son of his sovereign's sister; and Beowulf's uncle, like Roland's, has a place in history, for the Higelac who invaded

the Frisian land, who there "swallowed the sword-drink," whose life lay in the Franks' keeping, can be identified with the Chocilaicus mentioned in the *Gesta Regum Francorum* of Gregory of Tours, who was killed by the Frankish Prince Theodebert, son of Theodoric the son of Clovis, in the second decade of the sixth century. So also Hrothgar is the Roe, son of Haldanus, who figures in Saxo Grammaticus as a King of Denmark and the founder of Roskilde.

II

With *Beowulf* I have included two short poems and two epic fragments, everything of the kind which has survived in our language. *Widsith* may serve as an introduction to the rest, but a volume stouter than this would be required for the proper annotation of *Widsith* alone. The curious reader may turn to the fascinating work of Mr. Chambers,* and will find there a wealth of information on the history and mythology of the tribes and heroes mentioned in the poem. *Widsith*, like *Deor*, is found in the Exeter Book, a collection of Old English poetry made about the same time as the manuscript of *Beowulf*, and presented to the Cathedral of Exeter by its first Bishop, Leofric, who removed his See there from Crediton in 1050. Its own date is less easily determined, as the hero claims to have visited historical Kings whose reigns extended over more than two centuries, while references to Syrians and Israelites, Assyrians and Hebrews point to interpolation by a later, probably monastic, scribe; but the bulk of the poem must have been composed not much earlier, and probably not much later, than the year 600. It might well be called the *Lay of the First Minstrel*,

* *Widsith, a Study in Old English Heroic Legend*, by R. W. Chambers, Cambridge University Press, 1912.

as it is our oldest record of that noble tradition of which Scott celebrated the decline.*

If *Widsith* is an extremely condensed "narrative poem," *Deor* is in every sense a lyric. Mr. Wyatt compares it aptly to a ballade by Villon. Its construction in stanzas is deliberate, and is marked by the regular refrain. It is a plaintive, but philosophical statement of a poet's misfortunes, who is consoled by the reflection that greater than he have suffered also.

The short fragments of *Finnsburgh* and *Waldere* are long enough to shew what we have lost by the destruction of an epic literature, of which *Beowulf* alone survives. The forty-eight lines of *Finnsburgh* were found on a leaf of parchment in the library of Lambeth Palace, by Dr. George Hickes, the Non-Juror Dean of Worcester, for whom Humfrey Wanley made his catalogue. Later, this leaf disappeared, when the volume whose wrapper it had become was sent to a binder, and the sole extant authority for the fragment is the text printed by Hickes in 1705 in his *Linguarum Veterum Septentrionalium Thesaurus*. Apart from its evident merit as a battle-song, the fragment is of great interest as corroborating the longest of the lays in *Beowulf*, the song of Finn and Hildeburh sung by Hrothgar's bard on the mead-bench after the discomfiture of Grendel.†

The two fragments called *Waldere* were discovered in 1860 by the Royal Librarian at Copenhagen, among the papers left by Thorkelin, the first editor of *Beowulf*. They are part of an epic, the story of which is preserved in the Latin *Waltharius Manufortis* of Ekkehard of St. Gall, and has been well summarised by Mr. Wyatt in his

† "Within the memory of man, an old person used to perambulate the streets of Edinburgh, singing, in a monotonous cadence, the tale of Rosewal and Lilian."

Scott, *Sir Tristrem* (1804).

* *Beowulf*, lines 1068 to 1159.

Anglo-Saxon Reader, from which I quote : “ Walter of Aquitaine, Hildegund of the Burgundians, his betrothed, and Hagen of the Franks were taken as hostages by Attila and nobly reared at his court. But in course of time Hagen escaped. So, later, did the lovers, taking with them much treasure, When they reached the Vosges, they were attacked by the Frankish King Gunther and twelve warriors, including Hagen, Walter’s *frater juratus* eleven warriors were slain by Walter in the rocky pass, which was worth an army to him ; then Gunther and Hagen withdrew and hid themselves. Their ruse succeeded ; next day the lovers continued their journey, and were overtaken in the plain by their two foes. Walter’s appeal to friendship is in vain, for Hagen has now a sister’s son to avenge. After hours of fighting, one against two, the hero is still unconquered ; he has lost his right hand, Hagen an eye, and Gunther a leg, and in this condition they make peace, and jest while Hildegund serves them with wine.” In Old English Walter becomes Waldere, Hildegund Hildegyth, Gunther Guthhere (the same who gave a gladsome jewel to Widsith), and Hagen Hagena.

III

With my versification, prosodists are at liberty to find what fault they will. Old English poetry was composed not for the librarian but for the harpist, and if these versions of mine can be shouted aloud to the harp or its equivalent, so much the better. Apart from that, I have attempted to make the sort of lines that an Englishman of the Heptarchy would recognise as metrical, though he might feel obliged to improve them in a hundred ways. The first difficulty in translating Old English is presented by its curiously primitive syntax ; if this be retained, the effect is tedious

and unreadable ; if it be too much amended the original form is destroyed. Another difficulty is the loss from our speech of many excellent words in which the old poets found synonyms for the things they most commonly described, such as war, battle, army, soldier, sword, and, above all, the sea. A third comes from our having dropped the inflections from our words, so that what in the original was a trochee, with its proper rhythmical force, becomes a dull and unwieldy monosyllable. Yet another is the apparent loss of alliterative value in words whose initials have changed. I have escaped this by sometimes alliterating *g* with *y* where the latter (as in *ye*, *youth*, etc.) represents an Old English *g*, and by alliterating *l*, *n*, *r* and *w* with *h* and with each other when the Old English initial is aspirated, *hl*, *hn*, *hr*, or *hw*. A more difficult thing is the alliteration of compound and prefixed words, in which it has been impossible to follow consistently the rules observed in the surviving corpus—some thirty thousand lines—of pre-Conquest verse. Scholars, I repeat, are at liberty to condemn both my metre and my alliteration, provided that they shew me how both may be improved. The general reader must be content with my assurance that what follows is a fair imitation of Old English Poetry, the chief rules of which are as follows :

The line consists of two metrically equivalent halves, separated in this volume by an oblique stroke (/). In each half there are normally two* accented syllables, and at least one accented syllable in the first half-line is alliterated with one in the second. All four syllables may be alliterated, or any three ; or there may be double alliterations—

* Lines with three accented syllables in each half are rare in *Beowulf*. Examples are 1162-8, 1705-7, and there is elsewhere a tendency to associate a third word with the two most strongly accented in each half-line. Typical examples of the lengthened line will be found in *Judith*.

a b / a b, or *ab / ba*. For alliteration, all initial vowels are reckoned the same, as are all aspirated vowels and consonants—*ha, he, hi, hl, hn, ho, hr, hu*, and *hw*.*

To illustrate this I print the opening lines of *Beowulf* in their original form, substituting *th* for the old compound letter, and printing the accented initials in italics :

Hwaet ! we *Gar-Dena* / in gear-dagum
theod-cyninga / *thrym* gefrunon,
hu tha *aethelingas* / *ellen* fremedon.
Oft *Scyld Scefing* / *sceathena* threatum,
monegum *maegthum* / *meodo-setla* ofteah.
Egsode *eorl*, / *syththan* *aerest* *wearth*
fea-scaft *funden* ; / he thaes *frofre* *gebad*,
weox under *wolcnum*, / *weorth-myndum* *thah*,
oth thaet *him* *aeghwylc* / *thara* *ymb-sittendra*
ofer *hron-rade* / *hyran* *scolde*,
gomban *gyldan* ; / thaet waes god *cyning*.

IV

I have to acknowledge the kindness and the candour of several critics who have allowed themselves to be burdened with parts of this book in manuscript ; Professor Blyth Webster, to whom I owe any knowledge I may have acquired of Old English ; Professor Ker, whose warning I ought to have taken ; Mr. J. C. Squire, who allowed me to reprint the Dedication from his *London Mercury* ; Mr. J. E. Gurdon, who seemed to think the poem worth reading ; Mr. Arthur Waugh, who has thought it worth publishing ; and, above all and beyond all, Lord Northcliffe.

London,

CHARLES SCOTT MONCRIEFF.

March, 1921.

† Of the words in *Beowulf* beginning with aspirated consonants the commonest are *hlanan* to load, *hlaew* a law or burial-mound, *hlaford* a lord, *hleahtor* laughter, *hlud* loud, *hnah* niggard, *hrefn* raven, *hreo* rough, *hring* ring, *hrof* roof, *hron* whale, *hrycg* ridge, *hwa* *hwaet* who what, *hwaer* where, and such words as now begin *wh*, except *wiht* a whit.

Dedication

TO

RICHARD REYNOLDS BALL,

WHO, LIKE BEOWULF,
TRAVELLED FEARLESSLY IN
A FAR COUNTRY, RISKING
HIS LIFE TO HELP THE
VICTIMS OF WAR AND
OPPRESSION,
UNTIL HE DIED
IN POLAND

IN DECEMBER, 1919.
AND TO TWO OTHERS,
HIS FRIENDS AND MINE,
WHO HAVE FOLLOWED
FROM MY WORLD TO HIS :

JOHN SCOTT MONCRIEFF

GLADYS DALYELL

What ! My loved companion, / in coldness liest thou,
Finished with life, / in a land afar ?
From friends divided, / to death forsaken,
Farest thou alone / on Fate's errand,
The way of the world when / by the Will of God
Goeth to Him again / the gift He hath given,
His loan of life. / No less I mourn thee
Than did I those / whom Death went thieving,
Willing youths / in the years of war,
Our friends and our fellows, / though fain was I
of them

When keenly I bewailed / my battle-comrades,
Finding them murdered / upon many fields.
When a little knave I was / knew I thee first
Since before me thou / wast born among men,
An elder friend / to those following after.
For thou wast living / thirty years long,
Summers and winters, / ere war us sundered,
Friend from friend, / and four years following
Busily kept me / among killing banes.
Then thou wast with foreign races, /
 Russ-men and Frenchmen,
Serbs and Poles, / in the passing seasons,
Six winter-tides, / while the tale of war
Pressed to an end ; / peace came after,
Prosperity promised / to the peoples on earth,
Welfare after warfare. / Would they then readily
Wind away, / the warriors mostly,
A straggling few / of the fierce strugglers
Who out of the battle / had borne them alive.
But thou wast for returning / whither trouble waited,
Famine and fever / among friendless folk.
Nor was it any time then till / must taste thou also
The dreary cup / that Christ erst drank,
Sad in soul, / the Sinners' Shepherd,
The Holy Lord, / whose Heart ever loveth us,
The Son of God / in the Garden of Sorrows,
On the eve of Death. / Even so didst thou also,
By fever fated. / Freely everywhere wentest thou,
Shooting not at enemies, / armed with no shield
Against threats / of evil-thinkers,
But smiling at terrors, / true and simple,
Diedst thou as thou hadst lived, / dutifully.
Nor have I heard of a man / having more of happiness,
Stronger and kinder / to kinsmen and strangers,
A warden of the wretched. / Will they easily
Bear in mind, / who may hereafter be born,
The English friend / of their fathers of old,

Who helped them in need, / and held back nothing,
Gave his life / for the love of God.
They will say that of men / in mind and soul
He excelled others / among all peoples,
In mood the mildest, / in mercy and pity
Best beloved, / most beautiful to remember
In the days / of this our life.

June, 1920.

C. K. S. M.

Arguments of the Poems

Widsith

Widsith, a wandering poet of the Myrging tribe, speaks. He tells of the lands he has seen and the Kings who ruled in them, and especially of Eormanric, who gave him treasure, and of Eadgils, his own King, who gave him his father's heritage. Such is the fortune of the minstrel ; wherever he may wander, north or south, he may find a benefactor, sing his praise, and be rewarded.

Beowulf

I The poet recalls the power and prowess of the Danes ;
II Shield of the Sheaf, their first King, who as a child came to
III their shores, alone, in a ship, and, after his death, was sent
IV from their shores, alone, across the unknown ocean ; his
V successors, Beowulf, Hafdane and Hrothgar. Hrothgar
VI orders his people to build him a great hall, which he calls
VII Heorot, in which, for a short time, they dwell in happiness.
VIII Suddenly Grendel, a fiend from hell, of the accursed race
IX of Cain, invades the hall and snatches in their sleep thirty
of Hrothgar's thegns. The next night, he returns, and so,
for twelve years, the hall is deserted and the people plagued
Then Beowulf, a thegn and nephew of Higelac, King of
the Geats, hears in his home of the troubles of the Danes
and with fourteen picked companions crosses the sea to
their country. They are challenged by the coast-guard, who
is convinced of their friendly purpose, and guides them to
Heorot, where Beowulf is recognised and welcomed by
Hrothgar. At Hrothgar's bidding the Geats sit down to
feast with the Danes.

VIII Unferth, son of Ecglaf, a favourite of Hrothgar, is jealous
of Beowulf, and taunts him with his failure in a swimming-
match with Breca the Bronding. Beowulf replies, telling
IX the true story, and charging Unferth with cowardice in not
having dared to face Grendel. Wealhtheow, Hrothgar's
Queen, takes the cup round the hall, and Hrothgar retires
to rest.

- X Beowulf and his men lie down in the hall, and all but he
XI sleep. Then, out of the mists on the moors, comes Grendel;
he breaks through the doors and tears to pieces Hondscio,
one of Beowulf's men, whom he devours.
- XII But Beowulf has the strength of thirty men in his hand ;
unarmed, he wrestles with Grendel, and at length tears off
his right arm. Mortally wounded, Grendel slinks home to
his lair in the fens.
- XIII In the morning, young and old assemble ; they see Grendel's
arm hanging by the roof of the hall, and follow the track
of his blood to the foul pool in which he has dived and
died. They race their horses homewards, and on the way
a minstrel sings to them of Sigemund and his war with the
dragon, and of Heremod, an evil King, who was betrayed
into the hands of his enemies. Not so, he says, is Beowulf.
- XIV Hrothgar and his Queen leave their bower and come to the
hall, where he gives thanks to God, seeing Grendel's arm
exposed there. He hails Beowulf as his son, and promises
him ample rewards. Beowulf describes the fight. Ecglaf is
shamed into silence.
- XV Heorot is adorned for a feast with golden hangings. Hroth-
gar bestows armour, treasure and horses upon Beowulf,
and other gifts upon each of his companions. The bard
then sings the lay of Finn, a Frisian King, who had carried
off Hildeburh, the daughter of Hoc, and was attacked by
her brothers, Hnaef and Hengest. Hnaef and Finn's son
are killed, and Finn makes a pact with Hengest, who re-
mains in his burgh through the winter. The bodies of the
slain are burned. Hengest plans revenge, but the Frisians
attack him, and he is killed. Later, two of his men, Guthlaf
and Oslaf, return to Finn's country, kill him and carry
Hildeburh back to her home.
- XVII Wealhtheow again goes through the hall with the flagon,
which she gives to Hrothgar. She also gives Beowulf a
necklace, the greatest in the world, which, in later years,
Higelac is to wear when he invades the Low Countries, and
falls in fight with the Franks. The feast ends, and the
company separate.
- XVIII But now another horror comes upon them. Grendel's
mother, a monster-wife, greedy to avenge her son, enters
upon the hall, seizes and carries off Aeschere, the close
companion and trusted counsellor of Hrothgar. Sending
for Beowulf, Hrothgar tells him the news, and describes
the enchanted mere in which the monsters lurk. If Beo-
wulf will venture there he shall have farther rewards.
- XIX Beowulf accepts the challenge, and, with Hrothgar and his
men, sets out for the mere. He arms himself, and Unferth,

XXII

now cured of his boasting, lends him his own sword, Hrunting, which had never failed any man in battle. Beowulf commends his followers to Hrothgar's care, and bequeaths his own sword to Unferth ; he then dives into the mere, and for a whole day sinks towards the bottom, attacked as he falls, by all manner of monsters. At last Grendel's mother, conscious of his approach, comes from her den, and seizing Beowulf carries him down to a cave where no water comes. There they fight by fire-light, but the sword will not wound the creature, and Beowulf, flinging it down, catches her by the shoulder and throws her to the floor. She pulls him down after her, and draws her knife ; but God protects him.

XXIII

On the wall of the cave he sees an old sword, of giants' forging. He draws it, and cuts off her head. Then he sees Grendel on the ground, dead or dying, and cuts off his head also, and with it and the old sword dives upwards through the blood-stained water. But in the poisonous blood the old sword melts like an icicle in spring, and only the hilt of it remains. Hrothgar and his Danes have gone home, and Beowulf's men are left sorrowing on the shore, watching the eddies of blood in the water, when their Captain emerges. They disarm him, take up Grendel's head, and return to Heorot, where the Danes are at table with their King and Queen.

XXIV

Beowulf tells Hrothgar of the battle, and gives him the hilt of the old sword. Hrothgar exalts him above all men, and again contrasts him with the wicked King Heremod. All

XXV

men are mortal, and earthly pride avails little, unless a man chooses the Way of God. For the last time, the Geats feast in Heorot, and then the weary Beowulf is led to rest. In the morning he restores Hrunting to Ecglaf, and announces that he must return to his own country, and to Higelac, his King. He and Hrothgar kiss one another and part, and the Geats go down to their ship and put out to sea.

XXVI

XXVII

Higelac was a proud King, his house high and beautiful, his Queen, Hygd, very young, but wise ; unlike Thrytho, the Queen of Offa, who caused the death of her husband's courtiers, though some say that she, after her marriage, grew wise also.

XXVIII

The Geats land and make their way to Higelac's hall, where they are welcomed by him ; Hygd, his Queen, gives them to drink, and Beowulf tells his adventures. He speaks of Hrothgar's daughter, Freawaru, whom he saw in Heorot ; she is betrothed to Ingeld, son of Froda, a Heathobard Prince, which may make for peace now between Danes and Heathobards but may also lead to quarrels later. He

[XXX]

XXXI then relates his fights with Grendel and in the mere. He then brings in Hrothgar's gifts and offers them to his own lord, who gives him in return the sword of his father Hrethel, seven thousands of money, and a home. So Beowulf, who had been despised in his youth, and accounted slack, lives in prosperity with Higelac.

* * * * *

XXXII Years pass. Higelac is killed, and Heardred his son ; Beowulf succeeds to the kingdom, and reigns for fifty years. Then a dragon which for centuries has lived in a burial mound, guarding a hoard of treasure, awakes and, finding the treasure disturbed, flies out over Beowulf's country. (*Here the manuscript is much damaged by fire*). A man unnamed, a slave fleeing from punishment, has taken refuge in the mound, and has seen there all the treasures of some ancient and forgotten race, which the last survivor, mourning his friends and despairing of his own life, had hidden there, so that they might never again be enjoyed by man. The dragon, who had found the place open, had lain there for three hundred years, and slept. Then this man takes a cup from the hoard and offers it to his master. The dragon, in fury, comes out flaming, and burns the homes of the people and Beowulf's hall. Beowulf orders a shield of iron to be made him, and vows that he will go out alone against the monster. The earlier battles are recalled, by which he won his kingdom.

XXXIII Eleven men follow him to the mound ; he bids them farewell, and recounts the story of his own youth, of Hrethel and his sons ; one of them, Haethcyn, had killed his elder brother with an arrow. Powerless to do justice, Hrethel pined and died. The Swedes then invaded the country, and Haethcyn was killed.

XXXIV Beowulf advances to the mouth of the mound, and challenges the dragon, which comes hurtling out in smoke and flame to meet him. Of his men, all seek safety in a wood save one, Wiglaf, son of Weohstan, who draws his father's sword, rebukes his companions, and wades through the flames to Beowulf's side. Beowulf's sword breaks, and the dragon rushes upon him a third time, and catches him by the neck. Wiglaf wounds the dragon, whose fire begins to slacken ; then Beowulf kills it, but himself faints with his wounds. He bids Wiglaf fetch out the treasure from the mound, that he may see it before he dies. Wiglaf enters the mound, and finds there great treasures, which he rifles and brings to Beowulf. Beowulf thanks God for them, and bids Wiglaf have a barrow made for him upon the Whale's

Headland, looking over the sea. He gives him his own armour and dies.

[XXXIX] The dragon lies dead beside him, Wiglaf watching over both, when the ten companions come shamefully from the wood. Wiglaf rebukes them bitterly, and sends the news of Beowulf's death to the rest of his people. The messenger warns them that the Frisians and Franks, who had killed Higelac, would now invade them; the Swedes also would avenge the Battle in Ravenswood, where Higelac punished them for the killing of Haethcyn. Beowulf's body must now be burned, and the jewels with it. They go to the mound, and seven of them, with Wiglaf, enter the enchanted treasure-house. Wiglaf orders wood to be brought from near and far for the burning. The dragon's body is flung over the cliff.

XLI A great pile is built up for Beowulf, and decked with armour. His body is laid there, and burned. His wife (?) laments him, and foretells coming disasters. Then, for ten days, his men build a mound over the ashes, and bury with him the treasures from the hoard. Round the mound ride twelve champions, lamenting his death and proclaiming his worth.

Finnsburgh

(A fragment of the story summarised in *Beowulf*, lines 1068-1159, beginning here with the last three words of a question.)

Hengest and his men are surprised in their hall by the Frisians.—“Surely the gables are not burning?” asks one, and Hengest (?) answers: “This is not the light of dawn, nor a fiery dragon, nor are the gables burning. But they are coming against us, in clashing armour. Awake and prepare to fight.” They go to the doors, Sigferth and Eaha to one end. Ordlaf (? the Oslaf of *Beowulf* 1148), Guthlaf and Hengest to the other. Sigferth challenges the attackers, and they fight for five days, slaying many Frisians, but without loss to themselves, avenging the memory of Hnaef. One of them, wounded, makes his way to his King, with news of the battle. (It appears from *Beowulf*, 1142-4, that Hengest was killed by an otherwise unknown Hunlafing).

Waldere

I

Hildegyth encourages Waldere before the fight, reminding him that his sword, the Mimming, Weland's masterpiece, has never yet failed any man powerful enough to wield it. Now is the hour of death or victory. Never in the past has she seen him draw back from battle. He has offered tribute to Guthhere, who has refused it. Therefore must Guthhere pay the penalty in battle. . . .

II

(Guthhere praises Waldere's) sword, the Mimming, which Theodoric had owned, and had been minded to give, with other treasures, to Weland's son Widia. Waldere replies boasting that he has not been defeated by Hagena, and that he now defies the assault of Guthhere, trusting to God for protection. . . .

Deor

Deor, a minstrel, recounts the sorrows of Weland, who was imprisoned and mutilated by King Nithhad. But he escaped. Beadohild, Nithhad's daughter, had cause for sorrow, for Weland had outraged her, and killed her brothers. (By him she became the mother of Widia). But her sorrows passed. The Geatish King (? Nithhad) was maddened by love, which robbed him of sleep. But that passed. Theodoric was for thirty years an exile. But that passed. Eor-manric, the cruel King, held many a man in captivity, who longed for the fall of his kingdom. That also passed. Those who sit in sorrow and misfortune must remember that God often makes the wretched happy and brings down the haughty. The poet himself, Deor, bard of the Heodenings, was cherished by his lord until Heorrenda robbed him of his inheritance. Yet this trouble also may pass.

Widsith
BEOWULF
Finnsburgh ♦ Waldere ♦ Deor

Widsith

Widsith made utterance, / his word-ward
unlocked,

He who most of men / among meynes on the earth
And folks had wandered ; / oft on the floor he took
Lovely treasure. / From the loins of the Myrgings'
Offspring he arose. / He with Ealhild
Faithful Peace-Weaver, / on his first journey
The Hreth-King's / home did seek
From the East, out of Angel, / Eormanrice's
The fierce and faithless. / Began he then in fulness
to speak :

“ Of many men have I heard, / masters of peoples;
Must every king / by custom live,
One earl after another / his own home govern,
He who his throne-stool / to thrive wishes.
Of these was Hwala / awhile the best,
And Alexander / of all the richest
Of man's kindred, / and he most thrived
Of them whose fame / afar I have heard.
Attila ruled the Huns, / Eormanric the Goths,
Becca the Bainings, / the Burgunds Gifica.
Cæsar ruled the Greeks / and Cælic the Finns,
Hagena the Holm-Rugians / and Heoden the
Glommas.

Witta ruled the Swaefs, / Wada the Haelsings,
Meaca the Myrgings, / Marchalf the Hundings.
Theodric ruled the Franks, / Thyle the Rondings,
Breca the Brondings, / Billing the Wernas.
Oswine ruled the Eowas / and the Iutes Gefwulf,
Fin Folcwalding / the Frisian kindred.
Sigehere longest / the Sea-Danes ruled,
Hnaef the Hoccings, / Helm the Wulfings,
Wald the Woings, / Wod the Thydings,

Saferth the Sycgs, / the Swedes Ongentheow,
Scafthere the Ymbras, / Sheaf the Longbeards,
Hun the Hetwaras / and Holen the Wrosnas.
Hringweald was hight / the Herefaras' King.
Offa ruled Angel, / Alewih the Danes ;
He was of those men / highest-minded of all ;
Yet never did he over Offa / in earlship excel ;
But Offa fashioned / first among men,
When a young knave was he, / of kingdoms the
greatest ;

40 No one of an age with him / earlship mightier
Wrought in the onslaught / with one sword :
The march he measured / with the Myrgings
By Fifeldor ; / thenceforth they held it,
Angle and Swaef / as Offa drew it.
Hrothwulf and Hrothgar / held the longest
Union together, / uncle and nephew,
After they had cast out / the kin of the Vikings
And Ingelde's / army had humbled,
Hewn down at Heorot / the Heathobeards' host.
50 So I fared through many / foreign lands
Over the wide earth ; / of good and evil
There I made trial ; / from my tribe divided,
From my kinsmen far, / I followed men widely.
Wherefore I may sing / and say my story,
Mention before the multitude / in the mead-hall
How kingly-good men / kindness shewed me.
I was with Huns / and with Hreth-Goths
With Swedes and with Geats / and with
South-Danes.

With Vandals I was and with Vaerns / and with
Vikings.
60 With Gifthas I was and with Wends / and with
Gefflegs.
With Angles I was and with Swaefs / and with
Aenas.
With Saxons I was and with Sycgs / and with
Swordsmen.
With Whales I was and with Deans / and with
Heatho-Reams.

With Thyrings I was / and with Throwends
And I was with Burgunds, / there a bracelet I had ;
There Guthere gave me / a gladsome jewel
For my song in payment ; / 'twas no sluggard
King.

With Franks I was and with Frisians / and with
Frumtings.

With Rugians I was and with Glommas / and
with Rome-Welsh.

70 Also I was in Italy / with Aelfwine ;
Who had of mankind, / in my hearing,
The lightest hand / for laudable works,
The heart least niggard / when rings were
dealing,

Brightest bracelets, / that bairn of Eadwine.

With Saracens I was / and with Syrians.

With Creeks I was and with Finns / and with
Cæsar,

With him who the joy-burghs / by justice ruled,
Wealth and good-will / and the Welsh kingdom.

With Scots I was and with Picts / and with
Skating-Finns.

80 With Lidwicings I was and with Leons / and with
Longbeards,

With Heathens and with Haereths / and with
Hundings.

With Israelites I was / and with Assyrians,
With Ebrews and with Indians / and with
Egyptians.

With Medes I was and with Persians / and with
Myrgings

And Mofdings / and Counter-Myrgings

And with Amothings. / With East-Thyrings I was
And with Eols and with Iste / and Idumings.

And I was with Eormanric / all the time,

There the Gothic King / was good to me ;

90 A bracelet he gave me, / the burghers' lord,
Wherein were six hundred / of smelted gold
Coins reckoned, / counted in shillings ;

This I to Eadgils' / ownership gave,

To my lord and helper, / when to my home I
came,
To my friend as a fee / for that he furnished land
to me,
My father's heritage, / the Head of the Myrgings.
And then also Ealhild / another gave me,
Ducal-Queen of the doughty, / daughter of
Eadwine.

100 Her laud was prolonged / through lands many,
When I in song / was set to say
Where I under the sky / had seen the best
Gold-decked Queen / giving treasures.
When Shilling and I / with sheer voices
Before our royal Lord / upraised the song,
When loud to the harp / the lilt made melody,
Then many men / whose minds were proud
In words did say, / who well had knowledge,
That they never a sweeter / song had heard.
110 Thence I roamed over all / the realm of the Goths,
Sought I ever the best / of boon-companions ;
That was the indwellers / with Eormanric.
Hethca sought I and Beadeca / and the Herelings,
Emerca sought I and Fridla / and East-Gota
Old and gallant, / Unwen's father.
Secca sought I and Becca, / Seafola and Theodric,
Heathoric and Sifeca, / Hlithe and Incgentheow.
Eadwine sought I and Elsa, / Aegelmund and
Hungar
And the proud company / of Counter-Myrgings.
Wulfhere sought I and Wyrwhere ; / full oft there
war abated not,
120 When the host of the Hreths / with hard swords
By the Wistula Wood / must watch and ward
Their ancient seat / from Attila's people.
Raedhere sought I and Rondhere, / Rumstan and
Gislhere,
Withergyld and Freotheric, / Wudga and Hama ;
Nor were they of comrades / the worst to me,
Though I must name them / nearest the end.
Full oft from that host / whining flew

The howling spear / on a hostile people ;
Wanderers, they governed there / by wounden
gold

30 Husbands and wives, / Wudga and Hama.
So I have found it ever, / in all my faring
That he is loved the best / by the land-dwellers,
To whom God giveth / governance of men
To have and to hold / while here he liveth.”

So wandering far / by fate are driven
Men's lay-singers / over lands many,
Their thrifts say they, / thankful words speak they,
Ever, south or north, / with some one meet they
Apt in glees, / of gifts unsparing,
40 Who before the fighters wishes / his fame to exalt,
Earlship to achieve, / until all is scattered,
Light and life together ; / laud he gaineth,
Hath under the heavens / high fame and fast.

BEOWULF

WHAT! We of Spear-Danes / in spent days,
Of the Folk-Kings' / force have heard,
How the Athelings / excelled in fight.
Oft Shield of the Sheaf / from scathing hordes,
From many meines / their mead-stools tore.
Affrighted them the Earl, / since erst he was
Found, unwealthy ; / then friendship he awaited,
Waxed under the welkin, / in worship throve,
Until that each one / of those out-dwelling
10 Over the whale-road, / must hearken to him,
Gold must give him. / That was a good King.
His offspring was / afterwards known,
Young in the yards, / whom God sent
The folk to befriend ; / the fierce dearth He knew
They had ere then endured, / lacking elders
A long while. / To him the Life-Lord,
Glory's Wielder, / world-honour gave.
Noble was Beowulf / (bloomed wide his name)
Shielde's son / in the Scede-lands.
20 So shall a young groom / work his own good,
By full fees given / to friends of his father,
That with him in his age / they may ever abide,
Willing comrades, / whenas war cometh,
To serve the people ; / by praised deeds shall
One man thrive / among all man-kind.
Turned aside then Shield / in the time shaped
for him,
Full-ripe, to fare / in Frea's keeping.
Him then out they bare / to the brink of ocean,
His sweet companions, / so himself had bidden,
30 While his words had weight, / welcome friend of
Shieldings ;
A beloved land-chief, / long had he reigned.

There in the roads / ring-stemmed she stood,
Icy, out-faring, / an atheling's craft :
Laid they down then / the lovely Prince,
Bestower of bracelets, / in the breast of the ship,
Their man by the mast. / There was a mass of
wealth,

Fretted gold ferried / from far away.
Nor heard I of a keel / more comely-wise garnished
With brave weapons / and battle-weeds,
40 With bills and byrnies ; / on his breast lay
Many treasures / that must with him
In the flood's keeping / fare afar.
Nothing less / of gifts they allowed him,
Of their possessions / than had those
Who at his first faring / forth had sent him
Alone over ocean, / an infant indeed.
Still more, they stood up for him / a golden
standard

High over head ; / they let the holm bear him,
Sent him to the Spear-Man ; / sad was their soul,
50 Mournful their mood. / For men knew not
How soothly to say, / men seely in council,
Of their hero under heaven / who that lading
received.

Then in the burghs / was Beowulf Shielding,
 Loved Lord of the People, / a long time
 Famed mid the folk, / (his father had elsewhither
 turned,
 Being old, from the earth) / until to him after was
 born
 Haughty Hafdane ; / he held while he lived,
 Grey-haired, war-greedy, / the glad Shieldings.

To him four bairns / forth in order
 Awoke to the world, / the warriors' leader
 Heorogar, and Hrothgar / and Halga the kind ;
 Heard I that *the other* / was Onela's Queen,
 The Battle-Scilfing's / bed-companion.

Then was granted to Hrothgar / good-speed with
 the host,
 Such worship in war / that his willing kinsmen
 Harkened to him gladly / until the youth waxed
 great,
 A mighty band ; / it was borne on his mind
 That a Hall-house / he would have
 Made him by men, / a mightier mead-place
 Than men's offspring / remembered ever,
 And there, inside, / he would deal out to all,
 The young with the old, / as God had endowed
 him,

Save the folk-share / and the fates of men.
 Then widely I heard that / the work was ordered
 Of many meinies / over this middle-garth,
 To furnish the folk-stead. / In time it befell him,
 Early among men, / that it all was ready,
 Of hall-places mightiest ; / he made its name
 Heorot,

He who his word / had widely wielded.
 His boast he belied not, / bracelets he dealt them,
 Treasure at table. / Towered that hall
 High, its horns gaping ; / battle-heat it abode

Of the loathly flame. / Nor was it long thereafter
That the sword-hatred / of daughter's husband
Against wife's father / should awaken.

90 Hardly then / that ghost of horror
Bore the delay, / he that in darkness abode,
While he each day / their happiness heard
Loud in the hall ; / there was sound of harping,
Shrill song of the shaper. / Said he that knew how
Men's origin / from of old to reckon,
The Almighty, quoth he, / wrought the earth,
Our bright-seeming weald / in water embosomed ;
Battle-Happy, He set / the sun and the moon
For lights to lighten / the land-indwellers,
And adorned all / the ends of the earth
With leafy limbs ; / life eke he shaped
For each of the kindreds / that quickened do move.

100 So then the people's men / dwelt in prosperity,
Blessed and happy, / until one began
Felony to fashion, / a fiend out of hell :
Was that grim guest / Grendel hight,
A mighty march-stepper, / who the moors held,
Fen and fastness ; / through the fifel-kin's realm
The wanchancy wight / long while had wandered,
Since him the Shaper / had proscribed.
On Caine's kin / He avenged that killing,
The Lord Eternal, / for that Abel he slew.
No joy found He in that feud, / but far exiled him,
110 The Maker for the murder, / from out man-kind.
Thence abominations / all arose,
Etins and elves, / orcneys also,
Likewise giants / that with God strove
For many days ; / that doom He dealt them.

He went then to have knowledge, / when night
was come,

Of the high house, / how in it the Ring-Danes
After beer-drinking / were bestowed.

He found then inside / the atheling-band

Asleep after supper ; / no sorrow they knew,

120 Nor miseries of men. / The monster of unhealing,
Grim and greedy, / was speedily yare,

Fierce and furious, / and took forth from their beds

Thirty thegns. / Thence again he departed,

Happy in his haul, / homewards to fare,

From amidst that destruction, / to visit his dwelling.

Then in the dawn, / with the day's first light,

Grendel's war-craft / was kenned of men ;

Then were, after his gorging, / groans upraised,

Much sound in the morning. / The mighty Lord,

130 Jewel of athelings, / sate all joyless,

Tholed his strong wrong, / thegn-sorrow endured,

Whenas they looked / on the loathly traces

Of the cursed spirit ; / that strife was too strong,

Loathly and lasting. / Nor was it longer in time

Than one night after, / again he accomplished

More of murders, / and minded not

Their feuds nor their force ; / too fast was he fixed
in them.

Then was easily found / he who elsewhere

More roomily / his rest would seek,

140 A bed mid the bowers, / for beaconed to them
was,

Soothly spoken, / by a simple token,

The hate of that hall-thegn ; / he held himself
thenceforth

Farther and faster / who that fiend outwiled.

So ruled he them / and against the right fought

One against all, / till that idle it stood,

The holiest of houses. / That was some while ;
Twelve winter-tides / the taunt he tholed,
The Friend of Shieldings, / all forms of grief,
Swelling sorrows ; / since when it was
150 Openly known / to the offspring of men
In gloomy glees, / that Grendel fought
Awhile with Hrothgar, / waged hateful war,
Force and feud / in the following seasons,
Strife unceasing ; / nor in sympathy would
From any man / of the Danish meiny
Keep afar off that life-bane, / for a fee compound.
Nay, none of the wise there / need wish for any
Brighter boon / at the hands of the bane.
A wanton wretch / was worrying them,
160 A dark death-shadow, / the doughty and young,
Snared them and netted them, / nightly he
stalked
The misty moors ; / men know not
Whither hell's rune-spellers / hie in their
roamings.

So many crimes / man-kinde's foe,
That awful alone-goer / often planned,
Harsher humblings ; / Heorot he haunted,
That bright treasure-hall / in the blackness of
night.

Nor to greet the gift-stool / might he go,
Decked for the Creator, / nor have his desire ;
170 That was much shame / for the Friend of
Shieldings,

Breaking of mood. / Often sate many
Men rich in rune-lore, / their rede they pondered,
What it were best / for the bold-hearted
To frame against / their griesly fears.

At whiles they vowed / in the heathen-tents
Of idol-worship, / prayed with words

That the Slayer of Spirits / succour would send
them

Against that plague of the people. / Such was their
practice,

The hope of the heathen ; / 'twas hell they
remembered

180 In the thoughts of their minds. / Their Maker
they knew not,

The Dempster of deeds, / nor wist of Divine God,
Nor indeed the Helm of Heaven / knew they to
honour,

The Wielder of Glory. / Woe worth him who shall
Through slaying spite / his soul shuffle

Into the clutches of fire, / and find no comfort,
Nor wend thence a whit ; / well worth him who
may

After his death-day / the Divine Lord seek,
And in the Arms of the Father / find refreshment.

III

So in that time-sorrow / the son of Halfdane

190 Was seethed without ceasing ; / nor might the
sage hero

Win a change from his woe ; / was that warfare
too stiff,

Loathly and lasting, / that on the folk landed ;
Need pressed them with grim hate, / of
night-banes the greatest.

Till heard from his home / Higelac's thegn,
So good mid the Geats, / of Grendel's deeds ;

He was of man-kind's / meiny the strongest
In the days / of this our life,

Well-born and waxing. / He bade him a
wave-glider

Good be got ready ; / quoth he, the great King
200 Over the swan-road / he would seek,

That mighty Lord, / since men he lacked.

For that way-faring / his wise fellows
Blamed him but little, / though loved of them he
was ;

His high-mind they whetted, / watched holy
omens.

He had, good man, / from the Geatish people
Champions chosen, / of those that keenest
Might be found : / with fourteen else

The sound-wood he sought ; / a sailor shewed
them,

A lake-crafty man / the land-marks.

210 On time went ; / on the waves was their ship,
A boat under bergs. / The boys all ready

Stepped on the stem ; the stream was washing

The sound on the sand ; / those seamen bare

Into the breast of the bark / bright adornments,

Wondrous war-armor ; / well out they shoved
her,

(Wights willing to journey) / with wooden beams
bounden.

Went then over the waves, / as the wind drave
her,

The foamy-necked floater, / to a fowl best likened,
Till about the same time / on the second day

220 Her winding stem / had waded so far

That the sailors / land could see,

Shore-cliffs shining, / mountains sheer,

Spreading sea-nesses ; / then was the sound
crossed

At the end of ocean. / Thereon up quickly

The folk of the Weders / walked on to the fields,

Secured their sea-wood : / their sarks rattled,

Weeds of war ; / and God they worshipped,

For that the way o'er the waves / so easy was.

Then saw from the wall / the Shieldings'
watchman,

230 (He who the holm-cliffs / had to hold,)

Them bear over the bulwarks / their bright
targets,

Arms ready for action ; / amazement brake
On the thoughts of his mind, / what men were
these.

Hied him then to the haven, / on a horse riding,
The thegn of Hrothgar ; / in his hand he
brandished

Strongly his spear-wood, / and solemn words
spake :

“ What are ye / having armour,
A band in byrnies, / who thus a tall bark
Over the lake-street / leading, are come,
Hither over the holms ? / *Awhile I on the wall*
Have been set at the end, / the sea-guard have
held,

That in the land of Danes / no loathly foeman
With men in ships / scathe us might.
Not more openly hither / have attempted to come
Any shield-bearers ; / nor the secret word
Of our war-planners / wist ye readily,
The consent of our kindred. / Never saw I
comelier

Earl upon earth / than is one of you,
A man in his mail-coat ; / that is no hall-minion
Made worthy by weapons ; / unless his visage belie
him,

An air unmatched. / Now shall I your
Lineage learn, / ere leaving here ye ——
Lying spies / into the land of Danes ——
Fare forth farther. / Now ye far-dwellers,
Mere-journeymen, / hearken to my
Simple thought ; / swiftest is safest
To let me ken / whence your coming is.”

IV

To him the eldest / made his answer,
The wise man of the war-band / his word-ward
unlocked :

- 260 “ We are a group / of the Geatish people
And Higelace’s / hearth-companions.
My father was / famed among folks,
A noble ancestor, / Ecgtheow namely ;
He abode many winters / ere on his way he went
So old from the earth ; / have him easily in mind
Well-nigh all the wise, / this wide world over.
We with loving minds / the Lord of thee,
Halfdane’s son, / are come to seek,
The Helper of the lowly ; / be thou good to us in
thy lore.
- 270 We have with that mighty one / a mickle errand,
With the Lord of Danes. / Nor shall aught of it
doubtful
Remain, as I ween. / Thou wist if it is
So, as we soothly / have heard it said,
That against the Shieldings / I know not what
scatter
Deep-hidden, deed-hateful, / in darkest
night-time
Teaches by terror / troubles untold,
Havoc and humbling. / To Hrothgar I may
In the room of his heart / a rede impart,
How he, old and bold, / may that bane overpower,
280 If there should ever / end for him
This baleful business, / boons come after,
And the welling cares / wax cooler ;
Or if, ever after, / a time of anguish,
Throes of need he must thole, / while there it
lasteth,
Builded on high, / the best of houses.”
The watchman spake, / where his horse he sate,
An officer unfearing : / “ Either way should
A sharp shield-warrior / know how to skim
Words from works, / one that well thinketh.

90 This I find, / that this band is friendly
To the Lord of Shieldings. / Lead ye forth then
Your weeds and weapons ; / the way I shew you.
Likewise I call / the thegns my kinsmen
From any foe / your floating bark,
Your ship on the shingle / shining with tar,
To hold with honour / till hereafter she bear
Over the lake-streams / the man beloved,
That wood with winding-prow, / to Weder-mark.
To a man of good-will, / to such is given
00 The heat of battle / hale to bear.”

Forth went they faring ; / the floater abode still,
Stood to her cable / the stout-breasted ship,
Fast at anchor. / The Boar's image shone
Above the cheek-guards / chequered with gold,
Bright, burned to hardness ; / the Boar kept watch.
Battle-minded they snorted, / the men burst
forward,

Trooped down together, / till they the timbered hall
Gold-decked and garnished / got in sight :
That was the foremost / in fame among folk
10 Of roofs under heaven / where the rich one abode ;
The light of it lightened / many lands.
To them then the battle-hero / that house of bold
hearts

Shewed where it shone, / so that they should
Bear towards it straightway : / that bairn of war
Wheeling his steed / a word after spake :

“ 'Tis time I fare hence ; / may the Father
All-Wielding,

With Rod of Mercy / rule you all
Safe on your ways ! / I will to the sea
Against wrathful warriors / watch to hold.”

V

20 The street was stone-paven, / steering a path
For the men together. / Each mail-coat shone,
Hard and hand-linked, / the ring-iron bright
Sang in their sarks, / as soon to the hall,

In their griesly gear / going, they came.
They set, sea-weary, / broad-sided shields,
Hardened bosses / by that house's wall ;
They bent then to the benches ; / their byrnies
rang,

War-mail of men : / in a mass there stood
Spears, seamen's armour, / assembled together,
330 Ash-wood grey-tipped ; / was that iron troop
Wealthy in weapons. / Then a warrior brave
Of those athletes / their origin asked.

“ Whence bring ye / these beaten shields,
These grey sarks / and shuppen helms,
This heap of war-shafts ? / I am Hrothgar's
Usher, arm-bearer. / Ne'er saw I from elsewhere
So many men / in mood more bold.

I ween that from pride, / not as wretches in
exile,

But sound in heart / Hrothgar ye have sought.”

340 The great in daring / gave him answer,
Proud Prince of Weders / a word after spake,
Hard under his helm : / “ We are Higelac's
Boon-companions. / Beowulf is my name.

I wish to say / to the son of Halfdane,
To the mighty Prince, / this errand of mine,
To thy men's Elder, / if he will allow it us
That so good a man / we may greet.”

Wulfgar spake : / (that was a Wendel chief ;
The way of his mind / to many was known,
350 His warring and wisdom) : / “ That of the
Well-wisher of Danes,

Lord of Shieldings, / shall I ask ;
Of the Bestower of bracelets / as thou dost beg
me,

Of the mighty King / anent thy coming ;
And to thee, such answer / at once make known
As that good man / may think to give me.”

He hied then in haste / where Hrothgar sate,
Old and hoary / amid his band of earls.

He stepped forth, strong-hearted, / till he stood
by the shoulders

Of the Lord of the Danes. / He knew the law of
the doughty.

360 Wulfgar spake / to his willing Lord :
“ Here are men faring, / far hence coming
O'er the girth of ocean, / Geatish folk ;
Their eldest one / the other athletes
Name Beowulf. / And they do beg
That they, my master, / may with thee
Wrestle in words. / Wherefore withhold not
Thy consent, / courteous Hrothgar.
In their war-gear / worthy seem they
Of earls' esteem. / Indeed that elder is doughty,
370 He who the battle-men / has brought hither.”

VI

Hrothgar answered, / Helm of Shieldings :
“ I knew him / as a little knave ;
Ecgtheow was the name / of his old father,
To whom, to his home, gave / Hrethel the Geat
His only daughter ; / it is his offspring now
Hither hardily come, / a kind friend seeking.
They said then, too, / the sea-farers
Who the free gifts / to the Geats ferried,
Thither for thanks, / that he had thirty
380 Men's main-strength / in the mighty grip
Of his hand, great-hearted. / Him Holy God
For a signal help / hath sent to us
To the Wester-Danes, / as I could wish,
Against Grendel's grimness. / To this good-man
shall I
For his daring / treasures deal.
Be thou hastening, / bid them in
To my sight, this troop of friends / assembled
together ;
Say to them eke in words / that they are welcome
To the Danish people.” / *Then to the door of the
hall*
390 *Wulfgar went,* / the word announced from within :

“ Bids me say to you / my Battle-Sovran,
The East-Danes Elder, / that he your origin kens,
And ye are to him, / the sea-waves over,
Hardy of will, / welcome hither.

Now must ye go / in your martial gear,
Hidden under helmets, / Hrothgar to see ;
Let your war-shields / here await —
And your wooden corpse-shafts, / what comes of
this word.

400 Arose then the rich one, / many men round him,
A picked band of thegns ; / some there abiding
Watched over the war-gear, / as the hardy one
wished.

Sped they together / where the guide shewed them,
Under Heorot's roof. / *Strong-hearted he went,*
Hardy under his helm, / till in the high-place he
stood.

Beowulf spake : / (on him the byrny shone,
A steel net sewed / by the skill of a smith) :
“ Hail to thee, Hrothgar ! / I am Higelac's
Cousin and kin-thegn ; / much glory I claim
That I gat in my youth. / To me was this
Grendel-matter

410 On my own turf / openly told :
Say the sea-farers / that this hall standeth,
Holiest of houses, / to the whole of your men
Idle and useless, / soon as evening-light
In the house of heaven / is hidden away.
Then prevailed on me / mine own people,
The best-witted, / the men of wisdom,
Hrothgar, Sire, / that I should seek thee ;
For the main-strength / of me they knew ;
420 Themselves had seen me / when scatheless I came
Blood-foul from my foes, / when five I had
bound,

When I ended the etin-kind, / and in the ocean
slew

Nicors by night ; / narrow straits I endured,
Avenged the Weders' sorrows, / (woes had they
suffered !)

Ground down their grief-wishers. / And now with
Grendel I shall,

With that devil / decide, I only,

The thing with the giant. / This now of thee,

Prince of Bright-Danes, / will I beg,

Safe-Guard of Shieldings, / a single boon ;

Do not thou refuse me, / Refuge of Warriors,

43° Dear Friend of thy folk, / now so far I am come ;

That I may, I only, / with my band of earls,

This handful of hardy ones, / cleanse out Heorot.

Have I heard also, / how this horror

In his wan-heeding / of weapons recks not :

Hence I forswear / (so may Higelac

My master to me / be blithe of mood,)

A sword to bear, / or shield broad-sided,

Yellow-boss to the battle ; / but with bare hands
shall I

Fight with the fiend, / and the forfeit be life

44° Of foe against foe : / have faith he shall

In a doom divine / whom death shall take :

Ween I that he will, / if he be the winner,

In this hall of fighters / the folk of Geats

Eat, all unfearing, / as oft he did

To the might of the Hrethmen. / Not for me
needst thou

Heap earth on my head, / for he will have me

Drearly dripping, / if me death taketh ;

When he beareth my bloody corpse, / thinketh to
browse on it,

Eateth as alone he goeth, / all unmournful,

45° Staineth his moorland lair ; / nay, not for me

needest thou

For my body's treatment / take thought longer.

But send to Higelac, / if me the struggle slay,

This best of battle-shrouds / which my breast
guardeth,

Rarest of harness ; / it was Hrethel's leaving,

Welande's working. / Goeth aye Wyrd as she
will."

VII

Hrothgar answered him, / Helm of Shieldings :
 " To fight in our defence thou, / my friend
 Beowulf,

And from kindness / art come to us.

Fought thy father / in many feuds,

460 Happened he Heatholaf / to slay with his hand
 Among the Wylfings ; / then the Weder-kin
 For fear of harrings / might not harbour him.

Thereafter sought he / the South-Dane folk,

Over heaving seas / the Honour-Shieldings ;

Whenas first I ruled / the folk of the Danes,

And held in my youth / the gem-enriched

Hoard-burgh of heroes. / Then was Heorogar
 dead,

Mine elder brother / all unliving,

Halfdane's boy ; / he was better than I.

470 Since then the feud / with a fee I finished ;

Sent I to the Wylfings / over the water's ridge

Ancient treasures ; / oaths he swore to me.

In my soul a sorrow / it is to say

To any guest / what Grendel hath

Of humblings for Heorot / in his hateful thoughts,

Of sudden fears fashioned ; / the host of my floor,

My war-band waneth ; / whom Wyrð hath swept
 off

By greedy Grendel. / God easily can

That dealer in madness / divide from his deeds.

480 Full oft they boasted, / with beer drunken,

Over the ale-bowls, / did my athletes,

That in the beer-hall / they would abide

Grendel's onset / with grim swords.

Then was this mead-hall / in morning-tide,

Gore-drenched, dear house, / whenas day
 lightened,

The benches all / with blood were steaming,

The hall with sword-drops ; / had I henchmen the
 fewer

Dear and doughty, / by those whom death fordid.

Sit thee now to thy supper / and unseal thy
thoughts

490 The tale of thy triumphs / as thy tongue may be
whetted."

Then for the Geat-men / gathered together
In the beer-hall / a bench was numbered ;
There to sit / stout-hearted went they,
Assured in their strength. / A thegn did service,
He that bare in his arms / the ale-bowl beautiful,
Poured the pure drink. / At whiles the poet sang
High through Heorot ; / there was joy among
heroes,
No small draft / of Danes and Weders.

VIII

Unferth spake, / Ecglafe's boy,
500 Who sate at the feet / of the Friend of Shieldings,
Unbound the battle-rune / (Beowulf's voyage was
to him,
Proud-minded mere-farer, / much annoyance,
For he allowed not ever / that any other man
More of glory / on this middle-garth
Should hear, under heaven, / than he himself) :
" Art thou that Beowulf / who with Breca strove
On the wide sea, / in swimming wagered,
When ye twain, so brave, / of the tide made trial,
And for a dolt's wager / in the deep water
510 Offered life up. / Nor any man,
Nor friend nor foe / forbid you might
That sorrowful sailing, / when on the sound ye
swam ;
Then was the water-stream / by your arm-strokes
woven,
Ye measured the mere-street / in mighty
handfuls,
Sped over the Spear-Man ; / splashed you the
ocean,
Waves of winter. / Ye twain in the water's realm

Seven nights swinked ; / he in swimming outdid
thee,

He had more might. / Then in morning-tide
On to the Heatho-Raems' beach / the holm
upbare him ;

520 Thence he sought / his own sweet soil,
He, loved of his people, / the land of Brondings,
The fenced-burgh fair / where he had his folk,
His burgh and bracelets. / All his boast with thee
The son of Beanstan / in sooth fulfilled.
So ween I for thee / a worse outcome,
Though in war-onset thou / wert everywhere
winner,

A grimmer duel, / if for Grendel thou darest
All night long / and nigh to abide.”

Beowulf answered, / Ecgtheow's boy :

530 “ What ! Full many things, / my friend Unferth,
With beer drunken / of Breca hast spoken,
Hast said of his swimming. / In sooth I tell thee,
That I of mere-strength / more have owned,
Endurance of waves, / than any other man.
We two quoth, / being little knaves,
And we boasted / (we were both of us yet
In the spring of youth), / that we over the
Spear-Man

Would dare our lives : / and even so did we.

We held a sword naked, / when we swam on the
sound,

540 Hard in hand ; / against the whale-fishes
We thought to ward us. / No whit from me
Afar on the flood-waves / might he float,
Hastier on the holm ; / nor from him would I.
Thus we two assembled / on the sea went
Five nights forth, / until the flood scattered us,
Weltering waves ; / and weather coldest,
Darkening night / and northern wind
Rushed on us, war-grim ; / rough were the waters.
Was the mere-fishes' / malice quickened ;
550 Then against beasts / my body-sark
Hard, hand-locken, / help afforded ;

A battle-rail broidered / on my breast lay,
With gold engirdled. / Me to the ground tugged
A foe, a fiend-scather, / fast he had me
Grimly gripping ; / 'twas granted however
That I the wretch / with my point should reach,
With my battle-bill ; / the blow bare off
A mighty mer-deer / by my hand.

IX

560 So round me often / the evil-doers
Were thickly thronging. / I thegned it them
With my dear sword, / as was their due ;
Never their fill / with joy found they,
Evil destroyers, / to eat of me,
Nor sate to their supper / the sea-ground near ;
But in the morning, / mangled with blade-wounds
On the banks of ocean / up they lay,
Soothed by the sword, / so that never since
In the high fords / the sea-farers
Might they let in their journeys. / Light from the
East came,
570 Bright beacon of God ; / the billows were smoothed
Till the sea-nesses / I could spy,
The windy walls. / Wyrð oft saveth
An earl unfated, / who excels in valour.
However, it so befell me / that I finished with the
'sword
Nicors nine. / Nor by night have I heard
Under heaven's roof / of harder fighting,
Nor on ocean's race / of a man more wretched ;
However, I felt the foe, / and freely escaped,
Weary of wandering. / Then the sea washed me,
580 The flow of the flood / to the Finnish land,
The weltering waves. / Not one whit of thee
Such armed turmoils / have I heard tell,
Nor bouts with bills ; / Breca never yet
In the play of battle, / nor the pair of you both
So daringly / a deed performed

With shining sword / (I say it not boasting)
Though thou to thy brethren / a bane hast been,
To the sons of thy house ; / wherefore in hell thou
shalt

Thy forfeit fulfil, / though fine be thy wit.

590 I say to thee in sooth, / son of Ecglaf,
That Grendel never so much / that is gruesome
had wrought,

That cruel creature / upon thy King,
Nor humblings in Heorot, / if thy heart were
Or thy soul as stern / as thyself thou tellest ;
But he hath found / that for the feud he need not,
For the cruel sword-press / of your people,
Sit sorely troubled / by Triumph-Shieldings :
He takes pledges at need, / none he spareth
Of the Danish warriors, / but he warreth at
pleasure,

600 Slayeth and swalloweth, / seeketh no vengeance
From the Spear-Danes. / But speedily will I,
How good and gallant / the Geats be now,
In a match inform him. / Go he after who may
To his mead high-minded , / when the morning's
light

Of an other day / over the offspring of men,
The sun swathed in brightness / from the South
shineth."

Then was he joyful, / the Jewel-Giver,
Grey-haired, war-haughty ; / In help he trusted,
The Head of the Bright-Danes ; / heard from
Beowulf

610 The Herd of the folk, / his fixed purpose.
There was laughter of heroes, / loud resounding ;
Words were winsome. / Went Wealththeow forth,
The Queen of Hrothgar, / heedful of custom,
Gold-decked she greeted / the grooms in hall :
And that free-born wife / the flagon handed
First to the East-Danes' / Friend and Elder,
Bade him be blithe / at that beer-tasting,
Him, loved of his landsmen ; / he lustily took
The feast and the flagon, / fortunate King.

520 Then went around / that Woman of the Helmings,
To old and young, / gave each his share
Of the treasure-cup, / till the time was come
That she to Beowulf, / braceleted Queen,
Noble-minded, / the mead-bowl bare ;
Greeted she the Geats' Prince ; / God she thanked,
Wise in her words, / that her wish was
accomplished,

That she on any / earl might reckon
For comfort against the curse. / The cup he took,
A war-fierce warrior, / from Wealhtheow,
630 And then brake into speech, / for battle ready ;
Beowulf made utterance, / Ecgtheow's boy :
" I swear this oath / when I sailed on the ocean,
In a sea-boat sate / with my soldier-band,
That, once for all, / would I your people's
Wish have wrought, / or warring have fallen,
In the fiend's grip fast. / Fashion I shall
Earl-like efforts, / or the end of the days
Of me shall await / in this mead-hall."

To the wife that word / well-liking seemed,
640 The gest of the Geat ; / gold-decked she went,
A free-born Folk-Queen, / by her Friend to sit.
Then was, after as erst-while, / inside the hall
The proud word spoken ; / the people rejoiced,
The conquerors clamoured, / till sudden it came
That Hafdane's son / would go to seek
His evening rest ; / he knew that the evil one
That high hall / did think to harry,
Soon as the sun's light / see they might not,
Or, now descending / night over all,
650 Shapes of the shadows / slinking came,
Wan under the welkin. / The warriors all arose ;
Greeted each one / then the other,
Hrothgar Beowulf, / and bade him hail,
Wield it in the wine-hall, / and this word quoth :
" Never have I to any men / ere now entrusted,
Since shield on fist / I first might shew,
The noble-hall of Danes, / but now to thee.
Have thou and hold / this holiest of houses,

660 Of thy fame be mindful, / thy might make known,
Watch for the wrath. / Nor thy wish shalt thou
 lack,
If all that effort / alive thou endurest."

X

Bewent him then Hrothgar / with his band of
 heroes,
Help of the Shieldings, / out of hall ;
He would, the War-Chief, / Wealththeow seek,
A Queen for his couch. / He had, the Kings' Glory,
Against Grendel, / (so grooms heard tell)
A sentinel set ; / who service did
About the Danes' Elder, / offered watch against
 etins.

670 However the Geats' Prince / gladly trusted
In his moody might, / in his Maker's Mercy.
Then he did off / his iron byrny,
His helm from his head, / gave his hilted sword,
Choicest of irons, / to his armour-bearer,
And bade him hold / the battle-harness.
Spake then the brave one / some boasting words,
Beowulf the Geat, / ere to bed he went :
" Not in the might of hosts / more meagre hold I
 me,
In the game of war, / than Grendel's self ;
Therefore with the sword to sleep / will I not send
 him,

680 Nor of life dis-use him, / though all that I may.
Knows he not the good ways / gainst me to strike,
My round-shield to hew, / though rough he be
In works of violence ; / but we two by night shall
Set aside the sword, / if seek he dare
War without weapons, / and then let Wise God,
The Holy Lord, / on either hand
The merit deem, / as meet He thinketh."
Laid him down then the Champion, / a
 cheek-bolster took

690 The face of the earl, / and all around many
A seely seaman / sank to rest.
Not one of them thought / that therefrom he
should
His own loved earth / ever after see,
The folk or the free-burgh / where he was fostered:
For they had found / that far too many before
In that wine-hall / death had wasted
Of the Danish people. / But to them the Divine
One gave
Webs of war-speed, / to the Weder-people
Solace and succour, / that their foe they should
Through the craft of one / all overcome,
700 By the might of himself ; / in sooth it is known
That Mighty God / all mannes-kind
Through wide-time wieldeth. / Came in the wan
night
Stalking, the shadow-goer. / The shooters
slumbered,
They who the hall-house / should be holding,
All but one. / This by each was known
That them he must not, / If their Maker willed it
not,
The ceaseless scather, / under the shadows snatch ;
But he, waking, / in the wrath's defiance,
Abode, boiling with rage, / the battle's outcome.

XI

710 Then came from the moor / under misty slopes
Grendel gliding, / God's ire he bare ;
Was minded, that murderer, / of mannes-kind
Some to ensnare / in that solemn hall.
Waded he under the welkin / till he the wine-house,
Gold-hall of grooms / might get well in sight,
With filigrees fretted ; / nor was it the first time
That he Hrothgar's / home had sought.
Nor ever in his days did he, / ere nor after,
Hardier hero / nor hall-thegns find.

720 Came then to the house / that creature hieing,
 From delights divided ; / the door soon opened,
 Though with fired-bands fastened, / when his
 fingers touched it ;
 Burst he in then balefully-minded, / and boiling
 he was,
 The mouth of the room. / Rapidly after
 On its fashioned floor / the fiend was treading,
 On went he ireful, / in his eyes there shone,
 To leaping-flame likest, / a light unlovely,
 Saw he in the hall / heroes many,
 A cousin-band sleeping / couched together,
 730 A heap of friendly warriors. / Then his heart
 laughed out ;
 He was minded to divide, / ere the day came,
 That ugly devil, / in each and all
 The life from the limbs ; / then lust to him came
 Of feasting his fill. / Nor was it fated again
 That more he might / of mannes-kind
 Stomach after that night. / A strong wrong beheld
 Higelac's man, / how the mortal scather
 With his fearsome grip / would be faring.
 Nor that did the devil / think to delay,
 740 But he seized swiftly / in his first swoop
 A sleeping man, / unawares he slit him,
 Bit his bones'-cover, / his blood-streams drank,
 Swift mouthfuls swallowed ; / soon he had
 The unliving man / all polished clean,
 From his feet to his fingers. / Forth, nearer, stepped
 he,
 Took then with his hands / that highest-minded
 Hero at rest ; / reached out against him
 The fiend with his hand ; / he quickly held him
 With thoughts of envy, / and sate on his arm.
 750 Soon did he find, / that shepherd of felonies,
 That he had not met, / in Middle-Garth,
 In the ends of the earth, / from any other man
 A hand-grip harder ; / he in his heart
 Felt sore afraid ; / nor the sooner there-from
 might he.

In his mind was he fain / into the mirk to flee,
The tribe of devils to seek ; / nor was his treatment
there

Such as in earlier days / he had ever met.
Was minded then the gallant / mate of Higelac
Of his evening-speech. / Upright he stood,
760 And fast him held ; / his fingers were bursting :
Etin was outward ; / Earl farther stepped.
Meant he, so mighty, / whereso he might
To wind aside, / and on his way thence
Flee to the fen-lands ; / he knew that his fingers
were held

In a jealous grip. / 'Twas a joyless journey
That the harmful-scather / to Heorot made.
Dinned then the master-hall ; / and to the Danes
all seemed it,

To the chester-dwellers, / to each of the keenest,
To the earls, an ale-drought. / Ireful were both
770 Those cruel wardens. / The walls were crashing ;
It was a great wonder / that the wine-hall
Withstood the grim-fighters, / that to the ground
it fell not,

The fair field-dwelling ; / but so fast it was
Inside and outside / with iron bindings,
By sage thought smithied. / Then from the sills
fell

Mead-benches many / (my story tells)
With gold finished, / where the foes grappled ;
Nor weened ere then / the wisest Shieldings
That any among men / could manage it ever
780 Beautiful, bone-decked, / to break asunder,
Or find out to unlock it, / unless the flame's
embrace

Should swallow it in smoke. / A sound ascended
New enough ; / on the North-Danes fell
An awful terror / on each and all,
Who from the wall / to his weeping hearkened,
To God's enemy greeting / a griesly lay,
No song of triumph, / his sores bewailing,

790 Hell's bondman. / For held him fast
He that of men was / in might the strongest
In the days / of this our life.

XII

Would not the earls'-buckler / for any thing
Let that quelling quester / quick escape him ;
Nor his time on the earth / to any tribe
Deemed he useful. / Drew then each
Of Beowulf's earls / his ancient heirloom,
And would his lordes / life defend,
The marvellous Prince, / if so they might.
For this they wist not, / when they waged against
him,
The hardy-minded / men of battle,
800 And on every half / they thought to hew him,
To search out his soul ; / that the ceaseless scather
Not one upon earth / of the choicest irons,
Of war-bills none / would there come near,
For winning weapons / he had bewitched,
And every sword-edge. / Must the end of his time
In the days / of this our life
Be sorrow-full, / and the foreign phantom
Into the fiends' realm / far must travel.
Then this he found, / who freely erstwhile
810 In mirthful mood / against man-kind
Had fashioned felonies, / he, foes with God,
That his live body / might last no longer,
For him the haughty / mate of Higelac
Had by the arm ; / so each to the other
While he lived was baneful. / Grief of body he
bore,
The wicked wretch ; / a wound in his shoulder,
A swelling sore shewed ; / the sinews sprang out,
The bones'-cover burst. / To Beowulf was
The glory given ; / must Grendel thence
820 Sick of life flee / under fenland slopes,
Seek a joyless dwelling ; / judged he surely

That his evil life / to an end was come,
The tale of his days. / For the Danes all was
After that fatal fight / fulfilment of wishes.
Had he then cleansed, / he that came from afar,
Wise-head and stout-heart, / the hall of Hrothgar,
From jeopardy saved it ; / he rejoiced in that night's
work,
In his excellent strength. / To the East-Danes had
The Geat-men's Prince / his proud boast
performed,
830 So that their miseries / all were mended,
The sorrow of enmity / they had erstwhile
endured,
When in throes of need / they had to thole
Taunts not a little. / 'Twas a token clear,
When that battle-hero / the hand laid down,
The arm and the oxters / (it was all there together,
Grendel's grip !) / under the groined roof.

XIII

Then were in the morning / (my story tells)
Around the mead-hall / many a bold man ;
Fared the folk-leaders / from far and near
840 Over wide ways, / a wonder to witness,
The foot-prints of their foe. / That his life was
finished
Seemed no matter for sorrow / to any of those
men
Who his un-triumphant / track regarded,
How, weary at heart / on his way from thence,
In fight overcome, / to the fen of the nicors,
Fordoomed and fleeing, / he had footed life's road.
There was his blood / to the brink up-welling,
Awful waves, eddying / all bemingled
With boiling gore, / with blade-drops surged ;
850 Death-fated he dyed them, / when divided from
joys
In his fenland lair / he laid down life,

His heathenish soul ; / there hell him seized.
 Came back there-after / the elder comrades
 And youngsters many, / a jovial journey,
 From the mere, so happy, / on horses mounted
 Boys upon bays. / There was Beowulf's
 Might proclaimed ; / many and oft quothey
 That south nor north, / two seas between,
 Over the endless earth, / never another
 860 Under the bowl of heaven / was there better,
 A round-shield warrior / more worthy to rule.
 Nor did they in their Friend and Lord / the least
 fault find,
 In glad Hrothgar, / for that was a good King.
 At whiles, great in battle, / they let gallop,
 Matched in a race, / their fallow mares,
 Where the field-ways / fairest were reckoned,
 Kenned and chosen. / At whiles the King's thegn,
 A man boast-laden, / of ballads mindful,
 Who almost all / of the olden sayings
 870 Could well remember, / fresh words would find,
 With truth entwined. / He took up his tale
 Of the coming of Beowulf, / cleverly weaving it,
 And spake with good speed / his skilful stories,
 Wrestled in words ; / well-nigh all he quoth
 That of Sigemund he / had heard them say,
 His mighty efforts, / unknown things many,
 The wars of the Waelsing, / his wide journeys,
 Whereof the sons of men / were scarcely aware,
 Of feuds and of felonies, / save Fitela by his side,
 880 When something of such matters / would he say,
 An uncle to his nephew, / for so ever they were
 In fighting times / faithful comrades :
 They had almost all / of the etin-kindred
 Sunk with their swords. / Unto Sigemund sprang
 After the day of his death / a deal of glory,
 Since, hardy in war, / the Worm he quelled,
 That herd of the hoard ; / under a hoary stone,
 An atheling's son, / alone he ventured
 A fearless deed ; / nor was Fitela with him :

890 However it was sent him / that his sword went
 through
 That wondrous Worm, / till in the wall it stood,
 A doughty iron, / and the dragon swooned in death.
 He had, that gallant, / so wholly gained,
 That the jewel-hoard / he might enjoy
 As himself listed ; / a sea-boat he loaded,
 Bare into the breast of the ship / bright adornments,
 Did Waelses son. / The Worm its heat melted.
 He was of wanderers / well the most famous
 In the houses of men, / a helper of warriors
 By his daring deeds : / so in days of old throve he.
900 Whenas Heremodes / hardihood waned,
 His power and his prowess, / amid the Eotens he
 passed
 Into bondage of his foes / forth betrayed,
 Sent away swiftly. / Surging of sorrows
 Lamed him too long. / Throughout life he was
 A care to his own, / to his kinsmen all.
 So that often bewailed / in olden times
 The stout-hearted one's sailing / sage carls many
 Who on him, as a bulwark / against bale, had
 believed,
 When, son of their Kings, / he should come to
910 manhood,
 Take his father's rulership, / reign over the folk,
 The hoard and the refuge, / a realm of heroes,
 Homestead of Shieldings. / He was by all—
 Higelac's mate— / of mannes-kind,
 By his friends more favoured. / But in felony the
 other was steeped.

 At whiles in races / the yellow roads
 The mares' feet measured. / Then was morning's
 light
 Thrust suddenly forth. / Fared soldiers many,
 Haughty-hearted, / to that high hall,
920 To see a strange wonder ; / so himself too, the
 King,
 Out of the bride-bower, / the bracelet-store's warden,

Trod forth triumphant, / with a troop beyond
number,
He, kenned and chosen, / and his Queen beside
him
The mead-walk measured / with her maiden-band.

XIV

Hrothgar spake ; / he to the hall going
Stood on the steps of it, / saw the steep-pitched
roof
With gold made lovely, / and Grendel's hand :
“ For this ensign / to the Almighty thanks
At once be offered. / Many evils have I borne,
930 Gins set by Grendel ; / ever may God work
Wonder upon wonder, / Warden of Glory.
'Tis not any time / since I from none
Of my woes did ween / that in the wide world
ever
I should reach a remedy, / when, reeking of blood,
This dearest of houses / sword-dreary stood ;
Woe scattered wide / my wise men all
Who weened not that they / in the wide world
ever
Might the folk's cloister / close to their foes,
To demons and devils. / Now a doughty one hath
940 By Grace Divine / a deed accomplished,
Where all of us / might not ever
Succeed, for our subtilty. / What ! Now may she
say,
Whosoever the woman be / who this warrior bore,
The latest of his line, / if she yet liveth,
That God of old / was gracious to her
At her child-bearing. / Now, Beowulf, thee,
Sagest of men, / as mine own son
Will I love throughout life ; / good-luck attend
thee
With thy new kindred ; / be thou never in need

950 Of thy wish in the world, / while I am wielding
power.

Full oft and for less, / fees have I lavished,
From my hoard have honoured / men less hardy,
Feebler in fight. / Thy fame thou hast
Made so great by thy deeds / that thy glory liveth
For ever and all time. / May the Almighty with
thee

Deal ever kindly / as He did this day ! ”

Beowulf answered, / Ecgtheow's boy :

“ We this mighty work / with great good will
Fought and finished ; / fiercely dared we
960 The rage of the unknown ; / rather would I
That thou himself / mightest have seen,
The fiend in his war-gear, / wearily falling.
Hastily I, / as hard I clasped him,
On his death-bed / thought to bind him,
So that, gripped by my / muscles, he should
Lie, for life gasping ; / lest his body leap from me.
But him I might not, / for the Maker willed it not,
Keep from his going ; / I did not cling fast enough
To that fatal foe ; / too forceful he was,
970 The fiend on his feet. / However his fingers he
left,

His life to save, / and to leave us a sign of him,
His arm and his oter. / Nor yet did he any
Happiness purchase, / a helpless wight.
No longer he liveth / in loathly doings,
Burdened with sins ; / but sore pain hath him
In a grip of necessity / narrowly prisoned,
In baleful bonds ; / there shall he abide,
A monster foul with malice, / the mighty doom
Which the Shining Maker / as sentence shall mete
him.”

980 Then a silent man / was the son of Ecglaf
In boasting words / of his battle-works,
Since that the athelings / by that earl's strength
Over the high roof / a hand could see,
A fiendes fingers / before them all.
Was the stem of each nail / to steel best likened,

Heathenish hand-spurs, / the battle-hardy one's
Talon unholy ; / then each of them told
That there was naught so hard / that hold him
 might,
Nor old-tried iron / which from that ogre
990 The bloody battle-fist / might break away.

XV

Then it was hastily / ordered that Heorot
 withinwards
Be made fair by men's fingers ; / not a few were
 there
Of wights and of women / who that wine-house,
The guest-hall garnished. / Gold-broidered shone
Webs on the walls, / wonder-sights many
For every soul / that on such things stareth.
Was that bright building / broken sorely
Though inwards all / with iron-bands fastened,
Its hinges sundered ; / the roof only still
1000 Was whole and sound, / when the wanton one
Foul with felonies / in flight bewent,
Of life unhopeful. / Not easy is it
To escape away, / make the effort who will,
But each soul-bearer / shall be borne,
By necessity bound, / of the bairns of men,
Of the peoples on ground, / to the place prepared
Where his dear body, / in its bed-lair fast,
Sleeps after life's supper. / Then was season and
 reason
That to the hall should go / Halfdane's son ;
1010 The King himself / would partake of the supper.
Nor have I heard that a muster / of men so many
About their booty-giver / bare themselves better.
Bent they then to the benches, / abundant in wealth,
With joy they feasted ; / and fairly tasted
Many a cup-ful / the kinsmen of all there,
Hardy of heart / in that hall so high,
Hrothgar and Hrothulf. / Heorot within was

Filled with friends ; / no fashion of treason
The Shielding-People / shaped that while.
1020 Gave then to Beowulf / the bairn of Halfdane
An ensign of gold / to grace his triumph,
Broidered shaft-standard, / byrny and helmet ;
A mighty treasure-sword / many saw there
Borne before that brave. / Beowulf took
The flagon on the floor, / nor of that fee-gift
Among the shooters / shamed need he be ;
Nor have I heard that more friendliwise / four
treasures

Any gold-girdled / groups of men
At the ale-benches each / upon other bestowed.
1030 About the roof of that helmet / his head's safety,
With wires ywounden, / a wreath guarded
without,
That the file-sharp blades, / boldly aimed, might
not,

Shower-tempered, scathe him, / when the
shield-warrior
Should be going / against his foes.
Bade then the Earls'-Buckler / eight horses
With fashioned facings / upon the floor be led
In under the barriers ; / on one of them stood
A saddle, tricked out, / with treasures shining ;
That was the captain-seat / of the High King,
1040 When in the play of swords / the son of Halfdane
Was fain to flourish ; / never failed in the
forefront

His famous skill / when the slain were falling.
And then to Beowulf / of both these riches
The Prince of Ing's Friends / possession gave,
Animals and weapons ; / bade him well to use
them.

So manliwise / the Mighty Lord,
Hoard-Warden of heroes, / battle-horrors
rewarded
With mares and with metal, / so that never man
may blame him,
Who wishes to say / the sooth as is right.

XVI

1050 Then also on each / the Lord of Earls,
 Of those who with Beowulf / the brimming-sea
 travelled,
 At that mead-bench / bestowed treasures,
 Ancient heirlooms ; / and for that one he bade
 That gold be given, / whom Grendel lately
 With malice had quelled, / as more of them he
 would,
 Had not Wise God / their wyrd withstood,
 And the might of their man. / The Maker ruled
 over all
 The nations of men, / as now even He doth ;
 Wherefore is understanding / everywhere best,
 1060 Forethought of mind. / Much shall he find
 Of lovely and loathly, / he who long here
 In these war-days / the world brooketh.
 There was singing and sounding / assembled
 together
 Before Halfdane's / battle-headsman,
 The laughter-wood was touched, / the lay oft told,
 When of hall-pleasure / Hrothgar's bard
 Along the mead-benches / made announcement.

“ By Finnes offspring, / when fear gat hold of them,
 The hero of Half-Danes, / Hnaef of the Shieldings
 1070 In Frisian fight / to fall was fated.
 No wise did Hildeburh / need to honour
 The troth of the Eotens ; / unsinning, she was
 Lorn of her loved ones / at that linden-play,
 Of her boys and her brothers ; / they bowed to
 their fate,
 Wounded with spears ; / that was a sorrowful
 woman.
 Nor without due reason / did Hocces daughter
 The Maker's Doom mourn / when morning came,
 When under the sunshine / she might see
 Her men lie murdered / where most she had held
 1080 Of joys in the world. / War took off all

Of Finnes thegns, / except a few only,
So that he might not / in the meeting-place
Fight one whit / in war with Hengest,
Nor his sorry few / by fighting save
From the Prince's thegn. / But they offered in
payment

That another place for him / they would have all
ready,

A hall and a high-seat ; / that half of the lordship
They might own and share / with the sons of the
Eotens ;

And that at fee-givings / Folcwalda's son

1090 Every day / the Danes should endow,
Hengest's host / with rings should honour,
With even so much / of massed treasures,
Of fashioned gold, / as he the Frisian kin
In the beer-hall / would embolden.

Then they trysted / on the two sides.

A fast peace-compact ; / Finn to Hengest

In strength, unstriving, / with oaths did swear

That he the woeful few, / by his wise men's decree,

Would nourish with honour, / so that no man
there

1100 By words or by works / should wreck the treaty,

Nor by evil cunning / ever undo it,

Though they their sovran's / slayer should follow
Master-less, / as needs they must ;

But if any of the Frisians, / fool-hardy in speech

Of that murderous hatred / mindful were,

Then the sword's edge / should avenge it.

The pact was plighted, / and precious gold

Borne up from the hoard. / 'The Army-Shieldings'

Best man-of-battle / on his bier lay ready ;

1110 On that pyre was / plainly seen

A blood-stained sark, / a Swine all-golden,

Iron-hard Boar, / and athelings many

Struck down by their wounds ; / some in the strife
had fallen.

Bade she then, Hildeburh, / that on Hnaefes pyre

Her own self's sons / to the flames be sent,

Their bodies for burning / on the bier to don ;
Her hand on his shoulder / sorrowed that lady,
With lays lamented. / The lord arose ;
Curled up to the clouds / of corpse-fires the
greatest,

1120 Roared before the mound ; / their heads melted,
Wound-gates burst open ; / then blood sprang out
From bodies foe-bitten. / The flame all swallowed,
Most gluttonous ghost, / those whom the war had
gotten,
Of both the folks ; / their bloom was scattered.

XVII

Departed those valiants / to visit their dwellings,
Forlorn of their friends, / Friesland to see,
Their homes and high burgh. / Hengest all through
That death-stained winter / dwelt with Finn
In strength unstriving ; / his homestead he
remembered,

1130 Although he might never / over the mere drive
His ringed-stem ; / with storms the holm weltered,
Warred with the wind. / Winter locked the waves
Ice-ybounden, / till that there came another
Year in the garths, / even as yet doth
(What, surely, aye / observes the season)
Glory-bright weather. / Then was winter scattered,
Fair was the field's bosom, / forth went the exile,
The guest from the garths ; / he of grief's avenging
Sooner thought / than of sea-faring,

1140 If he a bitter meeting / might bring about,
That the men of the Eotens / therein be
remembered.

So he did not refuse / the world's ruling
When Hunlafing / the light of battle,
The best of blades / in his bosom thrust ;
Whose edges were / to the Eotens known.
So to fearless-hearted / Finn befell
Sword-death savage / to himself at home,

When the grim grappling / Guthlaf and Oslaf
After sea-sailing / in sorrow lamented,
150 Charged him with a share of their woes ; / nor
might he the wavering life
Hold in his breast. / Then the hall was bestrewn
With bodies of foemen ; / Finn likewise was slain,
A King mid his courtiers / and the Queen taken.
The shooters of the Shieldings / to their ships
carried

All the inward furnishings / of that earthly King,
Which in Finnes home / they might be finding,
Sun-jewels, subtle-gems. / Then on the sea-way
His courtly dame / to the Danes they carried,
Led her to her people.”

The lay was sung,

160 The gleeman's gest. / Joy after arose,
Bright grew the bench-sound ; / Bearers gave out
Wine from wondrous vessels. / Then came
Wealhtheow forth

Going beneath a golden crown, / even where the
goodly twain

Sate, the uncle and the nephew ; / still were they
each at peace together,

Each of them was true to the other. / So there
Unferth, too, the spokesman,

Sate by the feet of the Shieldings' Father ; / all of
them in his feeling trusted,

That he had a cruel courage, / though he was not
to his kinsmen

Loyal, with the sword-edge playing. / Spake then
the Lady of the Shieldings :

“ Take thou this flagon, / free-lord of mine,

170 Heaper of treasure, / happy be thou,
Gold-friend of men, / and to the Geats speak
In mild words, / as a man should do.

Be glad with the Geats, / of gifts be mindful ;

Near and far, / thou now peace findest.

Men have said to me / that thou for thy son wouldst
Have this hero. / Heorot is cleansed,

Bright hall of jewels ; / enjoy while thou mayest

Comforts many, / and to thy kindred leave
 Folk and kingdom / when forth thou must,
 1180 To meet thy Maker. / I know mine own
 Gracious Hrothulf, / that our youth he will
 Hold in honour, / if thou sooner than he,
 Lover of Shieldings, / leavest the world :
 Ween I that he good things / will yield again
 To our own offspring, / if all he remembers
 That we two for his wish / and his worship of old
 When he was a child / in his honour planned.”
 Turned she then by the bench / where her boys
 were,
 Hrethric and Hrothmund, / and the heroes' bairns,
 1190 The youths together ; / there the good one sate,
 Beowulf of the Geats, / by those brethren twain.

XVIII

To him was the flagon borne, / and friendly
 bidding
 Given in words, / and wunden gold
 Gladly offered, / arm-girdles twain,
 Rings and a garment, / the greatest of necklets
 Whereof I on this earth / was ever told.
 Nor under the sky have I / heard of any seemlier
 Treasure hoard of heroes, / since Hama bore off
 To that bright burgh / the Brosings' collar,
 1200 The crown and the casket ; / from the cunning he
 fled
 Of Eormanric, / chose the Eternal Rule.
 That ring had also / Higelac the Geat,
 Grandson of Swerting, / on his last sailing,
 When he under his banner / the booty guarded,
 Fenced the spoils of the slain ; / him fate sped
 hence,
 When in wanton pride / woes he suffered,
 A feud with the Frisians. / He that finery wore,
 Costly stones, / on the cup of the waters,
 Richest of princes ; / under his shield he perished.

1210 Lay then in the Franks' keeping / the life of that
King,
His body's clothing / and the collar therewith ;
Evil prowlers / his corpse plundered
By the fortune of war ; / the folk of the Geats
Held that field of slaughter.

The hall filled with sound.
Wealththeow began then, / before the warriors
spake :

“ This bended-work use, / Beowulf, beloved
Youth, with good luck, / and this garment wear,
The people's treasures, / and prosper well.
Shew thyself in thy strength, / and to these
striplings give

1220 Kindly rede ; / thy reward I will remember.
So hast thou fared, / that far and near
All their lives long / shall men esteem thee,
Even so far abroad / as the sea is bowed about
Windy earth-walls. / Be while thou livest
A wealthy atheling ; / I wish thee much
Store of treasures. / Be to these sons of mine
Helpful in thy deeds. / Uphold them in happiness.
Here is every earl / by the others trusted,
Mild of mood, / to the Master loyal,
1230 The thegns are kindly, / the commons all in
readiness.

Drinking, the nobles / do as I bid them.”
Went she then to her seat. / There was of suppers
the choicest,

Drank wine those wights ; / Wyrð they knew not,
The forecast grim / that was falling upon
Many an earl. / Soon as evening came,
And Hrothgar bewent him / to his own home
A rich man to his rest, / guarded that roof
Earls unnumbered, / as often of old they had done.
The bench-tree they bared ; / it was over-borne
1240 With beds and with bolsters. / Of the beer-sharers
one

Fey and fated / to his floor-rest bent.
Set they by their heads / their shields of war,

Board-wood bright ; / on the bench there was
Over each atheling / easily seen
A battle-steep helmet, / a ringed byrny,
A mighty spear-wood. / Their manner it was
That they ever were / for war all ready
Or at home or in the host, / or howso it might be
Even at such times / as to their sovran lord
1250 The need might come ; / that was a kindly race.

XIX

They sank then to sleep. / One sorely paid for
His evening-rest, / as full oft it befell them
What time the golden hall / Grendel haunted,
And wrought unrightly / until his end came,
Slaughter after his sins. / Then seemingly was it
Known widely of men / that a wreaker of
 vengeance still
Lived after that loathly one, / long time enough
After the griefs and murders ; / Grendel's mother,
A woman, a monster-wife, / her woes remembered,
1260 She who in dread waters / her dwelling must keep,
In coldest streams ; / since Cain became
With his blade the bane / of his only brother,
The seed of his father ; / then forth into exile went
 he,
Marked with that murder, / from men's joys
 fleeing ;
In the wastes he wandered. / Awoke from him
 many
Ghosts fore-ordained, / and Grendel one of them,
That hateful sword-wolf / who in Heorot found
A watching man / his warfare abiding.
There was the griesly one / groping after him ;
1270 Howbeit he remembered / his mighty strength,
The gift firm-set / which God had sent him ;
And himself to the Father's / favour entrusted,
For comfort and kindness ; / whereby he
 overcame the fiend,

Felled the hell-ghost, / who gat him forlorn,
From delights divided, / his death-place to seek,
Man-kindes foe. / And so now his mother,
A glutton gloom-minded / was for going
A sorrowful voyage / her son's death to avenge ;
Came she then to Heorot, / where the Ring-Danes
1280 Through the hall were sleeping. / Then, there,
swiftly, was

A change for the earls, / when in on them charged
Grendel's mother. / Was her grimness less
By even so much / as a maiden's strength is,
A wife's war-grimness / than a weaponed man's,
When the hilted blade, / by a hammer beaten,
When the sword blood-stained / the Swine on the
helmet

Of the enemy sheareth, / doughtily edged.
Then was in hall / the hard-edge drawn,
The sword over the seats, / and shield-rings many
1290 Held fast in hand ; / of helmet he recked not,
Nor of spreading byrny, / whom that horror
seized.

She was in haste, / would hie away thence
For safety, as soon / as she was seen ;
At once, of the athelings / one she had
Fast in her fangs ; / then fenwards she went.
He was Hrothgar's / dearest henchman,
By the custom of comrades, / two coasts between,
A rich shield-warrior, / whom she brake in his
rest,

A baron well-famed. / Nor was Beowulf there,
1300 For another inn / was erewhile allotted,
After treasure-giving, / to the mighty Geat.
Arose shouting in Heorot ; / she in its blood took
A hand they kenned ; / their care was renewed,
Grew in the dwellings. / That deal was not good
Which they on both sides / had to barter,
The lives of friends. / Then was the learned King,
Hoary warrior, / harshly minded,
When his elder thegn / all unliving,

His dearest soldier, / dead he saw.
 1310 Swiftly to the bower / was Beowulf summoned,
 The man of triumph ; / with the twilight of dawn
 Went mid his carles / the excellent champion,
 Himself with his comrades / where the sage King
 Wondered whether the Almighty / ever would
 After that chapter of woe / work him any change.
 Went then over the floor / the man famed in armies
 With his handful following, / (the hall-wood
 dinned)
 That he the wise one / in words might greet,
 The Lord of Ing's Friends, / might ask if so it
 was,
 1320 After this call in need, / that the night had been
 quiet.

XX

Hrothgar spake, / the Helm of Shieldings :
 " Ask not thou of our safety ; / sorrow is renewed
 In the Danish people. / Dead is Æschere,
 Yrmenlafe's / elder brother,
 My rune-binder / and my rede-bearer,
 Who stood by my shoulder / when we in the shock
 Fended our heads / in the footmen's onset,
 When crests were shattered. / So should an earl
 be
 Ever good ; / so Æschere was.
 1330 In Heorot was / the hand that slew him
 A wandering death-guest's, / nor wot I whither
 That terror, carrion-proud, / turned again
 homewards,
 In the fame of her feast. / She the feud has avenged
 Wherein thou, yesternight / Grendel quelledst,
 By thy hardihood / harshly clasping him,
 For that he too long / my loyal people
 Beset and brought low. / He bowed in the battle
 At the cost of his life ; / and now another is come,

1340 A mighty murther, / her man would avenge,
 And farther hath / the feud carried,
 Wherefore may it be thought / by many a thegn,
 Who for his treasure-giver / in his soul greeteth,
 A heart-sorrow hard ; / now the hand low lieth
 That to each among you / yielded his desire.
 I the land-dwellers, / my loyal people,
 The sage men in hall, / I have heard them say
 That they have seen / such a twain
 Of mighty march-steppers / holding the moors,
 Ghosts of Elsewhere ; / one of them was,
 1350 As with most certainty / they might perceive,
 In a woman's likeness ; / the other, to
 wretchedness doomed,
 In a man's image / the exile-ways trod,
 Save that he was mightier / than any man other,
 Who in days of yore / Grendel was named
 By the field-dwellers ; / of his father they know
 not
 Whether any for him / was ever begotten
 Among ghosts of darkness. / In a doubtful land
 Dwell they, wolf-slopes, / windy nesses,
 Fearsome fen-paths, / where the force from the
 mountains
 1360 Under misty nesses / netherwards floweth,
 A flood under the fields. / 'Tis not far from hence
 As miles are marked / that the mere standeth,
 Above which hang / rimy bowers,
 A wood fast-rooted / the water o'ershadows.
 There will, every night, / a wonder be seen,
 Fire in the flood. / There is none found so wise
 Of the sons of men, / who has sounded those depths.
 Though the heath-stepper, / by hounds sore
 swinked,
 The hart strong of horn / the holt-wood seek,
 1370 Put to flight from afar ; / life freely he selleth,
 His soul on the shore, / sooner than therein will
 he
Hide his head. / 'Tis no happy spot, that ;
 Thence an eddying wave / ascendeth upwards,

Wan to the welkin, / when the wind stirreth
Loathly weather, / till the lift darkeneth,
The heavens weep. / Now wisdom belongs
Again to thee only. / That airt yet thou knowest
not,

1380 The marshes of fear / where thou mayest find
That soul full of sins. / Seek if thou darest.
I will thee for the fight / with a fee reward,
With olden treasures, / as erst I did,
With wunden gold, / if away thou comest."

XXI

Beowulf answered, / Ecgtheow's boy :
" Sorrow not, old sage ; / better serves it that each
man

His friend's murder avenge, / than much mourning.
Every one of us / the end must await
Of life in the world, / let him win who may
Fame before death ; / that is for a fighting man
Whose life is over / thereafter best.

1390 Arise, Realm-Warden, / let us run forth,
Grendel's kinswoman / go we tracking.
I swear to thee this / that she shall not escape me
In folds of the earth / nor in mountain forests,
Nor on ocean-ground, / go where she will.
This day therefore / do thou have patience
In each of thy woes, / as I wish of thee.

Upleaped then the greybeard, / God he thanked,
The Mighty Lord, / for what the man had spoken.
Then for Hrothgar / a horse was bridled,
1400 A charger with woven mane ; / the wise old Prince
Went forth in state ; / stepped out the war-band
Of shield-bearers. / The track was shewing,
Along the wood-paths / widely seen,
Footprints over the ground ; / she had gone for-
ward
Over the murky moor, / their mate-thegn had
borne,

Of soul bereft, / the best of them
 Who with Hrothgar / the home had guarded.
 The son of the athelings / then went over
 Steep stone-cliffs, / strait passages,
 1410 Single tracks, / a road untrodden,
 Beetling nesses, / nicor-houses many ;
 He went first, / with him a few
 Prudent men, / the plain to espy,
 Until in a trice / the mountain trees
 He found o'erhanging / a hoary stone,
 That joyless wood ; / the water stood under,
 Drumling, blood-dreary. / To the Danes all was,
 To the friends of Shieldings, / sorrow of soul
 For many a thegn / that he had to thole,
 1420 Trouble for each of the earls / whenas Æschere's
 Head they met / on that holm-cliff.
 The flood surged with blood / (the folk saw that)
 With heart-drops hot. / The horn now sang,
 Sounding to battle. / The soldiers all sate ;
 They saw then in the water / of the worm-kind
 many,
 Strange sea-dragons / swimming the sound,
 Also, on the ness-slopes, / nicors lying,
 (Who in the first daylight / often follow
 A sorrowful course / on the sail-road),
 1430 Worms and wild-deer ; / away they hurried,
 Bitter and belching, / the blast they had heard,
 The war-horn yelling. / One the Yeats' Prince
 With his leaping bow / bereft of life,
 Of his strife with the waves, / so that stood in his
 guts
 The harsh war-arrow ; / he on the holm was
 Slower in swimming, / for death then seized him.
 Swiftly was he on the billows / by their boar-sprits
 Sharply hooked, / hard bested,
 Cruelly pressed / and pulled on the cliff,
 1440 A wondrous wave-breaster ; / the warriors looked
 On their griesly guest. / Girded him Beowulf
 In the weeds of an earl, / nor recked at all of life ;
 He would in his war-byrny, / braided by hand,

Broad and broidered with skill, / brave the deep
 sound ;
 Well could it shelter / the sheath of his bones
 That the battle-grip / might not his breast,
 Nor the angry clutch / his spirit injure ;
 But the white helmet / his head warded,
 Which on the mere's floor / was to mingle,
 1450 To seek the sound's tumult— / with treasure
 made worthy,
 With fine chains compassed, / as in former days
 The weapon-smith wrought it, / with wonders
 adorned it,
 Beset it with Swine-figures, / so that since then no
 Brand nor battle-blade / managed to bite it.
 Nor was that the meanest / of main-supports
 Wherewith Hrothgar's spokesman / helped him
 in his need ;
 That hafted blade / Hrunting was named ;
 'Twas one of the foremost / of ancient treasures ;
 Its edge was of iron, / etched with poison-twigs,
 1460 Hardened in the blood of hosts ; / never in battle
 had it failed
 Any man / whose arm had clasped it,
 Who the way of terror / dared to tread,
 The field of foemen ; / 'twas not the first time
 That an excellent work / it was to accomplish.
 Indeed he recalled not, / Ecglaf's kinsman
 Strong in might, / what he had spoken before,
 With wine drunken, / when that weapon he lent
 To a better swordsman ; / himself, he durst not
 Under the rush of the waves / risk his life,
 1470 Act with lordship ; / lost he thereby glory,
 An excellent fame ; / 'twas not so with the other
 When he for the assault / had armed himself.

XXII

Beowulf spake, / Ecgtheow's boy :
 " Bethink thee now, mighty / man of Halfdane,

Duke most wise, / now that for the deed am I ready,
Gold-friend of thy lads, / of what lately we said
That if I should, / sharing thy need,
Of life be stripped, / thou wouldst stand to me
ever,

When forth I have fared, / in a father's place.

1480 Do thou be kind / to my kinsmen-thegns,
My boon-companions, / if me the battle take ;
Do thou also the treasures / that in tribute thou
gavest me,

Hrothgar dearest, / to Higelac send.

May he learn then from that gold, / the Lord of
the Geats,

May Hrethel's son see, / when on that hoard he
stareth,

That I had found / a fine and good
Jewel-giver, / and had joy while I might.

And do thou let Unferth / the old heirloom,
The well-wrought wave-sword, / —a widely
known man

1490 Have that hard edge. / For me, I with Hrunting
Glory will gain, / or death shall get me."

After those words / the Weder-Geats' Prince
Sped boldly on, / nor any answer

Would he abide ; / the brimming flood whelmed
That man of battle. / 'Twas the breadth of a day
Ere he might get / to the ground beneath.

Soon found she out / who the flood's extent
Had held, a sword-glutton, / an hundred seasons,
Grim and greedy, / that some groom there

1500 That home of else-things / over head was scouting.
She groped then towards him ; / the warrior gripped
In an awful clutch ; / not at all might she scathe
His hale body ; / the rings without guarded him,
So that through his coat of mail / she might not
come at him,

Through the locken limb-sark / with loathly
fingers.

Bare then the mer-wolf, / when to the bottom she
came,

The ringed Prince / to her own place,
 So that he might not, / for all his proud mind,
 Wield his weapons ; / for such wondrous things
 1510 Swinked him in the sound, / sea-deer many
 With worrying tusks / his war-sark tare,
 Chased him the creatures. / Then the earl knew
 That he was in some or other / enemy's hall,
 Where no water / a whit might scathe him,
 Nor, for the hall's roof, / might get hold upon
 him
 The fierce grip of the flood ; / fire-light he saw,
 A blinding gleam / that brightly shone.
 The good one grew ware then / of the
 ground-lying wolf,
 A mighty mer-wife ; / a main-stroke he gave her
 1520 With his sword of battle, / nor its swing did his
 hand withhold,
 Till the ring-set sword / rang out on her head
 A greedy war-lay. / Then her guest found
 That his battle-gleamer / would not bite,
 Nor fetch to her heart, / but the edge of it failed
 The lord in his need. / It had lasted many
 Hard-fought meetings, / helms oft had shorn,
 Fated-men's war-coats ; / this was the first time
 For the goodly weapon / that its glory waned.
 Still was he purposeful, / of his prowess lost
 nothing ;
 1530 Of his honour mindful / was Higelac's mate.
 Threw down then the banded sword / with jewels
 blended
 That angry warrior, / so that on the earth it lay,
 Stiff and steel-edged. / In his strength he trusted,
 Hand-muscles of might. / So a man should do
 Then when in war / he thinketh to win
 Lasting praise / nor of his life recketh.
 Caught then by the shoulder / (for the fight he
 cared not)
 The War-Geats' Master / Grendel's mother ;
 Flung he then, battle-hardy, / so furious was he,
 1540 The foe of his life, / till she lay on the floor.

She quickly again / requited his handiwork
With her grim grip, / and against him reached.
Stooped over then wearily / the strongest of
warriors,
The foot-men's champion, / until that he fell.
Sate she then on the hall-guest / and her saxe she
drew,
Broad and brown-edged ; / her bairn she'd
avenge,
Her only offspring. / Over his arm there lay
A woven breast-net ; / that warded his life,
Withstood the entry / of point and of edge.
1550 Then had sped / the son of Ecgtheow.
Beneath the wide ground, / the Geatish champion,
If his battle-byrny / had not brought him help,
A hard war-net ; / did not Holy God
Rule the winning of wars. / The Wisest Lord,
The Justice of Heaven / judged it aright
Easily ; / so up he stood.

XXIII

He saw then among the armour / a sword rich in
victories,
An old Eotenish blade, / doughty of edge,
To warriors worshipful ; / 'twas the choicest of
weapons,
1560 But it was mightier / than any man other
Into the play of battle / might have borne,
Good and glorious, / giants' work.
He seized then the belted hilt ; / that Wolf of the
Shieldings,
Rough and war-rude, / the ringed blade drew ;
Hopeless of living, / with heat he struck
So that hard it gripped / her on the neck,
Her bone-rings brake ; / the bill went through all
Her fated flesh-cover ; / on the floor she crashed.
The sword was sweating ; / the soldier rejoiced
in his work.

1570 A flash was kindled, / light filled it within,
Even so as from the sky / brightly shineth
The Candle of Heaven. / He looked through the
house,
Turned then to the wall ; / the weapon heaved he,
Hard, by the hilt, / Higelac's thegn,
Angry, one-minded. / That edge was not
worthless

To the man of war, / for at once he would
Settle with Grendel / the many assaults
That he had wrought / on the Wester-Danes,
Far more often / than one time only,
1580 When he Hrothgar's / hearth-companions
Slew in their slumber, / swallowed sleeping
Fifteen men / of the folk of Danes,
And others also / carried out,
A loathly loot. / For that loss repaid him
The raging champion, / inas resting he saw
Grendel lie, / of war grown weary,
All unliving, / as erstwhile had left him
The battle in Heorot. / His body sprang aside
When he after death / endured that stroke
1590 The hardy sword-swing ; / then he carved off his
head.

Soon they saw, / the subtle churls,
They who with Hrothgar / on the holm were
gazing,
That the eddying waves / all were mingled,
The water blood-foul. / White of hair
The elders about the good one / said together
That they expected not ever / of that atheling
That he, swelled with conquest, / would come to
seek

Their mighty Prince, / for to many it seemed
That the wolf of the brine / had broken him up.
1600 Then came nones of the day ; / from the ness
departed
The haughty Shieldings. / Went homewards from
thence

The Gold-Friend of men. / The guests were sitting

Sick in mind, / and staring on the mere ;
They feared, and they felt not / that their friend
and lord

Himself they might see. / Then that sword began
From the sweat of death / in icicle drops,
The war-bill, to wane ; / that was something
wondrous

That it all melted, / to ice most likened
When the bond of frost / the Father unlooseth,
1610 Unwindeth the whirlpool-ropes, / He that wieldeth
Times and climes. / That is a true Creator !
Nor took he in those places, / the Weder-Geats
Prince,

More of rich treasures, / though many he saw there,
But that head / and the hilt therewith
Medalled and jewelled. / The sword was now melted,
Burned up the patterned blade ; / the blood was
so hot,

So deadly the strange spirit / that had swooned
there in death.

Soon was he swimming, / he who was saved from
the struggle,
The onslaught of his enemies ; / up he dived
through the water.

1620 The eddying waves / all were cleansed,
The spreading tracts / where the stranger-spirit
Finished his lifetime / and this fleeting state.
Came then to the shore / that Helm of Sailors,
Strong of heart, swimming, / in his sea-spoil
rejoicing,

In the mighty burden / that he brought up with him.
Going then towards him, / God they thanked,
The gallant band of thegns / were glad of their
Prince,

That they might see him / safe and sound.
Then from that bold one / byrny and helmet
1630 Were hastily loosened. / The lake grew smooth,
Water under the welkin, / weltering with blood.
Fared they forth thence / the foot-paths over,
Fain of mind / the field-way measured,

Streets well-known, / those kingly-bold men ;
From that holm-cliff / the head they bare,
No easy thing / for any among them,
The fiercest-minded ; / four of them must
Swinking carry / on a killing-shaft
Grendel's head / to the golden hall,
1640 Until there quickly / came to that hall
Fierce, whetted to fight, / four and ten
Geats a-going ; / their Guardian with them,
Proud-minded among his troop, / the mead-plains
trod.

Then came and entered / that elder among thegns,
A deed-keen man, / and duly cherished,
A hero, battle-hardy, / Hrothgar to greet.
Then into the house / by the hair was borne
Grendel's head, / where the host were drinking,
Awful before the earls / and that lady also ;
1650 On a wondrous prospect / the warriors peered.

XXIV

Beowulf made utterance, / Ecgtheow's boy :
“ What ! we to thee this sea-booty, / son of
Halfdane,
Lord of Shieldings, / lustily bring
In token of triumph, / whereto here thou lookest.
I all unsoftly / escaped alive,
In war under water / work I dared
That was not easy ; / almost was
My warring finished, / had not God me warded.
Nor might I in the heat of it / with Hrunt-ing
1660 Work any whit, / though that weapon be worthy ;
But to me granted / the Guardian of men
That on the wall I saw / seemly hanging
An old sword and good / (oftenmost has He guided
When friends are wanting), / so that weapon I drew.
Slew I in that onslaught, / as the chance offered,
The keepers of the house. / Then that killing blade

Burned away, braided mail, / as the blood
out-sprang,

Hottest of battle-sweat. / I the hilt thereof
Fetched away from my foes, / avenged their felonies,
1670 The death-qualms of Danes, / as it was due.
I to thee therefore vow it, / that thou in Heorot
mayest

Sorrowless slumber / with thy soldier-band,
And each of the thegns / of thy people,
The doughty and young ; / and that dread them
thou needest not,

Prince of Shieldings, / from those parts,
A death-bane to earls, / as of old thou didst.”
Then the golden hilt / to the grey warrior,
The hoary host-leader, / into his hand was given,
Giants' ancient work ; / it to the ownership passed,
1680 After the devils were lost, / of the Danish Lord,
Wonder-smiths' work ; / and when gave up this
world

That grim-hearted groom, / God's adversary,
Murder-guilty, / and his mother eke,
To his keeping it went— / of the Kings of the
world

To the seemliest, / two seas between,
Of those who on Sceden-ig / scattered wealth.
Hrothgar answered— / the hilt he scanned,
An ancient heirloom / whereon was the origin
written

Of the former warring / when the flood destroyed,
1690 Gushing ocean, / the Giants' kin ;
Fearlessly fared they ; / that folk was foreign
To the Lord Eternal ; / to them that ending
payment

By the welling waters / our Wielder sent.
So too on the sword-guard / of shining gold
By runic staves / aright was marked
Was set and said / for whom the sword,
Choicest of irons, / had of old been worked
With wreathed hilt and worm-pattern. / Then
spake the wise

Son of Halfdane ; / were silent all :

1700 " That, lo ! may he say / who soothly and right
Frames for his folk, / all far things remembers,
An old hearth-warden, / that this earl was
Born of the best. / Thy bloom is upraised
Beyond the wide ways, / my welcome Beowulf,
Thine over every people. / All of it in patience
thou holdest,

Thy might with wisdom of mind. / I shall grant
thee my

Pact, as at first we promised ; / Thou shalt
protection furnish

All through time / to thine own tribe,

A helper of heroes. / Nor was Heremod such

1710 To Ecgwela's heirs, / to the Honour-Shieldings ;
Nor waxed he for their welfare, / but for wanton
slaughter

And for death-qualms / of the Danish people ;

He brake, with boiling mind, / his board-companions,

Who had stood by his shoulder, / until alone he
stepped,

A famous Prince, / men's pleasures from.

Though him Mighty God / in the joys of mastery,

In strength, exalted / over all men else,

Helped and held him, / yet in his heart there grew

A blood-rough breast-hoard ; / no bracelets gave he

1720 To the Danes, as was due ; / undelighting abode he,

So that he from that turmoil / trouble suffered,

A lasting folk-sorrow. / Do thou learn by that ;

Get thee manly goodness ; / I this gossip for thee

Have worded, old in winters. / A wonder it is to
say

How Mighty God / o'er mannes-kind

By His Wide Spirit / wisdom spreadeth,

Earth and earlship ; / all things He wieldeth.

At whiles He in love / letteth turn

His Mind-Thoughts to a man / of mighty kindred,

1730 Giveth to his ownership / earthly joys,

A hedged-burgh of men / for him to hold,

Doth so for his wielding / a deal of the world,

A spreading kingdom, / that himself man cannot
In his unwisdom / think of the end.
Dwelleth he in wealth ; / no whit him darkeneth
Illness nor oldness, / nor anguish of enemies
Staineth his soul, / nor strife anywhere,
Weapon-hate, sheweth, / but all of the world
Works for his will. / Nothing worse he knoweth,

XXV

1740 Until within him / an o'erweening part
Waxes and swells, / when the warden slumbers,
The soul's shepherd ; / is that sleep too fast,
Netted in sorrows, / the Slayer is very near,
Who from his arrow-bow / angrily shooteth.
Then is he, in his strength, / struck, under his
helmet
By the cruel shaft ; / to shield him he knows not
From the crooked wonder-biddings / of the cursed
ghost ;
Thinketh he too little / what long he hath held ;
His bold mind is greedy, / never for a boast giveth
he
1750 Fashioned rings, / and then he the fate fore-shapen
Forgetteth and forgoeth, / for that God erstwhile
gave him,
Glory's Wielder, / a share of worship.
At the end of the tale, / after, it happeneth
That the flesh of his body / fleeting faileth,
Falleth fated ; / followeth him another,
Who not tearfully / the treasure divideth,
That earl's ancient-wealth, / nor the awe of him
heedeth.
Bestir thee against that balefulness, / lovely
Beowulf,
Best of men, / and the more blessed way choose
thee,
1760 Honour eternal ; / incline not to haughtiness,
Manly champion. / Now is thy might in bloom

A while only ; / soon after it may be
That thee sickness or sword / of thy sovrantry
sunder,

Or fire's fingers, / or flood's welling,
Or force of blade, / or flight of spear,
Or bitter age ; / or the eyes' brightness
Forsake and o'ershadow thee ; / swiftly it shall be
That thee, duke of men, / death overpowereth.

1770 So I the Ring-Danes / an hundred seasons
Have wielded under the welkin, / and from wars
have locked them,

From many meiniess / over this middle-garth
With ash-wood and edged-sword, / so that I not
any

Enemy counted / under heaven's arch.

What ! to me in my chamber / came a change,
Gloom after gladness, / since Grendel was,
An old adversary, / invading me ;

I by his questing / constantly bore
Mind-care mickle. / To the Maker be thanks,
Eternal Lord, / that I in life have abode

1780 Until I on his head, / hacked by the sword,
After the old struggle / with my eyes may stare.

Go now to thy seat, / the supper-joy share,
Worshipful in war ; / for us shall a wealth
Of treasure be measured, / when morning comes."

Geat was glad-minded, / soon did he go
To take his seat, / as the trusty one bade him.

Then was, after as erst, / for the valiant in action,
For the floor-sitters / fairly furnished

A new feast. / Night's helmet lowered

1790 Dark over the kinsmen. / The company all arose ;
Would that blanched head / his bed discover,

The aged Shielding. / Before all things the Geat,
Rough shield-warrior, / for rest was longing ;

Weary of his swimming, / swiftly the hall-thegn
Guided him forth, / who was come from far ;

He that worshipfully / watched over all

The needs of a thegn, / such things as in those
days

Sea-wanderers / might be wanting.
 Rested him then, roomy-hearted ; / the roof
 towered,
 1800 Gaping and gold-decked ; / the guest within slept,
 Until the black raven / of heaven's blessings
 Boded, blithe-hearted ; / then came brightly
 scattering
The sun over the hills. / The soldiers hastened ;
 Were the athelings / again to their people
 Fain to be faring : / far thence would he,
 The bold-hearted stranger, / seek out his bark.
 Bade then the hardy one / to gird on Hrunting
 Ecglaf's son, / his sword bade him take,
 Lovely iron ; / for the loan he thanked him,
 1810 Quoth he, that battle-friend / a fine one he
 reckoned,
 Strong in war ; / in no words blamed he
 The edge of that blade. / 'Twas a brave-minded
 man.
 And when ready to travel, / trapped in their
 armour,
 Were the warriors, / went, worshipped of Danes,
 The atheling to the upmost place, / where the
 other was ;
 The hero battle-haughty / Hrothgar greeted.

XXVI

Beowulf made utterance, / Ecgtheow's boy :
 " Now we sea-wanderers / wish to say,
 Come from far, / that forth we will go
 1820 Higelac to find ; / here were we fitly
 Housed, as we wished ; / well hast thou done by
 us.
 If then I on this earth / may one whit
 More attain / of thy mind's love,
 Duke of men, / than I yet have done,
 For striving in war / I am willing straightway.
 If I should learn, / over the lane of ocean,

That on thee thy neighbours / throng with terrors,
As, hating thee, / awhile they did,
I to thee a thousand / thegns shall bring,
1830 Heroes to help thee. / Of Higelac I wot,
Of the Yeatish lord, / though young he be,
The Folk's Shepherd, / that he will so frame for me
Words and works, / that well may I worship thee,
And to thy support / my spear-shaft bear,
My might for thy comfort, / when men thou
cravest.

If then Hrethric himself / in the House of the Geats
Muster, a King's son, / he may there many
Friendships find ; / far-countries are
Seemliest sought / by whomso himself is doughty.”
1840 Hrothgar made utterance / to him in answer :
“ The words thou sayest / our Wisest Lord
Hath sent to thy soul ; / nor have I heard sagelier
Any man reason / so early in life ;
Thou art strong in might / and old in mind,
A wise word-speaker. / Ween I it likely,
If it be spelt / that the spear take,
Or sword-grim battle, / the son of Hrethel,
Illness or iron / end thine Elder,
Shepherd of the laity, / and thou thy life havest,
1850 That the Sea-Geats / will have no seemlier
King than thee / to call to them,
Hoard-warden of heroes, / if hold thou wilt
The rule over the meiny. / Me thy mind and heart
Liketh longer and better, / lovely Beowulf.
Thou hast found out a way / that to the folks shall be,
To the Yeatish people, / and the Yard-Danes,
Peace in common ; / and strife shall perish,
The bitter enmity / that erst they bore ;
There shall, while I wield / this wide kingdom,
1860 Be mingling of treasures ; / many shall others
Greet with gifts / across the gannet's bath ;
Shall a ringed-ship / over the sea bring
Loot and love-tokens. / The laity, I wot,
To friend and to foe / are fast established,
In all things blameless / in the ancient ways.”

Then again the Earls' Guardian / gave him,
within there,

Halfdane's Prince, / prizes twelve,
Bade him with that treasure / his dear tribe
Seek in safety, / soon again come.

1870 Kissed then / the King well-born,
Baron of Shieldings, / that best of thegns,
And clasped his neck ; / coursed his tears,
The hoary-beard. / Both things he looked for,
Ancient and old, / but one thing rather,
That, some time, each / might see the other,
Proud minds in a meeting. / Was that man so dear
to him

That his breast's swelling / he might not bear,
But far within his bosom, / fast in bonds of thought,
For the dear man / a deep-hid longing

1880 Burned in his blood. / And Beowulf thence,
A gold-proud warrior, / the grassy mould trod
In his booty exulting ; / the sea-goer abode
Her lord and owner, / which at anchor rode.
Then was in their going / the gift of Hrothgar
Often appraised. / That was a King
In all things blameless, / until age bereft him
Of joy in his might, / which oft many hath scathed.

XXVII

Came then to the flood / the crowd of haughty
Bachelor-men ; / ring-nets bore they,

1890 Locken limb-sarks. / The land-warden espied
Earls a-going, / as erst he had ;
Nor did he with harmful words / from the
headland's height

Greet the guests, / but galloped towards them ;
Quoth he that welcome / the Weder-People's
Shining-clad soldiers / to their ships might fare.
There on the sand was / the sea-worthy craft
Laden with hero-weeds, / the ringed prow
With mares and with money ; / the mast towered

Over Hrothgar's / hoard of treasure.
 1900 He on the boat-warden / a gold y-bounden
 Sword bestowed, / so that sithence he was
 On the mead-benches / by that boon held worthier,
 A dear heirloom. / On deck he departed
 To drive deep water. / Danes' land he left.
 Then was to the mast / one of the mer-sheets,
 A sail rope-fastened ; / the sea-wood roared ;
 Nor that wave-floater / did the wind over the
 waters
 Hinder from sailing ; / the sea-goer started,
 Floated, foamy-necked, / forth over the waves,
 1910 The banded stem / over brimming streams,
 Till they Geatish cliffs / might get in sight,
 Kenned nesses ; / the keel pushed up
 Driven by the breeze, / on the beach she stood.
 Rapidly by the holm / was the hythe-warden ready,
 He who ever and long / for the lovely men,
 Fain by the flood, / -afar had gazed ;
 He bound to the sand / the broad-bosomed ship
 With anchor-bonds fast, / lest the force of the
 waves
 That winsome wood / might wrench away.
 1920 Bade he then upwards bear / the athelings' treasure,
 Fretted and fashioned gold ; / nor had they far
 thence
 To go seeking / the giver of jewels,
 Higelac Hrethling, / where at home he dwelt,
 Himself with his subjects / the sea-wall near.
 The building was beautiful, / its baron a proud
 King,
 High were the halls ; / Hygd was very young,
 Wise, well-thriven, / though winters few
 Locked in the burgh / had she abode,
 Haereth's daughter ; / was she not humble however,
 1930 Nor too niggard of gifts / to the Geatish people,
 Of massy treasure.
 Moodiness Thrytho shewed,
 Valiant folk-queen, / fearsome violence ;
 Was none who durst, / doughty, to venture

Of her own household, / her husband save,
Her upon by day / with his eyes to stare ;
But on ropes of death / for a doom might he reckon
Hand-i-woven ; / hastily then was
After his seizure / the sword allotted him,
That sharply, sheerly, / should life shut,
1940 Make clear his killing. / Not so is the queenly
custom

For a woman to work, / though wonder-fair she be,
That she, a Peace-Weaver, / the life pursue,
In lying malice, / of a man beloved.
Howbeit, that did he hinder, / Hemming's kinsman.

Ale-drinkers / otherwise said,
That she of folk-damage / fashioned less,
Of feud and hatred, / since first she was
Given, gold-decked, / to the gallant youth,
Dear of ancestry, / when she Offa's floor
1950 Over the fallow flood / by her father's counsel
Sailing sought : / there she, sithence, well
On the royal seat, / renowned for goodness,
The life allotted her / lived and enjoyed,
Held high love / for the Heroes' Prince,
Who of all mankind, / in my story,
Was seemliest, / two seas between,
Of every-kind. / Wherefore Offa was,
In spending and striving / a spear-keen man,
Widely worshipped ; / in wisdom held he
1960 His own homestead. / From him Eomaer sprang
For the help of heroes, / Hemming's kinsman,
Grandson of Garmund, / great in battle.

XXVIII

Bewent him then the hardy one / with his handful
Himself over the sand / the sea-field treading,
Wide water-marks ; / the world-candle shone,
The sun, south-rising ; / they shaped their way,
With force they went / where the Fence of Earls,
The bane of Ongentheow, / his burgh within,

1970 Their young and good / War-King (they guessed)
 Rings was dealing. / Higelac was
 Of Beowulf's travelling / quickly told,
 That within those walls / the warriors' champion,
 His linden-comrade / alive was come,
 Hale from the battle-play / to the house going.
 Rapidly was made ready, / as the rich one bade,
 For the footing guests / the floor within.
 Sate then by his side / he who was saved from the
 strife,
 Kinsman by kinsman, / when the King of men
 Speaking aloud / his liegeman greeted
 1980 In mighty words. / With mead-draughts moved
 Over that hall-floor / Haereth's daughter ;
 She loved the laity, / liquor-bowls bare
 To the hands of the heroes. / Higelac began
 His housemate / in the high hall
 To question kindly ; / knowledge he craved,
 What the Water-Geats' / wanderings were.
 " What came to you on your crossing, / kinsman
 Beowulf,
 When thou, in a moment, / wert minded afar
 Strife to seek, / over salt water,
 1990 Hand-play in Heorot ? / And hast thou Hrothgar's
 Wide-famed woe / one whit made better,
 That mighty Prince. / I with painful mind
 In sorrow-waves seethed, / that sailing mistrusted
 Of a man beloved. / Long time I prayed thee
 Never to meet / that murder-guest
 But to leave the South-Danes' / selves to settle
 Their grievance with Grendel. / To God I say
 thanks
 That I may see thee / safe and sound."

2000 Beowulf answered, Ecgtheow's boy :
 " It is no secret, / Sovran Higelac,
 Among many men, / our *mighty* meeting,
 What a bout of *gripping* / to Grendel and me
 Came on that field / where he with countless
 Sorrows had troubled / the Triumph-Shieldings,
 Everlasting anguish : / All of it I avenged,

So cannot boast / *any* cousin of Grendel
In all the earth, / of that morning-uproar,
Not he that longest liveth / of the loathly clan,
Fenced in his *fens*. / There first I came
2010 To that Ring-Hall, / Hrothgar greeting ;
Straightway for me the mighty / man of Halfdane,
Whenas the mind / of me he knew,
By the son of himself / a seat appointed.
The laity laughed ; / nor in all my life saw I
Under heaven's vault, / among sitters in hall,
More joy in their mead. / At times the mighty
Queen,

Peace-maker among peoples, / paced the floor,
Boldened the young boys ; / often a bended ring she
Bestowed on a stalwart / ere she stepped to her
stool.

2020 At times before the doughty / the daughter of
Hrothgar

To the earls at each end / the ale-cup bare,
' Freawaru ' then I, / by the floor-sitters,
Heard her named, / as the nail-studded treasure she
Bent to the brave. / Betrothed is she,
Young, gold-embroidered, / to the glad son of Froda.
A fair thing has it seemed / to the Friend of
Shieldings,

Shepherd of his Realm, / and a good rede he
counteth it,

That he by this woman / a wealth of feuds
And slaughter may settle. / *Not* seldom *but* often,

2030 When a Lord is fallen, / a little while only
Is the death-spear banished, / though the bride be
doughty.

This, then, may displease / the Prince of
Heathobeards

And every thegn / among that people
When he with that femme / upon the floor goeth,
That on a well-born Dane / his warriors wait ;
One on whom gleameth / their grandsires' leavings
Hard and ring-mailed, / the Heathobeards' treasure ;
While they those weapons / might be wielding,

Till they led astray / to the linden-play
 2040 Their loved comrades, / and their own lives.
 Then says over his beer, / as the booty he sees,
 An old ash-warrior / who it all remembers,
 The spear-murder of men, / (and his mind is
 grim)—

He beginneth gloomily / the young champion's
 Courage to spy out, / by the thoughts of his spirit,
 War-anger to kindle, / and this word quoth :

' Dost thou, my son, / the sword distinguish,
 Which thy father / to the fight bare,

Trapped in his helmet, / the hindmost time,

2050 His dear iron, / when the Danes slew him ;

And won the slaughter-field, / when Withergyld
 lay there,

And the fighters were fallen, / the fierce Shieldings ?

Now, here, those slayers' / son, or such-like,

Exulting in his finery / over the floor goeth,

Of the treason boasteth, / and the treasure beareth

Which rightly had passed / into thy possession.'

Moveth he him so and remindeth him, / many a
 time,

With savage words, / till the season cometh

And the femme's thegn / for his father's deeds,

2060 When the blade has bitten him / in blood sleepeth,

Endeth his days ; / and the other from thence

Loseth himself alive, / for that land is well-known
 to him.

Then bin broken / on both sides

The oaths earls swore, / when in Ingeld

Welleth up deadly loathing, / and his love of his
 wife

Under waves of care / waxeth cooler.

So I on the Heathobeards' / honesty count not,

On their share in the Peace / with the simple

Danes,

Or fastness in friendship.

Henceforth shall I speak

2070 Again about Grendel, / till thou get full
 knowledge,
 Offerer of treasures, / how it turned at the end,
 That hand-fight of heroes. / After heaven's gem
 Glided below the ground, / that guest angrily
 came,
 An awful evening-rage, / us to visit,
 Where safe and sound / we sate in the hall.
 There upon Hondscio / a host descended,
 His life forfeit by fate ; / the first he fell.
 A girded champion ; / to him Grendel was,
 To our mighty man / a mouth of murder,
 2080 Of that swain beloved / the limbs he swallowed.
 None the earlier out again, / idle-handed,
 That bloody-toothed bane, / of butchery mindful,
 From the gold-hall / would be going ;
 But, bold in his might, / of me made trial,
 Grappled me greedy-handed. / His glove was
 hanging
 Wide and wondrous, / with woven-bands fastened ;
 It was by cunning / all contrived
 With devils' craft / and dragons' pelts.
 He there, inside it, / me unsinning,
 2090 That dire deed-worker, / would have done away,
 One among many ; / that might not be
 When I in ire / upright arose,
 Too long is it to reckon / how I to that land-scather
 For each of his evils / offered hand-payment ;
 There I, my Prince, / made thy people
 Worshipful by my work. / Away he escaped,
 A little while / life's joys he brooked ;
 But his right arm / the road pointed,
 His hand in Heorot ; / and he, hapless, thence,
 2100 Mournfully minded, / to the mere's floor fell.
 Me for that fight / the Friend of Shieldings
 With fashioned gold / in full rewarded,
 With many treasures, / when morning came,
 And we to the banquet / had bent us down.
 Then was song and glee. / The greybeard Shielding
 Asking us many things, / old tales remembered ;

At times a hero / the happy harp,
 The joy-wood swept, / while a song he uttered,
 True and tragic ; / at times a strange tale
 2110 Read us aright / the roomy-hearted King ;
 Awhile after began, / by age bounden,
 A grizzled warrior / his youth to bewail,
 His battle-strength ; / his breast in him swelled
 As he, old in winters, / all that remembered.
 So we inside there / all the day long
 Tasted of pleasure, / until night returned
 Again to the earth. / Thereafter was rapidly
 Girt for vengeance / Grendel's mother ;
 Set her forth sorrowful ; / her son death had
 taken,
 2120 The Weders' war-hate. / A wife unlovely,
 Her bairn she avenged ; / a brave man she
 vanquished
 Unafraid ; / there from Aeschere,
 A learned elder, / life went out.
 Neither might they, / when morning came,
 Him, death-weary, / the Danish people
 Burn with brands, / nor on the bale-fire lay
 Their loved kinsman ; / his corpse she bare off
 In fiendish fingers / under the mountain-flood.
 That was for Hrothgar / harshest of the sorrows
 2130 Which on that Folk-Lord / long time had fallen.
 Then that lord of me, / by thine own life,
 Wistfully besought / that in the swirling waters
 I should act with earlship, / offer life up,
 Merit glory ; / meed he promised me,
 I then of those wells / —it is widely known—
 The grim and griesly / guardian found.
 There for us two awhile was / a hand-encounter ;
 The pool heaved with blood, / and I the head
 carved off,
 In that *ground*-mansion, / of Grendel's mother,
 2140 With a huge sword ; / not softly thence
 Did I fetch me alive ; / I was not fated as yet ;
 But the Guardian of Earls / afterwards gave me
 A heap of treasures, / Halfdane's son.

So the people's King / by custom lived ;
 In no way my fee / foregone had I,
 Tribute for might, / but treasures he gave me,
 Halfdane's son, / as myself I chose,
 Which I, bravest of Kings, / will bring to thee,
 Will gladly offer. / Ever from thee do all
 2150 Favours fall ; / but few have I
 Of high kinsmen / save, Higelac, thee."
 Bade he then bear in / the Boar, the head-crest,
 The battle-steep helmet, / hoary byrny,
 War-sword splendid ; / then spake a word :
 " To me this harness / Hrothgar offered,
 Sagest of Princes, / and in certain words bade
 That I first should thee / of his friendship tell ;
 Quoth he, that held them / Heorogar the King,
 Lord of Shieldings, / a long while ;
 2160 Nor yet to his own son / would he assign,
 To lusty Heorowearð, / loyal though he were to
 him,
 That breast-armour. / Use it all well."
 Heard I that this finery / four horses.
 All alike, / did follow after,
 Apple-yellow ; / he yielded him the honour
 Of horses and treasures. / So should a tribesman do,
 Never envy-nets / for others weave,
 Nor by dark-hid craft / with death encompass
 His hand-companions. / To Higelac was,
 2170 Hardy in fight, / his nephew most faithful,
 And each was mindful / of the other's good.
 Heard I, that he the necklace / on Hygd bestowed,
 That work of wonder / which Wealththeow had
 given him,
 A prince's daughter ; / and three palfreys therewith
 Slim, bright-saddled ; / since then she went,
 After his bounty, / with breast adorned.
 So was emboldened / Ecgtheow's boy,
 A groom war-famed, / by his good deeds ;
 He dwelt as he deemed, / never, drunken, slew

2180 His hearth-fellows ; / nor was he harsh in spirit,
 But among man-kind / with most of craft
 The gift firm-set / which God had sent him
 Held, battle-hardy. / Humbled was he long,
 For the sons of the Geats / no good of him said,
 Nor, on the mead-bench, / of mickle worth
 The captains of warriors / would account him ;
 Shrewdly they reckoned / that slack he was,
 An atheling ungallant. / Atonement came
 To the man triumphant / for all his troubles.
 2190 Then the Fence of Earls / bade fetch him in,
 The King battle-haughty, / Hrethel's heirloom
 Gay with gold ; / among the Geats was not then
 A wealthier treasure / in the way of swords ;
 This he in Beowulf's / bosom laid,
 And spent upon him / seven thousands,
 A bower and a throne. / To both of them was
 In that country / land bequeathed,
 Home and ownership ; / to the other one, rather,
 The broad realm ; / wherefore the better man was
 he there.

* * * * *

2200 After that it happened, / in other days,
 In the fury of hosts, / when Higelac was fallen,
 And on Heardred / the hewing swords
 Through the board of his shield / balefully
 shattered,
 When sought him out / mid his soldier-people
 Bold wolves of battle, / Warrior-Scylfings,
 Who forcefully harried / Hereric's nephew ;—
 Then to Beowulf / the broad realm
 Came under his hand. / He held it aright
 Fifty winters / (then was he a white-haired King,
 2210 An old land-warden), / until one began
 In darkness of night, / a dragon, to lord it ;
 Which in a high law / lay over a hoard,
 A steep stone-barrow ; / and steps thereunder,
 Unknown to the world. / Within there went

Some enemy, / *who in envy* seized
 The heathenish hoard ; / his hand *took forth*
 A jewelled *bowl*, / nor did he *bring it* again,
 But he ensnared / the sleeping *warden*
 By thievish craft ; / so the King *found*,
 2220 The brave one of the folk, / that he was belching
 with fury.

XXXII

Never of a purpose / the power of the Worm's
 hoard
 Sought he, for his own sake, / who sorely scathed
 himself ;
 But in straitest need, / *the slave* of some one
 Of the sons of heroes, / hate-swinges fled,
 Finding no *home*, / and therein fell,
 A soul sin-busied. / Soon it *betided*
 That *there*, over the guest, / griesly terror came ;
 Whether in his wretchedness, /
 /
 2230 / *While on him* the fear pressed
 The jewel-cup *he saw*. / Of such were there many
 In that earth-house, / of ancient riches,
 Such as in olden days / any one of men,
 (The whole heritage / of an honoured kindred)
 Heedful in thought, / there had hidden,
 Dearest treasures. / All of them death had taken
 In earlier times, / and the only one now
 Of the people's lords, / he who longest abode
 there,
 Waxed friend-sorry, / wished to linger,
 2240 That he a little spell / the long-kept riches
 Might enjoy. / The mound all in readiness
 Stood on the earth / near the streams of ocean,
 New-wrought on the ness, / narrow-closed and
 fast ;
 Bare he then inside / of those earls' bounties,

That lord of rings, / a heavy load,
Of fashioned gold, / and few words quoth :
“ Hold thou now, earth, / now heroes may not,
What Earls have owned. / What ! of old out of thee
2250 Gallants got them ; / grim death has taken,
Massacre fierce, / the men, each and all
Of my people, / who have passed from this life ;
They had seen the hall’s bliss. / None have I who
beareth sword.

Or polisheth / the plated bowl,
The drinking-cup dear ; / the doughty are
elsewhere scattered.

From the hard helmet / harnessed with gold
Its plates shall slip ; / the polishers slumber
Who the battle-masks / were wont to burnish ;
And so the army-coat / that in conflict endured,
When boards were broken, / the bite of iron,
2260 Moulders with its master ; / nor may the mailed
byrny

With the war-chief / widely journey,
At hand by the heroes. / In the harp is no joy,
No game of the glee-beam ; / no good hawk
O’er the house swingeth, / nor any swift horse
In the stone-court stampeth. / For stern death
All of the folk-life / forth has exiled.”

Thus, sad of mood, / his sorrows he mourned,
One, after them all ; / unblithe he wept,
Daily and nightly, / until death’s tide
2270 Felt at his heart.

The hoard of joy he found,
That old striker in twilight, / standing open,
He who, burning, / the barrows seeketh,
A naked fear-dragon, / nightly flieth
Driven by fire ; / him the field-dwellers
Sorely dread. / Still he seeketh
A *hoard* in the ground / where he heathen gold
Watcheth, old in winters : / nor is he a whit the
wealthier.

So the people’s threatener, / three hundred winters
Held in the earth / such a hoard-house,

2280 Of endless strength, / until angered him one
Man in his mind ; / to his master bare
The plated bowl, / for a peace-pact begged
The lord of him. / Then was the hoard looted,
Borne off its bracelets ; / as a boon 'twas granted
To the friendless man. / His master saw
The former work of the folk, / for the first time.
When the Worm awoke, / was war renewed ;
He snuffed then over the stones, / stark-hearted
he found

2290 Footprints of a foe, / who too far had stepped,
Crafty in darkness, / the dragon's head near.
So may one unfated / easily escape
Woe and exile, / who the Wielder's
Friendship holdeth. / The hoard-warden sought
Greedy over the ground, / that groom he would find
Who to him in his slumber / sorrow had brought ;
Hot and harsh-minded / the hill he oft hunted
All round about ; / nor was any man there
Upon that waste. / Yet for war he was joyful,
For battle-work ; / at whiles to the barrow he
turned,

2300 The jewel-cup sought ; / but soon he found
That some one of men / had searched out the gold,
That high treasure. / The hoard-warden abode
Ill at ease, / until evening came ;
Was belching then / the barrow's keeper,
Would the foul foe / with flame repurchase
His drinking-cup dear. / Then was day forth
driven,
As the Worm could wish ; / Nor within his walls
for long

2310 Would he abide, / but with bale-fire went,
Forth on his flame. / At the first it affrighted
The country folk, / even as quickly it was
And bloodily ended / by their Bounty-Giver.

XXXIII

Then the enemy began / to spit forth embers,
To burn the bright houses ; / a blazing light shone

Awful to all men ; / nor aught there alive
That loathly lift-flier / would he leave.
Was the Worm's warfare / widely seen,
The narrow-foe's fury / near and far,
How a warring punisher / the Geatish people
Was hating and humbling. / To the hoard again
he shot,

2320 To his dark domain, / ere dawn of day ;
He had the folk of the land / with fire
encompassed,
With burning and branding ; / in his barrow he
trusted,
In his war and his wall ; / that weening bewrayed
him.

Then was the tale of terror / told to Beowulf
Swiftly and in sooth, / how himself his home
Best of buildings / in burning waves melted,
The gift-stool of the Geats. / That to the gallant
one was

Hurtful at heart, / heaviest of mind-sorrows ;
Weened the wise one / that the Wielder he,
2330 Against the ancient Law, / the Lord Eternal
Had bitterly angered ; / his breast welled in
him

With darkest cares, / as his custom was not.
Had the fire-dragon / the people's fastness
Which on earth they owned, / by the ocean's edge,
With coals consumed ; / wherefore the King of
Battle,

The Weders' Prince / planned a vengeance.
Bade he then work him / (the Warriors' Buckler)
All of iron / (the Lord of Earls)

A wondrous war-shield ; / wist he well
2340 That hewn-wood to him / no help might furnish,
Fuel against flame. / Must he of his fleeting days,
An atheling ever-good, / the end await,
Of life in the world, / and the Worm to boot,
Though he the hoarded wealth / had held for
long.

Too proud was then / the Prince of Rings

That he the wide-flier / with warriors should
seek,
With a strong host ; / nor for himself the struggle
dreaded,
Nor the Worm's warring / a whit esteemed,
His might and menace ; / for that many times, of
old,
2350 Venturing in strait places / by strife he had
vanquished,
In heat of battle, / since he Hrothgar's
Hall had cleansed, / a happy conqueror,
And in fight had outgripped / Grendel's folk,
That loathly kindred.

Nor the least was that
Of hand-encounters, / where Higelac they killed,
When the Geats' ruler / in the race of battle,
Friend of his folk / in Frisian land,
Son of Hrethel, / the sword-drink swallowed,
Beaten down by the blade ; / therefrom Beowulf
came

2360 By his own craft, / used his sea-cunning ;
He had on his arm, / he only, thirty
Weapons of war, / when to the water he went.
Never did the Hetware / need to exult
In their fighting on foot, / who forward against
him
Linden-shields bare ; / little of them came back
From that battle-wolf, / to behold their homes.
Overswam then the sea's width / the son of
Ecgtheow,

In poverty, alone, / again to his people.
There Hygd offered him / hoard and kingdom,
2370 Bracelets and throne ; / in the boy she trusted not,
That he against strange folk / the stool of his
fathers
Would know how to hold, / and Higelac killed.
None the sooner the mourners / might obtain
From that atheling, / on any terms,
That he would Heardred's / lord become,
Or that kingdom / choose to hold ;

However he kept him with the folk / in friendly
counsel,
Graciously, with honour, / until the lad older grew.
The Weder-Geats ruled. / Him wretched exiles
2380 Sought over the sea, / the sons of Ohthere ;
Had they held out against / the Helm of Scylfings,
The seemliest / of the sea-kings
Who in Swio-rice / riches scattered,
A mighty lord. / His measure that marked ;
He there, destitute, / his death-wound won
By swingeing sword, / the son of Higelac.
And thereafter bewent him / Ongentheow's bairn
His home to behold, / when Heardred lay dead,
He let Beowulf keep / the kingly seat,
2390 Govern the Geats. / That was a good king.

XXXIV

He was minded to have payment / for that Prince's
murder
In after days ; / To Eadgils he was
A friend in his sorrows, / with his folk he
supported,
Over the wide sea, / the son of Ohthere,
With warriors and weapons. / He wreaked
vengeance thereafter
Coldly marching, / that King of life bereft.
So from every enemy / escape he did,
From savage onslaughts, / the son of Ecgtheow,
From deeds of daring, / until that same day
2400 When he with that Worm / wager must.
Went then, one of twelve, / with anger swelling,
The Duke of Geats / the dragon to seek :
He had then found out / whence the feud arose,
The curse on the captains ; / into his keeping was
come
The famous treasure-cup / from the finder's hand.
He was in that troop / the thirteenth man,
Who of that battle / beginning had made ;

A slave in sorrow / must he show forthwith
 Where the way was. / Unwilling went he
 2410 To where was one / earth-house he wist,
 Hollowed under ground / the holm-waves near,
 The warring floods, / that was filled within
 With wrought-work and wire-work. / A warden
 unkindly,
 A greedy war-wolf / the gold-treasures held,
 An old one under the earth; / 'twas no easy bargain
 For any man / to enter in.
 Sate then on the headland / the hardy War-King,
 While hail he bade / his hearth-companions,
 The Gold-Friend of Geats. / Full of gloom was his
 mind,
 2420 Wavering, death-willing; / the Wyrð was very
 near
 Which that greybeard / was to greet,
 To seek his soul's hoard, / to scatter asunder
 Life from limbs; / not for long then was
 That atheling's being / bound in his flesh.
 Beowulf made utterance, / Ecgtheow's son:
 " Often in youth have I borne me / out from the
 battle-race,
 In hours of onset; / all of that I remember.
 I had seven winters / when the Wielder of Treasures,
 Friend and Lord of the Folk, / from my father
 took me;
 2430 Held me and had me / Hrethel the King,
 Gave me fee and feast, / of our friendship was
 mindful;
 Nor was I in his life to him / a whit less likely
 A brave in his burgh / than any of his boys,
 Herebeald or Haethcyn, / or Higelac mine own.
 Was for the eldest / unbecfittingly
 By a kinsman's deed / his death-bed strewn,
 When him Haethcyn / and his horned bow,
 His friend and lord / by an arrow felled,
 Missed the mark / and his mate shot dead,
 2440 One brother the other, / with bloody shaft.
 'Twas a feud beyond fee, / a felonish sinning,

Mind-wearying and heart ; / must howsoever
 That lord unavenged / from life depart.
 So mournful is it / for an aged man
 To bide alive / while his bairn rideth
 Young on the gallows ; / then a glee may he sing,
 A sorry song, / when his son hangeth,
 A raven's comfort, / and to help him he cannot,
 In oldest age, / aught devise.
 2450 Always is he reminded, / every morning.
 Of his offspring gone elsewhere ; / nor of another
 careth he
 To abide the birth, / his burgh within,
 For a further heir / when the former hath
 By death's constraint / of his deeds made proof.
 Sore at heart he seeth / in his son's bower
 The wine-hall a waste, / for winds to rest in it,
 Of revels bereft ; / the riders are sleeping,
 The heroes in shadow ; / nor is sound there of
 harping,
 Nor gaming in the yards / as of yore there were.

XXXV

2460 Wendeth he then to his chamber, / a chant of
 sorrow waileth,
 One man for another ; / seem to him all too roomy
 The fields and the folk-stead. / So the Fence of
 Weders
 For Herebeald / with sorrow of heart
 Melted away ; / no whit he might
 Upon the murderer / mend the feud ;
 None the sooner that soldier / might he shame
 By deeds of hatred, / though dear to him he was
 not.
 Then for that sorrow, / the sore that had wounded
 him,
 Man's cheer he gave up. / God's light chose ;
 2470 To his children he willed, / as doth a wealthy
 man,

Land and lordship, / when this life he left.
Then was sin and strife / among Swedes and Geats,
Over the wide water, / wrath in common,
Hard troop-hatred, / after Hrethel was dead.
And to them Ongentheow's / offspring were
Proud and warlike ; / peace they would not
Hold, across the water, / but against Hreosna
Hill

Evil inroads / often planned.

2480 Which mates and kin / of mine avenged,
Feuds and felonies, / (so the fame of it went)
Though one of them / with his own life paid,
A hard bargain ; / for Haethcyn was,
For the Geats' Warden, / war-death fated.
Then at break of day / one man his brother
By the sword's edge, / on his slayer avenged,
When Ongentheow / with Eofor met ;
His battle-helm glided asunder, / the grey-haired
Scylfing

Fell, *murder*-pale ; / a hand remembered
Feuds enough, / nor failed at the death-stroke.

2490 Him then, for the gold / which he had given me
I repaid in war, / as it was awarded to me,
With lightning sword ; / land he gave me,
Ownership of earth. / Was not any need
That he of the Yifthas, / or of the Yard-Danes,
Or in Swio-rice, / should be seeking
A weaker war-wolf, / or pay him his worth ;
Ever for him with the foot-men / before would I
go,

2500 Alone in the van, / and so always shall I
Seek to fight, / while this sword endureth,
Which early and late / hath often served me,
Since I in my doughtiness / was Dayraven's
Hand-slayer, / the Hugas' champion's.
Never could he the finery / to the Frisian King,
The breast-adornments / bring again ;
But in strife was struck down / the standard's
keeper,

An atheling brave ; / nor was the blade his ending,
 But the battle-grip / his heart's beating,
 His bone-house brake. / Now shall the bill's edge,
 Hand and hard-sword, / for the hoard contest."
 2510 Beowulf made utterance, / boasting words spake,
 For the last time : / " I launched me on many
 Wars in my youth ; / yet again will I,
 An old folk-shepherd, / seek the fight,
 Do mighty deeds, / if me the monster
 From his earth-house / come out to meet."
 Greeted he then / the grooms each one,
 Haughty helm-bearers, / a hindmost time,
 His sweet companions : / " A sword would I not
 bear,
 Nor weapon against the Worm, / if I wist how
 2520 With that enemy / else I might
 Come to grips, boast-yelling, / as of yore with
 Grendel I did ;
 But here on a hate-fire / hot I reckon,
 And breathing of venom ; / wherefore I bear on
 me
 Board and byrny. / Nor will I from the barrow's
 warden
 Flee away / one foot's measure,
 But to us shall it be at the wall / as Wyrð shall
 appoint for us,
 The measure of every man. / I am in mind
 emboldened,
 So that I forgo boasting / before that battle-flier.
 Await ye on the barrow, / byrnies wearing,
 2530 Men in armour, / which may the better
 After the duel / endure his wounds,
 Of us twain. / Nor is it your trial,
 Nor any man's, / save mine only,
 That he with the monster / measure his strength,
 Match his earlship. / I by my might shall
 Gain the gold, / or the battle gather,
 Cruel life-bane, / the lord of you."
 Stood up then with his shield / the stalwart
 champion,

Hardy under his helm, / his harness bare
2540 Under the stone-cliffs, / in the strength he trusted
Of a single man ; / such is not the manner of
cowards.

Saw he then in the wall, / (he who in a wealth
Of battles had vanquished, / blest with valour,
Roaring fights, / in the rush of foot-men)
A stone-arch standing, / a stream out thence
Breaking from the barrow ; / were that burn's
eddies

Hot with hate-fire ; / nor near the hoard might he
Unburned / for any time

Its depths endure, / for the dragon's flame.

2550 Let then from his breast, / so he boiled with anger,
The Weder-Geats' Prince / pass out a word ;
Stark-hearted he stormed ; / under the hoary
stone,

Echoing battle-bright, / brake his voice ;
Hatred was kindled, / the hoard-warden knew
The speech of man, / nor was there space any more
To bid for peace. / Burst forth first

The breath of the ogre / out of the stone,
Hot sweat of battle. / Shook the ground.

The brave under the barrow / his round-board
swung

2560 Against the griesly guest, / the Geatish lord ;
Then the ring-twister's / heart was fain
A duel to seek. / His sword now had drawn
The excellent War-King, / bequeathed from of old,
Unslow of edge ; / to each of them was,
Murder-minded, / menace from the other.

Stiff-minded stood / behind his steep shield

The King of Friends, / as coiled the Worm
Swiftly together ; / in his trappings he waited.

2570 Came then the burning one, / bowed and creeping,
Speeding to his doom. / The shield well defended
Life and limb, / a lesser while

For the mighty lord, / than he might look for
So he at that point, / in the prime of the day,
Was to win / (as Wyrð had not written for him)

The honour of the fight. / His hand upraised
 The Geatish lord, / the griesly-hued one struck
 With Ing's heirloom, / but its edge fell back,
 Brown from the bone, / bit less keenly
 Than its Nation-King / had need of it,
 2580 Busily beset. / Then was the barrow's warden,
 After that fierce stroke, / stirred to fury,
 And spewed slaying fire ; / sprang forth afar
 Its battle-gleams. / Boasted not of triumph
 The Gold-Friend of Geats ; / his good sword had
 failed,
 Naked in the fight, / as never should
 Excellent iron. / Nor was that an easy journey
 When the champion, / the child of Ecgtheow,
 Had to forsake / the fields of earth,
 Must, undesiring, / make his dwelling
 2590 Elsewhere, / as must every man
 Leave his loan of days. / Nor was it long then ere
 Either champion / charged again.
 Boldened him the barrow-warden, / his breast
 swelled with breath,
 Now anew ; / he was narrowly beset,
 Fenced in fire, / who the folk had ruled.
 No wise for him in their host / his hand-companions,
 Athelings' stock, / stood around
 In their battle-worth, / but to the wood they
 bound them,
 To save their lives. / In one alone swelled
 2600 His soul with care ; / kinship never may
 Any thing unbind, / in one who well thinketh.

XXXVI

Wiglaf was he named, / Weohstan's son,
 A loved linden-warrior, / a lord of Scylfings,
 Sib to Aelfhere ; / he saw his master
 Under the shitten helmet / suffering heat ;
 He minded him then of the honour / which he of
 old had given him,

The wealthy township / of the Waegmundings,
And folk-rights all, / as his father had owned
them ;

Nor might he hold back then, / his hand the shield
seized,

2610 Yellow linden, / his yore-sword he drew.

That was, for all men, / Eanmund's heirloom,
Ohthere's son's, / whom in the slaughter,
A friendless wanderer, / Weohstan finished
With the blade's edge, / and from his fellows bare off
The brown-hued helm, / the ringed byrny,
The old sword, Eotenish, / which Onela had given
him ;

His brother-clansman's / battle clothing,
Fit for service. / Nor about the feud spake he
Though he his brother's / bairn had murdered.

2620 He wore those treasures / many winters,
Blade and byrny, / until his own boy might
Earlship achieve, / as erst his father ;

He gave him then among the Geats / his gear of
battle

All, unnumbered, / when out from life he went,
Old, forth-faring. / This was the first time
For the young champion / that he the charge of
battle

With his sovran lord / had to suffer ;
Nor melted his courage, / nor was his kinsman's
heirloom

2630 Weak at warfare ; / that the Worm found out
When they together / once had gone.

Wiglaf uttered / words fit and many,
Said to his comrades / (full of care was his soul)
“ Of that time I am mindful, / when the mead we
tasted,

When we made a vow / to the master of us
In the beer-hall, / who these bracelets gave us,
That we for our weapons / would repay him,
If to him this kind / of peril came,
For helmets and hard swords. / Nay, he us from
the host did choose

For this journey, / of his own judgement,
 2640 Reminded us of glory, / and to me these treasures
 gave,
 Because he accounted us / cunning spearmen,
 Lusty helm-bearers ; / though our lord for us
 This work of valour / wished alone
 To shape and finish, / the Folk's Shepherd,
 For that he most among men / of mastery hath
 wrought,
 Of desperate deeds. / Now is the day come
 That our lord and master / the main-strength
 needeth
 Of gallant warriors. / Let us go to,
 And help our hero, / while this heat endureth,
 2650 Flame-terror grim. / God wot of me,
 That to me it is much liefer / that my live body
 With my gold-giver's / the flame should grasp.
 Nor meseems it becoming / that we bear our shields
 Back to our folk, / save first we may
 Fell this foe, / defend the life
 Of the Weders' Prince. / Well do I know
 That his ancient worth is not such / that he only
 should
 Of the Geatish soldiery / suffer sorrow,
 Sink in the strife ; / for us twain shall be sword
 and helm,
 2660 Byrny and covered-shield, / for both in common."'
 Waded he then through that blood-reek, / his
 war-head bore
 His friend to comfort, / and few words quoth :
 " Dearest Beowulf, / do all things well,
 Even as thou in thy youth-time / of yore didst say
 That thou wouldst not let, / from thyself living
 Glory dwindle ; / now must thou, great in thy
 deeds,
 Atheling one-minded, / with all thy might
 Save thy life ; / and I support thee."
 After those words / the Worm irefully came
 2670 An evil guest of enmity, / another time,
 With fire-waves flashing, / his foes to seek,

Those loathed men. / In lapping-fire was burned
Board with boss ; / his byrny might not
To the young spearman / yield any succour ;
But the young man / under his master's shield
Went eagerly on, / when his own was
Wasted by fire. / Then again the War-King
Was mindful of his fame, / by main-strength he
smote

2680 With his hostile blade, / so that on the head it beat,
Forced by his fury ; / in flinders Nailing
Swooned in the battle, / Beowulf's sword,
Hoary and grey. / 'Twas not granted to him
That any edge / of iron might
Help in the struggle ; / was that hand too strong,
Which every sword, / as I have heard say,
Overbore with its stroke, / when to the strife he bare
A wondrous-hard weapon ; / nor was he a whit the
better.

2690 Then the tribe's scather / a third time,
The fearsome fire-dragon / his feud remembered,
Rushed on that gallant one, / when room he gave
him,
Hot, battle-grim, / all his neck he grasped
In bitter tooth-bones ; / he bloodied was
With his soul's gore ; / that sweat in streams
gushed.

XXXVII

Then I *heard that* in the need / of the Nation's
King

That earl unceasing / excellence shewed,
Craft and keenness, / as his kind was ;
Nor heeded he that head / (but the hand was
burned

2700 Of that masterful man, / when his mate he helped),
For he that dread guest / downwards a little struck,
A soldier in armour, / so that the sword dived in,
Brightly fashioned, / and the fire began

To slacken straightway. / Then himself the King
again

Conquered his wits, / the killing-knife drew,
Bitter and battle-sharp, / which on his byrny he
wore ;

The Weders' Helm wrote into / the Worm's
middle.

Their foe they felled, / their valour finished him,
And both of those twain / had broken him up,
Kinsmen-athelings ; / so should every man be,
A thegn in peril. / For the Prince that was

2710 The utmost triumph-day / of his own deeds,
Of his work in the world. / Then the wound began,
Which upon him the earth-dragon / earlier had
wrought,

To sweal and to swell ; / soon he found out
That through his breast / a baleful hurt was welling,
Poison from within. / Went then the atheling
Until he by the wall / in wisdom of mind
Sate on a seat ; / he saw the giants' work,
How that stone-arches / on staples fast
The everlasting earth-hall / inwardly held.

2720 Him then with his hands, / horrid with blood,
His famous Prince, / that thegn faithful beyond
measure,

His friend and lord / did lave in water,
Spent with battle, / and unspanned his helm.
Beowulf made utterance ; / of his bane he spake,
Of his wound death-piteous ; / wist he readily
That he his day-span / had spent at length
Of earthly joy ; / then was all scattered
The tale of his days, / death very nigh :—

2730 “ Now I to a son of mine / would seek to give
My weeds of war, / were it so awarded me
That any heir should / after me come,
Begotten of my body. / This burgh have I held
Through fifty winters ; / nor was there a
Folk-King

Who me with his war-friends / to welcome dared,
To harass me with terrors. / At home I attended

What time should bring me, / treated well mine
 own,
 Nor sought armed quarrels, / nor swore me many
 Oaths unrightly. / From all of this I may
 2740 When sick with death-wounds / succour draw ;
 Blame me for that cannot / the King of Men
 For the murder of kinsmen, / when cast forth is my
 Life from my limbs. / Let thee now hasten
 The hoard to behold, / under the hoary stone,
 Beloved Wiglaf, / now that the Worm lieth,
 Sleepeth sore-wounded, / of his silver bereft.
 Be off now in haste, / that I the ancient wealth,
 The gold-hoard may glimpse, / may gaze my fill
 On the shining jewels, / that so more softly I may
 2750 For that mass of treasure / take leave of my
 Life and lordship, / which I long did hold."

XXXVIII

Then swiftly (as I heard) / the son of Weohstan
 When this word was spoken / his wounded lord,
 War-sickened, obeyed, / went in his ringed byrny,
 His braided battle-sark, / under the barrow's roof,
 Saw he then in his triumph, / as by the seat he
 went,
 A masterful tribe-thegn, / treasures many,
 Glistening gold / on the ground gathered,
 Wonders on the walls, / and the Worm's den,
 2760 The old twilight-flier's ; / flagons stood there,
 Far-dead men's vessels, / with none to furbish
 them,
 Husked of their platings. / There were helms in
 plenty,
 Old and rusty, / arm-rings many
 Twisted and tied. / Treasure easily may,
 Gold in the ground, / get from the grasp
 Of any man in the world, / hide it who will.
 So too, set there he saw / a sign all golden

High over the hoard, / of hand-wonders the greatest,
Locked by skill of limb ; / wherefrom a light so
shone

2770 That he the ground there / might get in sight,
Throughout the wealth on it. / Nor of the Worm
was there

Any sign, / for him an edge had slain.

Then I heard that in the hill / the hoard was rifled,
The old work of ogres, / by one man only ;
That his breast he loaded / with bowls and dishes
As seemed good to himself ; / the sign also he took,
Brightest of beacons. / The blade now had scathed
him

2780 Iron-edged, / of an old lord,
Him who had held / in his hand those treasures
A long while. / Lightning-terror he waged
Hot for his hoard, / with hatred welling
In the midst of the night, / until by murder he
perished.

Fleet was the messenger, / fain to return,
Driven on by his treasures ; / doubt was tearing
him

Whether, full-hearted, / he would find alive
On yonder plain / the Prince of Weders,
Power-less, / where he had left him anon.
Then he with that gold / the glorious Prince,
The Lord of him / at his life's end,
2790 Bleeding, found ; / then again began he
To sprinkle him with water, / until an opening
word

Brake from his breast-hoard ; / *Beowulf* spake,
Grey-haired, in grief / on the gold he gazed :
“ I for these riches / to the Ruler of All my thanks
(To the Worshipful King) / in words will say
(To the Lord Eternal), / whereon I here do look,
For that I might / for mine own people
Ere my killing-time / conquer such things.
Now I for the precious hoard / have paid with my
2800 Old life laid down, / look thou still

To the laity's need ; / here may I no longer be.
 Bid the battle-famed ones / build me a barrow
 Bright with the bale-fire / on the brink of the cliff ;
 It shall for a memory / to my people
 Be walled up high / on the whale's headland,
 So that sea-farers / in future say
 ' Beowulf's Barrow ! ' / who their brave ships
 Over the mists of the flood / from afar shall drive."
 Did off from his neck / that noble Prince
 2810 A golden ring ; / to his thegn he gave it,
 To the young spear-warrior, / his gold-wrought
 helm,
 Armlet and byrny, / bade him well to use them.
 " Thou art left at the end / of our kindred,
 Of the Waegmundings ; / all of them Wyrð hath
 swept off,
 Friends of mine / to the fate fore-doomed,
 Excellent earls ; / and I must after them."
 That was the old warrior's / utmost word
 Of the thoughts of his breast, / ere the bale-fire
 he sought,
 Hot battle-waves ; / from his bosom went
 2820 His soul to seek / the salvation of the faithful.

[XXXIX]

Thereafter it was / for the young warrior
 Ill to bear, / that on the earth he saw
 That most beloved, / at his life's end,
 Cruelly suffering. / His killer likewise lay,
 The loathsome earth-dragon / of life bereft,
 Struck down in ruin. / The ring-hoard for longer
 That winding Worm / might never wield,
 For him the iron / edges had taken,
 Hard, battle-scarred, / hammers' bequests,
 2830 So that the wide-flier / by wounds made still
 Heltered upon the ground, / his hoard-place near ;
 Nevermore in the welkin / would he wheel for
 sport

At prime of day, / in the pride of his treasures
Shewing his shape, / for he had sunk to earth
By that hero-leader's / handiwork.

Nay, throughout all lands / little has a man prospered,
Endowed with might, / (in my hearing)
Though in every deed / daring he were,
When he against a poison-reeker's / breath went
rushing,

2840 Or a store of rings / with his hands did stir,
If waking he / its warden found
Biding in the barrow. / By Beowulf was
His part in the princely treasure / paid for with
death ;
Each of them had / to the end been brought
Of this fleeting life.

'Twas not long thereafter
That the battle-laggards / left the holt,
Feeble troth-liars, / ten together,
Who before had not dared / their darts to fling
In their noble master's / mickle need ;
2850 But shamefully now / their shields they bare,
Their garments of war, / where the greyhead lay ;
They looked upon Wiglaf. / He in weariness sate,
That fighting foot-man, / his friend's shoulder
near,

Wakening him with water ; / no whit did it speed
him,
Nor might he in this world, / much though he
wished it,

In that lord of spears / the life preserve,
Nor the Wielder's will / a whit unbind.
The Doom of God / the deeds must rule
Of every man, / as even now it doth.

2860 Then out of that youngster / a grim answer
Quickly came, / to those who their courage had
lost.

Wiglaf made utterance, / Weohstan's son,
A lad sore-hearted / seeing those he loved not :
" Lo ! This may he say, / who in sooth would
speak,

That the lord of the tribe / who treasures gave
you,

The soldier-clothing / wherein clad ye stand here,
When he at the ale-benches / oft bestowed
On the sitters in hall / helms and byrnies,

2870 A prince on his people, / on the proudest-hearted
Whom, far or near, / he might anywhere find,
That wholly he / those weeds of war
And wantonly had wasted, / when warfare came
to him.

Never did our Folk-King / of his field-comrades
Need to boast ; / howbeit God bestowed on him,
The Wielder of Victories, / that he should avenge
himself

Alone with his blade, / when the brave were
lacking.

I could but little / life-protection
Give him in the fight ; / I began, no less,
Beyond my measure / my master to help.

2880 Always was he the sufferer / when with my sword
I aimed

At the deadly foe ; / the fire less direfully
Welled from his head. / Helpers too few
Trooped to their King / when his time was come.

Now shall gold-sharing / and sword-giving,
Every home-joy / from your households,
All hope, languish ; / of land-rights must
All that family, / first and last,

2890 Wander empty, / whenas the athelings
From afar the fame / of your flight shall hear,
Your gloryless deed. / Death is more good
For any earl / than infamous life."

XL

Bade he then that battle-work / at the barrier be
told,

Up over the ocean-cliff, / where those earls in
company

All morning long / mourning had sate
Bearing their shields, / to both chances looking ;
To the end of his days / and to the after-coming
Of the man they loved. / Little did he keep silent
The new tidings, / who up the ness rode,
But he soothfully / said to them all :

2900 " Now is the Pleasure-Giver / of the
Weder-People,
The Duke of Geats, / on death-bed fast,
He hath won to his rest / by the Worm's deed.
Levelled with him lieth / his life's winner
By knife-wounds sickened ; / with his sword he
might not
On that evil creature, / at any cost,
Work a wound. / Wiglaf sitteth
Over Beowulf, / Weohstan's boy,
One earl over another, / and him unliving,
Holdeth with honour / watch by the heads
2910 Of friend and foe. / Now for the folk is
foreboding
Of a season of conflict, / soon as commonly
By Frisians and Franks / the fall of the King
Is known afar.

That feud was shapen

Hard against the Hugas, / when Higelac came
Faring with a fleet / to the Frisian land,
Where him the Hetware / humbled in battle,
Who achieved by their excellence, / overpowering
him,
That the byrny-wearer / must bow before them ;
He fell amid his foot-men ; / no finery gave
2920 That elder to his gallants. / From us ever since
Has mercy been withheld / by the Merowingians.
Nor do I in the Swede-Folk's / swearing trust
either,
Nor a whit expect it ; / for 'twas widely known
That Ongentheow / had thieved the life
Of Haethcyn Hrethling / by Ravenswood,
When, full of pride, / the Fighter-Scilfings
Visited first / the Geatish folk.

2930 Them soon the aged / father of Ohthere,
Old and awesome, / with onslaught answered,
Brake that wise seaman, / his wife delivered,
The greybeard his gossip, / of her gold bereft,
Onela's mother / and Ohthere's also,
And then followed / his deadly foes
Until they escaped / in evil plight
Into Ravenswood, / wanting their lord.
Set he then with a great host / about the sword's
leavings

2940 Wounded and weary ; / woes often promised he
To the anguished troop / that endless night ;
Said that in the morning / with the sword's edge
Get them he would, / on the gallows-tree some
A game *for the birds*. / Bliss came after
To their sorry minds / soon as the day broke,
When they of Higelac's / horns and trumpets
Heard the blast, / when the brave one came
With the force of his tribe / their track following.

XLI

Was that swathe blood-sweated / of Swedes and
Geats,
That welter of warriors / widely seen,
How that folk against them / a feud awakened.
Bewent him then the brave one / with his band of
kinsmen,
950 Old, full of sorrow, / a fastness to seek,
Earl Ongentheow / uphill removed ;
He had of Higelac's / fighting heard,
Boastful battlecraft ; / nor believed in withstanding,
That the men of the sea / he might resist,
From the ocean-harriers / his hoard defend,
His bairns and his bride ; / he bent him back thence,
Old, under an earth-wall. / Then pursuit was
offered
To the Swedish people, / the standard of Higelac ;
The plain of peace / they passed forth over

- 2960 When the Hrethelings / to the hedges thronged.
 There was Ongentheow / by edged swords,
 With his bleached locks, / to bay driven,
 So that People's King / consent he must
 To Eafor's sole judgment. / Him in anger
 Wulf Wonreding / with his weapon so reached,
 That from him at the stroke / in streams the blood
 sprang
 Forth under his hair. / Yet not fearful was he,
 The hoary Scilfing, / but in haste repaid
 With a stronger counter / that crashing stroke,
 2970 When the king of the tribe / turned him thither.
 Nor might the swift / son of Wonred
 To the old carl / an answer give,
 For he on his head / the helmet had shattered
 So that, foul with blood, / bow down he must,
 And fell on the field ; / nor yet fated was he,
 But raised himself, / though the wound had rent
 him.
- Let the hardy / thegn of Higelac
 His broad blade, / where his brother lay,
 Hoary sword Eotenish, / helm gigantic
 2980 Break over the shield-wall; / then bowed the King,
 The People's Herdsman / to the heart was pierced.
 Then were there many who wrapped up /
 the wounds of their kinsman,
 Rapidly raised him, / when room was made for
 them,
 So that they of the slaughter-field / should be
 masters.
- Then one captain / stripped the other,
 Took from Ongentheow / his iron byrny,
 His hard sword hilted / and his helm therewith ;
 The hoary one's harness / to Higelac he bare.
 He those precious things took, / and promised him
 fairly
- 2990 Prizes for his people, / and performed the same ;
 Pay for that punishing / did the Prince of Geats,
 Hrethel's offspring, / when to his home he came,
 Eofor and Wulf / with endless wealth,

Gave each of them / an hundred thousands,
Land and locked rings ; / nor for lavishness need
blame him

Any man in this middle-garth, / since for their
meed they had fought ;

And then to Eofor he gave / his only daughter
To plenish his home, / as a pledge of favour.

3000 That is the feud / and the foemanship,
Slaughter of men, / as it seems to my mind,
Wherefore will seek us out / the Swedish people,
Whenas they learn / that the lord of us
Has ended his life, / of old who held
Against hatred of enemies / hoard and realm,
And when fighters were fallen / the fierce
Shieldings ;

The folk's good fashioned, / and further again
Earlship achieved. / At once meseems best
That we come there to look / on our Lord and
King,

3010 And bring him back, / who bracelets gave us,
To his fire faring. / Nor shall a few things only
Melt with the mighty one, / for there is a mass of
wealth,

Gold uncounted, / grimly bargained for,
And now at the last / with his own life
Bracelets hath he bought ; / these shall the blaze
swallow,

The flame thatch over ; / never an earl shall wear
A jewel for reminder, / nor maiden sheen
Have on her throat / a ring for adornment,
But gloomy in mind, / of their gold bereft,
Often, not once, / else-lands shall they tread,
3020 Now that the leader of hosts / has laid aside
laughter,

Sport and song. / Wherefore shall spears
Many, morning-cold, / be clasped by fingers,
Hoisted in hand ; / never shall the harper's strain
Waken the warrior, / but the wan raven,
Fond over the fallen, / full of news,

To the eagle shall say / how at the eating he sped,
When he with the wolf / harried the corpses.”
So that bold soldier / was saying ever
Loathly tidings ; / he lied not much
3030 As to fate or fact.

His friends all arose ;
They went unblithely / under the Eagle's Ness
With welling tears, / the wonder to behold.
Found they there on the sand, / where his soul
had left him,
His resting-bed holding, / him who rings had
given them
In earlier times ; / then was the end of his days
Come to the good one, / when the King of War,
The Weders' Prince, / by wondrous-death
perished.

3040 First they beheld / a being more strange,
A Worm on the ground / against them there,
A foul thing lying ; / 'twas the flame-dragon
Their grim scather, / scorched with fire.
He was fifty / foot-measures
Long, as he lay. / Aloft he had sported
In time of night, / and netherwards then went
His den to visit ; / in death was he fast there,
He had his earth-cavern / used to the end.
By him stood / bowls and flagons,
Dishes lay, / and dear swords,
Rusty, through-eaten, / as they in the earth's
bosom

3050 A thousand winters / there had dwelt ;
Since it was, that birth-right / of boundless
strength,
The gold of ancient men, / by magic guarded,
So that to the ring-chamber / might not reach
Any son of man ; / save that God Himself,
The Truth-King of Triumphs, / entrusted to
whom He would
(He is mankind's Helper) / the hoard to open,
Even unto such a man / as meet to Him seemed.

XLII

Then 'twas plainly seen / that the way was not
prosperous

Of them who unrightly / inside had hidden
3060 Wealth under the walls. / The warden already had
slain

Some few of them ; / Then for the feud was
vengeance.

Wrathfully wreaked. / A wonder 'tis wherever
An excellent earl / at the end arrives

Of the life allotted him, / when no longer he may,
A man among his mates, / in the mead-hall dwell.
So was it with Beowulf / when he the barrow's
warden

Sought, and keen strife ; / himself he knew not
By what his world-sundering / should be wrought.

Until doomsday / so deeply had cursed it
3070 The mighty princes / who had put it there,
That his soul should / of sins be guilty,
Fixed in idol-shrines, / fast in hell-bonds,
Plagued and poxed, / who plundered that place.
Yet he was not gold-hungry ; / rather had he
His Owner's Favour / ever followed.

Wiglaf made utterance, / Weohstan's son :
Oft shall many an earl / by one man's will
Cruelly suffer, / as is come upon us.

Nor could we prevail / on our loved Prince,
3080 The Kingdom's Shepherd, / by any counsel,
That he would not go / to that gold-warden,
But let him lie / where long-time he was,
Abide within his walls / to the world's end ;
He held to his high calling. / The hoard is to be
seen,

Grimly gained ; / was that gift too costly
Which thither lured / the *Lord of us*.

I was inside there / and all of it saw,
The ornaments of the house / when 'twas opened
to me

Nowise pleasantly, / passage allowed
 3090 In under the earth-wall. / I at once seized
 Much in my hands, / a mighty burthen
 Of hoarded treasures, / hither out I bare them
 To my own King ; / quick was he still,
 Wise and whole-minded. / Very many things spake
 The old man in his grief, / and to greet you ordered
 me,
 Bade you furnish fitly, / for your friend's deeds,
 On the bale-fire's site / a barrow tall,
 Mickle and mighty, / as of men he was
 The worthiest warrior / the wide world over,
 3100 While the wealth of the burgh / he well might use.
 Let us now be off / on another *errand*
 To seek and to see / the subtle store-house,
 The wonder within the walls ; / I will you guide,
 That ye from near / enough may look
 On bracelets and broad gold. / Be the bier in
 readiness,
 Quickly fashioned, / when out we come,
 And lay we thereon / the Lord of us,
 The man beloved, / where long he shall
 Under the Wielder's / watch abide."
 3110 Bade he them command, / that boy of Weohstan's,
 That hero of the host, / heroes many,
 Who buildings owned, / that they the bale-wood
 Should fetch from afar, / being folk-owners,
 To the brave one's side. / " Now shall the blaze
 devour—
 The wan flame waxing— / the Warriors'
 Strengtheners,
 Him who oft abode / the iron showers,
 When a storm of darts / driven by strings
 Shot over the shield-wall, / the shaft held to its
 duty,
 And with feather-gear fain / the flying-barb
 followed."
 3120 And now the sage / son of Weohstan
 Called from the throng / thegns of the King,
 Seven together, / the seemliest ;

One of eight he went / under the enemy roof ;
 One man of battle / bare in his hand
 A flaming torch, / who in front of them trod.
 Nor was it left to the lot / who should loot that
 hoard,
 When, all unguarded, / any part of it
 The soldiers saw / in that cellar abiding,
 Lying there for a moment ; / little did any mourn
 3130 That they must at once / fetch out from thence
 Those dear treasures. / The dragon eke they
 shoved,
 The Worm over the wall-cliff, / let the wave take
 him,
 The flood enclasp / that keeper of jewels.
 There was wunden gold / on a wain laden,
 All unnumbered ; / and the Atheling borne,
 The hoary warrior, / to the Whale's Ness.

XLIII

Piled for him then / the Geatish people
 A bier on the earth / unyielding in strength,
 And hanged it with helmets, / hero-shields
 3140 Bright byrnies, / the boon he had asked ;
 Laid they on the midst of it / their mighty Prince,
 The heroes lamenting / the Lord they loved.
 Began then on the barrow / of bale-fires the
 mightiest
 A warrior to awaken ; / the wood-smoke soared
 Swart over the fire-swathes ; / the singing flame
 With weeping mingled / (the wind-eddies lay
 still)
 Until his bone-house / it had broken,
 Hot in its heart. / Unhappily minded,
 Moodily they mourned / their master's death ;
 3150 Also a weary lay / the wife of old
 For *Beowulf*, / with bounden hair
 Sang in her sorrow, / *said* once and again
 That *harmful days* / and harsh she *dreaded*,

Wanton slaughter, / terror of *warriors*,
Humbling *and slavery*.

Heaven swallowed the reek.

3160 Wrought they then, / the Weder-People,
A hill upon the cliff / that was high and broad,
By Wave-farers / widely seen ;
And timbered about / in ten days
The battle-chief's beacon ; / what was left from
the burning
With a wall they enwrapped / in the worthiest
way
Men foremost in wisdom / might have found.
In the barrow they laid / bracelets and jewels,
All such harnessings / as from the hoard erstwhile
Angry men / had taken out ;
They left the treasure of earls / for the earth to
hold,
Gold among gravel, / where again now it liveth,
To all men useless, / as of old it was.

3170 Then around the mound / rode battle-champions,
Athelings' sons, / twelve in all,
Who would keen *their master*, / mourn their King,
Tuned words measure, / and tell of the *man* ;
They exalted his earlship, / and his excellent work
Doughty they deemed, / as due it is
That their willing lord / men should laud in words,
Should love in their hearts, / when he must forth
Out of his body / be borne *at length*.

3180 So grieved and plained / the Geatish People
For their Lord's fall, / his hearth-fellows ;
They said that he was / a World King,
Of men the mildest / and to men kindest,
To his people most pleasant / and for praise most
eager.

Finnsburgh

“ It is never the horns / *of the house* are burning ? ”
Brake then into speech / the battle-young King :
“ This nor dawneth from the east, / nor here any
dragon flieth,

Nor here on this hall / are the horns burning ;
But the Boar forth bear they, / birds are singing,
Clattereth the grey-sark, / clasheth the war-wood,
Shield to shaft answereth. / Now shineth this
moon

Waxing under the welkin ; / now arise woeful
deeds

Which battle against this people / will bring to pass.

10 But awaken ye now, / warriors mine,
Take hold of your shields, / as heroes shape you,
Fight in the fore-front, / be firm in courage.”

Then arose many a gold-laden thegn, / girded on
him his sword ;

Then led to the doors / the lordly champions,
Sigferth and Eaha, / their swords drew they,
And at the other doors / Ordlaf and Guthlaf
And Hengest's self ; / he hied in their wake.

Then Garulf again / of Guthere besought

20 That they so free-born a life / in the first sally
Should not bear in harness, / to that hall's doors,
Now that one hardy in fight / was fain to
harry it ;

But he asked over them all / in open speech,
Dire-minded hero, / who was holding the doors.

“ Sigferth is my name,” quoth he, / “ I am the
Secgas' lord,

A wanderer widely known. / Many the woes I've
endured,

Hard battles. / For thee now is it here decreed,
Whatsoever thou thyself / wilt seek at my hands.”

Then was there in the hall / havoc of slaughter,
 Must the curved board / in keen hands,
 30 The bones' guard, burst. / The burgh-floor
 dinned
 When in that fight / was fallen Garulf,
 The first of all / the earth-dwellers,
 Guthlaf's son, / about him gallants many.
 Roamed over the corpses / the raven, wandered
 Swart and sallow-brown ; / the sword-gleam shone
 As though all Finnsburgh / on fire it were.
 Nor heard I ever that more worthily / in wars of
 men
 Sixty battle-heroes / bare themselves better,
 Nor ever did swains for their sweet mead / give
 seemlier payment
 40 Than to Hnaef was paid / by his house-fellows.
 They fought five days, / yet fell there none
 Of the doughty comrades ; / but the doors they
 held.
 Then bewent him the wounded hero / on his way
 going,
 He said that his byrny / broken was,
 No helpful garment, / and eke was his helmet
 pierced.
 Then swiftly asked him / the Shepherd of the Folk
 How the warriors / with their wounds were
 thriving,
 48 And which of the youths

Waldere

I

. she heartened him eagerly :

“ Indeed Weland’s / work not faileth
Any among men / who the Mimming can,
The hoary one handle. / Oft in the host hath fallen
Blood-sweating and sword-wounded / swain after
other.

Attila’s Vanguard, / let not thy valour yet
Dwindle to-day, / thy dominance *pass*.

For the day is come

When truly thou shalt take / of two things either ;

10 Thy life shalt lose / or lasting glory

Own among men, / Aelfhere’s son.

Never of thee, my friend, / the fault do I name

That I have seen thee / in the sword-play

By ignominy / with any man

Avoid to fight, / or flee to the wall,

Defending thy body, / though foes in plenty

Thy byrny coat / with their blades were hewing ;

But thou ever farther / to fight didst seek,

To parley beyond thy border ; / therefore thy
peril I dreaded,

20 For that thou too fiercely / to fight didst seek

In that encounter, / the other man’s

Pitched battle. / Prosper thyself

By gallant deeds, / while God for thee careth.

Nor be troubled for thy sword ; / to thee is the
choicest of treasure

Given, to help thee, / wherewith thou shalt

Guthhere’s

Boasting abase, / because he that battle began,

Unfairly, / the first to seek.

Refused he the sword / and the flagon jewelled,

And bracelets many ; / now, both of them lacking,

30 Shall hie from this fight / the lord, to find
His ancient heritage, / or here, first, slumber
If he the”

II

“ a better blade
Save that one only / which eke I have
In a stone chest / stealthily hidden.
I wot that Theodric / thought to send it
To Widia’s self, / and great wealth also
Of treasure with that blade ; / and a troop of them
beside him
With gold to adorn ; / he had got his fee of old
40 When out of his narrow straits / Nithhad’s kinsman,
Weland’s son, / Widia sent him ;
When from the giants’ fold / forth he hastened.”
Waldere made answer, / a warrior stout,
Held in his hand / his help in battle,
The grip of his war-blade, / and in words boasted :
“ What ! didst thou indeed believe, / Lord of the
Burgunds,
That me Hagen’s hand / had held in battle,
And driven from the fight ? / Fetch if thou darest
At my hoary byrny, / thus battle-weary.
50 Is happed here about my shoulders / the heirloom
of Aelfhere,
Good, broad-fronted, / with gold fashioned,
In all things blameless, / an atheling’s garment
For him to have / when his hand defendeth
His life-ward from foes ; / nor proves it false to me
When men unkind, / again beginning,
Meet with their blades, / as me ye did.
Yet victory may he own / who ever is
Ready and resolute / for all things righteous ;
Whoso him to the Holiest / for help entrusteth,
60 To God for favour ; / will he find it readily
If on that reward / he thinketh ever.
Then may the proud / divide possessions,
Wielding power ; / that is”

Deor

Weland among the Wurmas / wandered in exile,
A single-minded earl / he suffered hardship,
He had for his comrades / care and longing,
Winter-cold wretchedness ; / woe he often found,
When Nithhad him / with need constrained,
Bitter sinew-cutting / of a better man.
That overpassing, / this also may.

10 To Beadohild was not / her brothers' death
As sore in her soul / as herself's own plight,
For clearly she / conceived had
That she was mothering ; / nor might she ever
With certainty think / how that should be.
13 We have heard, we many, / of Hilda's raping.
14 That overpassing, / this also may.

Was deep beyond plumbing / the passion of the
Geat
So that sorrow of love / his sleep all stole.
That overpassing, / this also may.

Theodoric *was banished* / thirty winters
From the Maerings' burgh ; / to many 'twas
known.
20 That overpassing, / this also may.

We have asked and learned of / Eormanrices
Wolfish thoughts / (he ruled widely the folk
Of the Gothic realm) ; / that was a grim King.
Sate many a wight / by sorrows bounden,
Woe awaiting, / wished well enough
That overcome / that kingdom were.
That overpassing, / this also may.

Sitteth any sorrowful, / severed from fortune,
His soul darkened, / to himself thinketh he
30 That his share of evil / endless is ?
Let him then bethink him / that beyond this world
Our Lord All-Wise / often changeth ; ,
To many an earl / His Mercy sheweth,
Sure glory ; / to some a share of woes

And I of myself / will say this thing,
That a while I was / the Heodenings' bard ;
To my duke was I dear ; / and Deor was my name,
I had, for many winters, / a worthy office,
A handsome lord, / until Heorrenda now,
40 A man skilled in lays, / the land-right has taken
Which the Guardian of Earls / of old had given me.
That overpassing, / this also may.

Notes

WIDSITH

I must again turn the reader to the edition of *Widsith, a Study in Old English Heroic Legend*, by Mr. R. W. Chambers, published in 1912 by the Cambridge University Press. There are, in the poem, 143 lines; in the book 274 pages, on which the innumerable stories of history and myth suggested by each of the names in Widsith's catalogues are cunningly explored. Here I can refer to those only of the first importance or who figure in the other poems.

- 1 Widsith, the real, assumed, or symbolical name of a wandering minstrel, means simply "the wide traveller." The lock of his word-board is, of course, the "barrier of teeth" which we find in Homer.
- 2 I have used the word "meiny" here, and several times in *Beowulf*, to render the Old English "maegth," a tribe, or group of people. For this word as for its parent "maeg," a kinsman or comrade, there is no good equivalent with the "m" initial which alliteration requires, though "maeg" can sometimes be rendered "mate."
- 3 The Myrgings seem (see 43) to have lived south of the Angles, *i.e.*, between the Eider, the Elbe and the Baltic.
- 4 But Ealhild is a Lombard, daughter of Eadwine (Audoin); Widsith seems to have escorted her when she went as bride to the Gothic King Eormanric.
- 8 Eormanric (Hermanaricus), who died about A.D. 375 in his 110th year, remained for centuries a type of the fierce and martial tyrant. In *Beowulf* (1200) Hama fled from his cunning, bearing off the Brosings' Collar. Deor (21) had heard of his wolfish thoughts. "Fierce and faithless" he seems to Widsith, yet he (89) "was good to me; a bracelet he gave me"; and his courtiers were "the best of boon-companions."
- 15 Alexander seems an anachronism, but his story had travelled through the West, and Jordanes speaks of him as a parallel to Eormanric.
- 19 Under Gifica (Gibeche) the Burgunds were still neighbours of Huns, Goths, Greeks and Finns in the Vistula country. In *Waldere* we find them settled in the West, under Gunther.
- 20 The Greeks are called "Creacs" here and in 76 Cæsar here is the Emperor of the East.
- 21 See my note to *Deor*, 36.
- 22 Wada, whose name survives in Yorkshire, had a great literary career. We find in Chaucer and Mallory rumours of his strength

- and of his magic boat. He was also ascribed as father to Weland.
- 24 Theodric the Frank, son of Clovis, was father of Theodebert, who killed Beowulf's uncle Higelac in Friesland.
- 25 Breca of the Brondings is the hero who swam with Beowulf (499-606).
- 27 Finn, son of Folcwalda, is the hero of the episode in *Beowulf* (1068-1159) and the lord of Finnsburgh.
- 29 Hnaef, son of Hoc, was the brother of Finn's Queen, Hildeburh, and was killed at Finnsburgh (*Beowulf*, 1070).
- 31 Ongentheow is, in *Beowulf*, the father of Onela and Ohthere, who is killed in the fight with Higelac at Ravenswood.
- 32 The Longbeards (Lombards) are here still in their northern home on the banks of the Elbe.
- 33 The Hetwaras (Hatuarii) figure twice in *Beowulf* (lines 2363, 2916) as the enemy, fighting whom Higelac was killed in Friesland.
- 35 Offa : there were two Kings of this name, one in the continental Anglia, the other, his descendant, an actual King of Mercia. One of them is, in *Beowulf*, the husband of a fierce Queen, Thrytho. The story of the first Offa is told at length by Saxo. In youth he was stupid and speechless, but came forward as the champion of his country, which he defended in a duel by Fifeldor (the river Eider).
- 44 The Swaef (Suabian) is apparently equivalent here to Myrging. Of the latter nothing can be said with certainty beyond what this poem says.
- 45 Hrothwulf (*Beowulf*, 1017, 1181) was probably son of Hrothgar's brother, Halga the Kind (*id.* 61). He is also hero of the Saga of Rolf Kraki, where his father is Helgi, his uncle Hroarr, and his grandfather Halfdan. From *Beowulf* we guess that the peace between uncle and nephew is not to last : in line 1163 :
- even where the goodly twain
Sate, the uncle and the nephew ; still were they at each at peace
together,
- and earlier (1015) we find
- the kinsmen of all there . . .
Hrothgar and Hrothulf. Heorot within was
Filled with friends ; no fashion of treason
The Shielding-People shaped that while.
- Later, we can discern from Saxo that Hrothwulf deposed and killed the son of his uncle Hrothgar, and that he himself was attacked and killed by Heorowearð, the son of Hrothgar's elder brother, mentioned in *Beowulf* only as being deprived of the succession to his father's armour.
- 48 Ingeld, son of Froda, is the Heathobearð prince mentioned by *Beowulf* (2064) as betrothed to Hrothgar's daughter, in order to heal an old feud. What that feud was is suggested here.

65 The Burgunds (*cf.* 19) have perhaps moved to their Western home. Guthhere is the "Lord of the Burgunds" addressed in *Waldere*, (56).

70 Aelfwine and his father, Eadwine, are the Alboin and Audoin, who brought the Lombards into Italy. It seems here that Eadwine had also a daughter, Ealhild, who was given in marriage to Eormanric. That Audoin died in 565, whereas Eormanric was born about 265 is a discrepancy which need not detain us.

76 This Cæsar is probably the Western, as opposed to the Eastern Emperor in line 20 ; and the Welsh kingdom is Rome.

79 "Skating-Finns:" the Scritobini or Scridefinnas, so called from their practice of crossing the ground on snow-shoes or skis.

80 "Lidwicings:" the Armoricans. The Britons having invaded their country, killed the men and cut the tongues of the women, so that their children might not learn the Armorican tongue. Hence, says the chronicler, "illos vocamus in nostra lingua Letewicion, id est Semitacentes, quoniam confuse loquuntur."

91 This is obscure, but compare the sword given by Valdabrun to Guenes in the *Song of Roland*, 620 :

"Take now this sword, and better sword has none ;
Into the hilt a thousand coins are run."

93 The poet gives the treasure he has received in a foreign court to his own King, on his return. So we find Beowulf presenting the best of Hrothgar's gifts to his master, Higelac.

113 "East-Gota, old and gallant," is the earliest, save Alexander, of the heroes who figure in *Widsith*, being Ostrogotha, King of all the Goths, who crossed the Danube and wasted Moesia and Thrace in the reign of the Emperor Philip (A.D. 244-249). Cassiodorus says of him : "Enituit enim Ostrogotha patientia."

115 "Theodric." We have seen Theodric the Frank at line 24 ; Mr. Chambers argues and, I think, proves, that this is the Gothic champion, Dietrich von Bern, whom legend makes the nephew of Eormanric and a victim of his treachery. This is the Theodric who (in *Waldere*) thought to send a sword, and great treasure to Widia ; and whose story is hinted in two lines of *Deor*. Seafola then becomes his retainer, Sabene of Ravenna.

121 "The Wistula Wood:" Mr. Chambers says : "The Goths left the Vistula towards the end of the second century A.D. (Hodgkin's *Italy*, I, 40). These lines, therefore, preserve a very early tradition, but we can draw no exact chronological argument from the allusion except that we are here dealing with saga and not with history. The wood is probably to be identified with the Mirkwood which, in later Icelandic story, separates Goths and Huns."

124 Wudga is in *Waldere* Widia, the son of Weland by Beadohild, daughter of Nithhad. In Jordanes he is "Vidigoia, Gothorum fortissimus," in the later German epics he is Wittich, a type of

treachery. Hama is obscurely mentioned in *Beowulf* (1198) as carrying off the Brosings' Collar, and flying from Eormanric's cunning. In the *Thidreks Saga* he figures as Heimir Studasson, who after a long career as a robber-chief enters a monastery. (See my note on *Beowulf* 1198). From 129 we see that Wudga and Hama were not natives of the country they ruled, though we are not told where that country was, or how the two came together.

135 The poem ends, as it began, with nine lines, not put into the mouth of Widsith himself, but generally descriptive of the poet's lot, which has altered little in these fifteen centuries.

BEOWULF

- 4 There is some confusion between this "Scyld Scefing," Shield of the Sheaf, and the Angles' ancestor Scaef, to whom William of Malmesbury ascribes a similar origin: "Iste ut ferunt, in quendam insulam Germaniae Scandzam . . . appulsus navi sine remige, puerulus, posito ad caput frumenti manipulo, dormiens, ideoque Scaef nuncupatus, ab hominibus regionis illius pro miraculo exceptus et sedulo nutritus: adulta aetate regnavit in oppido quod tunc Slaswic, nunc vero Haithebi appellatur." Scaef appears in the Anglo-Saxon pedigrees as a son born in the Ark to Noah, and ancestor of the English Kings. In *Widsith* (32) Scaef rules the Lombards. On the other hand, Scyld is the Danes' ancestor, whence their name of Shieldings.
- 18 This Beowulf is not the hero of the poem. He disappears finally at line 56.
- 32 Here, as in the fine passage 2231-2270, the poet touches on customs which even to him were archaic, with feeling and imagination.
- 57 Halfdane and his sons come also in Saxo and in the Saga of Rolf Kraki. From 467 we learn that Heorogar died in Hrothgar's youth; from 2158 that he did not leave his armour to his son, Heorowearð, but that Hrothgar gave it to Beowulf. Hrothgar is at once a type of the wise old ruler, and of the doomed son of an accursed race. Throughout all his misfortunes, when he is wholly helpless, he is called the Helm of Shieldings, the Shepherd of his Folk, and so forth. Nor is his story finished in *Beowulf*. We learn (2020) that he wished to give his daughter to the Heathobearð Prince Ingeld, in order to heal an old feud. But he himself, Saxo tells us, was slain by one "Hodbroddus," in whose name the Heathobearð seems to lurk. His sons, Hrethric and Hrothmund, were still young (1180, etc.), and he was succeeded by Hrothulf, the son of his younger brother, Halga. Halga is the Helgi Hundingsbane of the Sagas, and Hrothulf is Rolf Kraki. In Saxo the dispossessed cousin, Heorowearð, reappears (as

Hiarwarus), falling upon Rolf and his men in the blazing hall. Thus, though it is nowhere said in the poem, the Shielding dynasty was one stained with fratricide and other tragic frailties. Against this background, too familiar for statement to the listeners gathered about the singing poet, the simplicity, honesty and courage of Beowulf and the Geats are unmistakably outlined.

62 The MS. has "hyrde ic th. elan cwen heatho-scilfingas heals-gebedda." "Heard I that elan" (or "ela's") "queen, a Battle-Scilfing's neck-bedfellow." Grundtvig suggested that *elan* is part of the word *Onelan*, and that Halfdane's fourth child, a daughter, was married to the Swedish King Onela, of whom later Mr. Wyatt reads "hyrde ic, thaet Elan cwen Ongentheowes waes," making the lady's name Elan, and herself the wife of Ongentheow. This identifies her with the "gossip" in line 2930, and makes her mother of Onela and Ohthere. Another suggestion is to borrow the names Signy and Saevil from the Saga of Rolf Kraki and read "hyrde ic, thaet Sigeneow Saewelan cwen waes." But the matter is of little importance.

63 The Swedes are called Scilfings or Scylfings, as the Danes are called Scyldings (Shieldings). Both names are compounded, usually to help out alliteration; so that we have North—, South—, East—, West—, Spear—, Ring—, Bright-Danes, Honour—, Triumph-Shieldings, etc. The Swedish Kings in *Beowulf* are Ongentheow and his son, Onela. A younger son, Ohthere, is father of Eanmund and Eadgils, who rebel against Onela, are banished, and take refuge with Beowulf's cousin, Heardred, at the Geatish court. This results in the campaigns described towards the end of *Beowulf*.

68 HEOROT means Hart. The horns (82) were probably antlers fixed to or carved upon the gables as symbols.

83 "Nor was it long"—this refers to the fight between Hrothgar and the Heathobeards; see *Widsith* 45-9. It was, perhaps, in a later fight that Hrothgar was killed, and the first fight may have come before Grendel's invasion.

92 This hymn, in its reiteration of a simple thought, recalls the famous Hymn of Caedmon, and is probably contemporary. Properly speaking, there are no Christian passages in *Beowulf*, but this seems to indicate that the poet had had a monastic schooling. Notice, too, at 175 his contempt for the heathen practices to which, after and in spite of this hymn, his Danes revert.

102 In *Beowulf* the words "gast," a ghost or spirit, and "gist," a guest or stranger, are both often written "gaest," which leads to confusion. But a guest, in Old English, was seldom an expected, and not often a welcome guest. Hence to this midnight murderer one word is as fitting as the other. The villain enters before the hero.

- 107 This, though not a "Christian passage," implies an acquaintance with, at least, the Old Testament. "He" in 115 is still Grendel.
- 168 This is one of the *cruces* of the poem. A literal rendering is "Nor he the" (or "that") "Gift-Stool greet" (or "visit") "might, with treasure before the Creator, nor know his mind" (or "nor have his desire"). The difficulty is to determine whether "he" is Hrothgar or Grendel, and whether "his" is Hrothgar's, Grendel's, or the Creator's mind. On the whole I prefer to take "he" as Hrothgar; its prominence in the line suggests a fresh subject, and Grendel was subject of the last sentence. This reading makes line 170 simple also. Hrothgar was ashamed because he could not visit the Gift-Stool, the Sacred Throne or Royal Altar in his Hall, from which he had planned to deal out shares of wealth to all his people. And he could not visit it because the hall was defiled by Grendel. On the other hand, it is held that "he" is Grendel, who was allowed to ravage the hall, but prevented by some charm from violating the sanctuary, and from interpreting (as the King must) the Will of God.
- 180 This follows harshly upon the hymn of lines 92-98. But one can imagine that a poet, himself a convert or the son of converts to Christianity in England, would feel some doubt as to the faith of his Continental ancestors.
- 194 "Higelac's Thegn" is the hero of the poem, BEOWULF, the son of Ecgtheow, by a daughter of the Geatish King Hrethel. From this point in the story the Danes fade into insignificance, and Beowulf and his "handful" hold the field. The Geats are placed by *Widsith* (58) between the Swedes and the South-Danes. They seem to have lived in the southern part of modern Sweden, beyond Lakes Wener and Wetter, and to have waged incessant war with the Swedes across these lakes. "Was deep beyond plumbing," says Deor, "the passion of the Geat," meaning, apparently, Nithhad, the captor and tormentor of Weland the Smith.
- 240 There is no gap here, but some words are plainly missing. I follow Bugge's emendation. Throughout the text I have printed in italics all words that represent serious additions to or alterations of the MSS. of these poems.
- 303 The Boar's image worn upon the helmet (as crests were worn in the days of chivalry) was a symbol of Freya. Its use is mentioned by Tacitus (*Germania*, xlv.): "Insigne superstitionis formas aprorum gestant: id pro armis omnique tutela securum deae cultorem etiam inter hostis praestat." And what remains of such a helmet was found in a Derbyshire barrow in 1848.
- 340 The Weders are the Geats.
- 389 These two half-lines were suggested by Grein to remedy the

defective alliteration, and fill a gap in the narrative. There is none in the MS. here or in 403.

421 Etins seem to have existed on land and sea. A thousand years later, in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (I, ii) the Citizen's Wife tells us: "Faith, husband, and Ralph says true; for they say the King of Portugal cannot sit at his meat, but the giants and the ettins will come and snatch it from him." Nicors are more properly sea-monsters. I heard of, but did not see, the arrival of one upon the shore of the Isle of Portland, in the autumn of 1914. It was described as a fish of repellent appearance, which lay at high water-mark, beneath Portland Castle, gasping audibly. A native at once named it a "nicor," but I have never seen the modern word defined.

445 The "Hrethmen" (Triumph-men) are here, most inappropriately, the suffering and discomfited Danes. The word is generally used of the Goths, as of Eormanric, the Hreth-King, in *Widsith* 7. This and the next lines suggest a speech in Virgil (*Aeneid* x, 557-580): Istic nunc, metuende, iace. Non te optima mater

Condet humi, patriove onerabit membra sepulcro:
Alitibus linquere feris, aut gurgite mersum
Unda feret, piscesque impasti vulnera lambent.

455 Weland, in later English Wayland, is the master-smith. This armour had perhaps come to Hrethel from Nithhad, the Geat by whom Weland was imprisoned and forced to work. See *Deor*. "Leaving" (laf) is a word frequently used of swords and armour, which must have figured prominently among the heirlooms of our ancestors. By a metaphor, the sword is spoken of as the hammer's, or the file's legacy; for from these implements its first owner may be said to have inherited it.

"Wyrð" (Destiny) is here personified, as in 477. Elsewhere the word is used of the destiny allotted to a man or men.

506 This is the story alluded to by Beowulf at 420. Breca of the Brondings has been mentioned in *Widsith*. Beowulf, at 541, seems to imply that Breca could not swim faster than he, and that he could but did not choose to swim faster than Breca. At 581 he breaks into what the sixteenth century Scots poets called a "flyting" and charges Unferth with the murder of his own brothers. The poet repeats this charge at 1167, but nothing more is known of it. The quarrel is made up at 1455, when Unferth lends Beowulf his sword, Hrunting, to fight Grendel's mother.

702 There is a quaint parallel to the story of Grendel's visit to the fifteen Geats in Heorot, in *Treasure Island*, when Long John Silver comes to the stockade with a flag of truce, and says: "That was a good lay of yours last night. I don't deny it was a good lay. Some of you pretty handy with the hand-spike end. And I'll not deny either but what some of my

people was shook,—maybe all was shook ; maybe I was shook myself ; maybe that's why I'm in here for terms. But you mark me, cap'n, it won't do twice, by thunder ! We'll have to do sentry-go, and ease off a point or so on the rum. Maybe you think we were all a sheet in the wind's eye. But I'll tell you I was sober ; I was on'y dog-tired ; and if I'd awoke a second sooner I'd a' caught you at the act, I would. He wasn't dead when I got round to him, not he."

" Well ? " says Captain Smollett, as cool as can be. All that Silver said was a riddle to him, but you would never have guessed it from his tone. As for me, I began to have an inkling. Ben Gunn's last words came back to my mind. I began to suppose that he had paid the buccaneers a visit while they all lay drunk together round the fire, and I reckoned up with glee that we had only fourteen enemies to deal with.—*Treasure Island*, chap. xx.

741 This man was Hondscio (2076).

748 He may be Beowulf or Grendel, probably the latter, as " thoughts of envy (inwit-thonc) " implies treacherous intent.

769 To these simple ancients a shortage of ale seemed the worst calamity that could befall them. The " cruel wardens " are apparently Beowulf and Grendel.

874 This, the Lay of Sigemund, is the first of the Episodes in *Beowulf*. In the later and more familiar story, the dragon was killed by Sigemund's son, Sigurd or Siegfried. Fitela (Sinfiötli) was the son of Sigemund, by his sister Signy, and so also his nephew. The Waelsing is better known as Völsung.

900 Sigemund as a good and heroic King is a type of Beowulf. In Heremod, here and at 1709, we find the contrast of a bad King, who harms his people. He seems to have been a King of the Danes, of a dynasty older than the Shieldings.

1017 Compare *Widsith*, 45.

1044 Ing was, according to Tacitus (*Germania*, ii) one of the three sons of Mannus, son of the earth-born god Tuisto, from whom the tribe nearest the ocean take the name of Ingaevones. This is in *Beowulf* Ing-wine, or Ing's Friends. We find Ing mentioned among the East-Danes in the *Runic Poem*.

1068 The Lay of Finn is the longest and most important of the Episodes in *Beowulf*. It appears to be a condensation of a similar epic, of which the 48 lines called *Finnsburgh* (page 105-6) are a fragment. The story seems to be as follows :

Finn, King of the Frisians, or Eotens, had carried off Hildeburh, daughter of the Danish King Hoc, and sister of Hnaef and Hengest. After some years her brothers invade Finn's country, and in their attack Hnaef and a son of Finn by Hildeburh are killed, with many of the Frisians. Peace is signed, and the surviving Frisians undertake to build a hall for Hengest and his Danes, and to pay them tribute daily.

The bodies of the slain are solemnly burned. It is now mid-winter, and Hengest is obliged to stay among the Frisians ; he is consumed with grief for his brother, and plans an attack upon Finn. This the Frisians anticipate, and in the *Finnsburgh* fragment we find them attacking Hengest in his hall. According to the fragment, none of the Danes falls, but from *Beowulf* (1142-4) we find that Hengest is killed. Two of his men, Guthlaf and Oslaf (or Ordlaf), escape to Denmark, return with fresh forces, kill Finn and loot his hall, and carry back Hildeburh (in a triumph which she perhaps does not share) to her own people.

- 1113 "Some" in the sense (which seems to have survived or revived in America) of "many."
- 1143 Hunlafing is possibly the warrior who kills Hengest ; but the MS. has "hun lafing," and the words may be separate. If so, Hun is the warrior (so *Widsith*, 33) and Lafing is a very probable name for a sword. The "world's ruling" is, of course, death.
- 1162 Here we have a passage such as is commoner in other poems, where there are three accented syllables in each half-line (compare 1705-7).
- 1180 It is evident that Hrothulf, being older than Hrothgar's sons, is regarded as the heir to his throne.
- 1198 Another story, of which tantalisingly little is told. We have seen Hama in *Widsith* (124-130). There he rules as an exile, by distributing "wounden gold." Here he flees into exile—apparently into a cloister, choosing the "Eternal Rule." Mr. Chambers (*Widsith*, p. 56) translates a passage from the *Thidreks Saga*, which bears on this. "The monastery into which Heimir has been received without telling his name, is attacked by a giant, who challenges the monks. Heimir offers to meet him, and asks for the weapons which he has, long ago, surrendered to the abbot. The abbot answers : 'Thou shalt not have thy sword ; it was broken asunder and a door hinge of made it here in the monastery. And the rest of thine armour was sold in the market-place.' Then spake Heimir : 'Ye monks know much of books but little of chivalry ; had ye known how good these weapons were, ye had never parted with them.' And he sprang towards the abbot, and took his cowl in both hands and said : 'Verily thou wast a fool, if no iron would suit thee to furnish thy church doors, but my good sword Naglhring, which has cut asunder many a helm like cloth, and made many a son of the giants headless ; and thou shalt pay for it.' And he shook the cowl, with the head inside, so hard that four of the abbot's teeth fell out ; three on to the floor, and the fourth down his throat. And when the monks heard mention of Naglhring, then they knew that it was Heimir Studasson, of whom they had oft heard tell. And they were sore afraid, and took the keys and went to

the great chest where all his weapons were stored. One took his sword Naglhring, the second his hauberk, the third his helm, the fourth his shield, and the fifth his spear. And all these weapons had been so well stored that they were no whit worse than when he parted with them.

“ And Heimir took Naglhring and saw how fairly its edges and its gold ornaments shone ; and it came into his mind what trust he had had in its edges each time that he should fight. And as he thought of many a happy day, and how he had ridden out to fight with his fellows, he was first red as blood, and then pale as a corpse. And he kepti silence for a time. After that he asked where was his horse Rspa. And the abbot made answer : ‘ Thy horse used to draw stones to the church ; he has been dead many a year.’ ”

The Brosings’ Collar we find in the *Elder Edda*. It was won from the dwarfs by Freya, and stolen from her by Loki. The Brosings or Brisings probably dwelt on the rocky summit of Alt-Breisach on the Rhine.

1202 This other Collar Beowulf gives to Higelac, who wears it on his last expedition to Friesland, where he is slain and robbed by the Franks of Theodebert.

1214 “ Held ”—not as conquerors (the word’s usual meaning), but by covering it with their corpses.

1247 So Tacitus tells us (*Germania*, xiii) : “ Nihil autem neque publicae neque privatae rei nisi armati agunt.”

1251 There is a distinct break in the poem. These lines (1251-78) sum up the preceding and introduce the new adventure. This time the Danes have returned to sleep in their hall, and the Geats are lodged elsewhere.

1257 This “ long time ” was one or two days at most.

1386 So in Virgil (*Aeneid* x, 467-9) :

Stat sua cuique dies, breve et irreparabile tempus
Omnibus est vitae : sed famam extendere factis,
Hoc virtutis opus.

1458 Swords have names here, as in *Roland*. So we have seen Heimir’s sword Naglhring (Nail-ring) and shall see Beowulf’s last sword (2680) Naegling (Nail’s offspring—its hilt was perhaps studded with nails, like the treasure-cup at 2023).

1558 “ Eotenish,” here and at 2616 and 2979, means “ gigantic,” the work of etins ; there is no allusion to the Eotens of King Finn.

1594 It is difficult to explain how, if water could not get into the hall, Grendel’s blood rose through the water.

1643 Mead-plains are fields in which the ingredients of mead are grown ; so, too, the “ mead-walk ” in 924.

1653 The alliteration in the second half-line is in “ to,” as in the original (literally, “ which thou here to lookest ”).

1688 Runes were cut on the hilts of swords. This story, of the war

with the giants, and of the Deluge, is probably the oldest of all those mentioned in the poem.

1709 Beowulf has already been contrasted with Heremod in lines 901-915.

1747 "Wom wundor-bebodum wergan gastes." *Woh* means crooked, hence wicked. The cursed ghost is the Tempter.

1755 The poet is constantly occupied by the thought of man's fleeting life, his forced parting from his wealth, and the callous indifference of his heirs.

1836 The suggestion that Hrethric, the elder son of Hrothgar, should take service among the Geats may be inspired by the prevision of a war with the Heathobeards, of which Beowulf speaks later (2024-2069); or by the feeling that Hrothulf would not protect Hrethric (whom, indeed, he appears from Saxo to have murdered) after the death of Hrothgar.

1861 "The gannet's bath," an effective synonym for the sea, is used also in the *Chronicle* (anno 975) in a short poem of lament for Edgar.

1885 A King. The word "a" here is strongly emphasised, and bears the alliteration.

1930 Humble "hnað"—mean, base, illiberal.

1931 As Heremod is contrasted with Beowulf, so is Thrytho with Hygd. From the *Vitæ Duorum Offarum* we learn of the Princess Drida, condemned to death, and set adrift in a boat; carried to the shores of England, and taken as his bride by Offa. But this is the second, the historic Offa, an eighth century King of Mercia. The story seems to have strayed to him from his Anglian ancestor, whom we found in *Widsith* 35. But the man she killed was her daughter's, not her own suitor.

1950 "Counsel," *i.e.*, a sentence of banishment.

2000 Beowulf runs through the tale with which we are now familiar, but introduces a fresh episode, the story of Hrothgar's daughter, Freawaru, and what is likely to happen if she goes with attendants to the court of Ingeld the Heathobeard. There is possibly a gap here, as Section XXVIII begins at 1962, and Section XXXI at 2144. There is no Section-number between these in the MS., and the space left between 2038 and 2039 is singularly inappropriate, coming in the middle of a sentence. I have used the word 'femme' in 2034 and 2059—to preserve the alliteration of the original 'faemne' meaning a maiden, or bride.

2140 He does not add that he cut off Grendel's head also.

2166 Here is implied a contrast between the Shieldings (though their crimes and treachery are never specified) and the blameless Geats. With this giving up of gifts we may compare Widsith's surrender to his own King, Eadgils, of the ring given to him by Eormanric.

2177 Here, in 23 lines which end the story of Beowulf's Adventures

among the Danes, we have a summary of his character. Like the elder Offa, he had been considered sluggish in his youth.

2195 See my note on *Widsith*, 91.

2200 A gap of some sixty years is indicated by the asteriks which I have placed in the text here. As it happens, the fire of 1731 has made a gap also in the MS. Four half-lines are entirely lost, and in others the words I have italicised are illegible. After the mutilated lines begins what is certainly the most imaginative, and I think the most poetical passage, in *Beowulf*. With a rare sense of perspective, the poet describes the hoard of treasure, then pictures the long-dead chief, last survivor of an earlier race, who must have hidden it in the mound ; then his reason for hiding it, and so his elegy (2247-2266) on his dead companions. Then three and a half lines summing up the rest of his life, until " Death's tide felt at his heart." After making allowances everywhere for verbosity, and for barrenness of grammatical construction, the reader of *Beowulf* comes upon this concise, simple and eloquent passage with a sense of joy, as one who comes upon a pool where he may dive and swim after walking through mile upon mile of the acrid dust and ensnaring stems of burned heather upon a moor.

2270 " He " in the first half-line is the dead chief ; in the second, the dragon.

2288 " Stonc tha aefter stane, stearc-heort onfand Feondes fot-last " ; a strong and effective phrase.

2354 This, as I have pointed out in the preface, brings us in touch with a historical invasion of Friesland, in the first quarter of the sixth century, in which Chocilaicus (Higelac) was killed. We have had the Hetware in *Widsith* (33). They appear to be the same as the classical Hatuarii.

2370 The boy is Heardred, son of Higelac and Hygd. As Hrothulf had succeeded his uncle, Hrothgar, so the Geatish throne is offered to Beowulf (the " atheling " of 2374).

2378 " He " here, and " him " in the next line, refer to Heardred. He seems to have given shelter to Eanmund and Eadgils, the sons of Ohthere, when they were banished by their uncle Onela. He (the " Ongentheow's bairn " of 2397) pursues them, and kills Heardred. He then retires, leaving Beowulf on the Geatish throne. Beowulf continues to support Eadgils (although his retainer Weohstan has slain Eanmund, as at 2612) and follows Onela to his own country, where he kills him, in a battle on the frozen surface of Lake Wener.

2396 " Cealdum cear-sithum " in cold care-marches. The two words outline a picture as clear as Balzac's long story of the Beresina.

2430 There was tragedy in the Geatish as in the Danish dynasty, but it was by chance, not through malice, that Haethcyn killed his brother, Herebeald. Haethcyn, however, is killed by the Swedes,

- Ongentheow and his sons, in one of their attacks on Hreosna Hill (Hreosnabeorh).
- 2484 Haethcyn was killed, but his brother, Higelac, avenged him by the hand of Eofor. Later we find that Higelac rewards Eofor with the hand of his only daughter (2997). This battle is described again in lines 2946-2998.
- 2490 "Him" and "he" refer to Higelac.
- 2494 The "Yifthas" are probably the Gepidae (see *Widsith*, 60), whose King, Fastida, sent a foolish challenge to Ostrogotha.
- 2502 The "Hugas," with the Franks and Frisians, opposed Higelac in his last battle.
- 2561 "The ring-twister" (hring-boga) describes the serpentine advance of the dragon.
- 2577 This sword is called "Naegling," or "Nailing," at 2680. Here the word is "incgelafe," whose meaning is uncertain. As good as any other rendering is to suppose that this is the Danish sword, presented by Hrothgar, the "Lord of Ing's Friends," to Beowulf, and that it is in some way connected with Ing, the founder of the earlier Danish house.
- 2602 Wiglaf is here a Scyfling (but in 2814 he is one of Beowulf's kindred) and a Waegmunding. Mr. Wyatt suggests that Ecgtheow and Weohstan were brothers, and sons of Waegmund, who was a brother of Ongentheow and son of Scyflf. It is possible that he is called "a lord of Scyflings," because he had inherited Scyfling heirlooms from his father, who had won them from Eanmund.
- 2705 As writing was originally done with a knife, upon wood, the suggestion that Beowulf, in wounding the dragon, carved runes of death upon it, is obvious and effective.
- 2720 There is something of the scene between Roland and Turpin here, and more of Arthur and Bedivere.
- 2767 The nature of this sign or standard, as of that set up over Shield of the Sheaf (47), is uncertain.
- 2890 So Tacitus (*Germania*, vi): "Scutum reliquisse praecipuum flagitium, nec aut sacris adesse aut concilium inire ignominioso fas; multique superstites bellorum infamiam laqueo finierunt."
- 2913 Here again we have a reference to the last fight of Higelac in Friesland. And, at 2922, a further account of the fight at Ravenswood, in which we are told how Ongentheow delivers his wife (possibly the daughter of Halfdane, mentioned at 62) from the Geats who had carried her off; and how Higelac (after Haethcyn has been killed) comes to the rescue of his Geats, and drives the Swedes back across the plain of peace. Wulf and Eofor, sons of Wonred, attack Ongentheow. Wulf falls wounded, but Eofor kills the old King, and is rewarded with the hand of Higelac's daughter.

- 3005 This line has been regarded as a repetition of 2052, and as presenting a difficulty, which I myself cannot see, unless in the suggested reading "Scylfings." The speaker is rapidly summarizing Beowulf's career backwards. This line refers to the fight with Grendel, the next line to the still earlier exploits, such as the swimming-match with Breca.
- 3052 The greatest pains were taken to guard against the violation of treasure hoards. The grim story in *Grettir the Strong* suggests the kind of fear associated with them.
- 3121 The last folio, which begins here, is much torn. The worst gaps are in lines 3150-3155, where it seems that a new character is introduced, "sio geo-meowle," "the wife of old." We have heard nothing hitherto of Beowulf's wife, but it is only natural to suppose that one existed. Possibly she was Hygd.

FINNSBURGH

- 1 The sole authority for the text of this fragment is the *Thesaurus* of Dr. George Hickes, Dean of Worcester, the MS. having long disappeared. It opens with ". . . nas byrnath naefre." Supplying "*hornas*" from line 4, we get the end of a question or exclamation "The gable-horns are never burning." There is still some obscurity, as the speaker appears to be inside the hall. See my note on *Beowulf*, 1068.
- 2 The "battle-young King" is probably Hengest; his brother, Hnaef, having been killed earlier in the story.
- 16 Orlaf and Guthlaf are probably the Oslaf and Guthlaf of *Beowulf*, 1148, who escape from the fight and return, later, to avenge the death of Hengest by slaying Finn.
- 18 These difficult lines are, literally. "Then yet Garulf stirred up Guthere that they so noble (free-born) a life on the first journey to the hall's doors in harness bear not, now that it one hardy in enmity would take." But whose was the noble life? Hengest's or Sigferth's or Garulf's own? The last was, apparently, son of Guthlaf.
- 24 "Secg" means "a man," or (*Beowulf*, 684) "a sword." We have seen a tribe of "Sycgs" twice in *Widsith* (31 and 62), where their ruler is called Saferth. Möller identifies them with the subsequent colonists of Essex.
- 34 Hickes here reads "Hwearflacra hraer," which is meaningless.
- 40 They paid Hnaef for their mead by avenging his death. But it is possible that the place of the fragment is far earlier in the story, during the first Danish attack on Finn, in which Hnaef is killed.
- 41 Yet we have seen that Garulf was killed, and we know that Hnaef was killed in the first and Hengest in the second fight. Without the help of *Beowulf*, 1068-1159, this fragment would not be intelligible, and even with that help it presents several puzzles.

It seems to belong to an epic of which the poet in *Beowulf* has summarized part, and to an epic more tersely and vigorously written than is the greater part of *Beowulf*.

WALDERE

I have given a summary of the story in my Preface (p. xiv).

3 The "Mimming" was a sword made by Weland, and inherited by his son, Widia (Wittich), whom we have seen in *Widsith*, 124 (Wudga). He was an associate of Theodoric, into whose possession this, or possibly Gunther's, sword seems (36) to have passed.

6 Waldere had just left the host of Attila, of which he had been a captain.

28 Gunther had been offered a large ransom by Waldere, but had refused to bargain, preferring to win the whole by fighting.

The second fragment opens in a speech by Gunther (Guthhere) to Waldere before their fight.

40 Widia was son of Weland, by Beadohild, daughter of Nithhad, and thus kin to both parties.

46 We have seen Guthhere and his Burgunds in *Widsith* (65-6), where he gives the poet a "gladsome jewel."

47 It is evident that Waldere has now fought with Hagena.

50 Either a sark or a helmet; the epithet "geapneb," "wide-mouthed," suggests the latter; but is glossed "amply studded," by Mr. Wyatt. Aelfhere is unknown, but Wiglaf was also of his kindred (*Beowulf*, 2604).

DEOR

1 "Weland him be wurman wraeces cunnade" is difficult; Mr. Wyatt takes it to mean "in Wermaland," a district of western Sweden. Nithhad, a King among the Geats, or South Swedes, imprisoned the smith Weland, and hamstrung him so that he could not escape while working for him. But Weland made himself wings, killed the sons of Nithhad and violated his daughter Beadohild, and then escaped.

11 She was pregnant with Widia.

13 By transposing lines 14 and 13 we get symmetrical stanzas, and better sense than if we take 14 and 15 together. Hilda is then the same as Beadohild.

15 "The Geat" is Nithhad, and his passion (according to the *Volundarkvitha*) is grief for the death of his sons.

18 The MS. reads: "Theodric held for thirty winters," etc. But, as the poem deals with sufferings, and as Theodric is the classic

instance of an exiled prince, I have ventured to assume an error in the text. Yet the poet may have been commiserating the Maerings as victims of Theodric's rule.

21 See *Widsith*, 9.

28 This, and the six following lines, are condemned as an interpolation, which breaks the symmetry of the stanzas.

36 Heoden ruled the Glommas, according to *Widsith*, 21. In the *Edda* he carries off the daughter of Hagena, who pursues the pair to the Island of Hoy, in Orkney. "They fought all day, and in the evening the Kings went to their ships. But Hild (Hagena's daughter) went by night to the corpses, and awoke the dead by magic. And the next day the Kings went to the battle-field and fought, and so did all those who fell the day before. In such wise the battle continued day after day; so that all those who fell, and all the weapons and shields which lay on the battle-field, were turned into stone. And when it dawned, all the dead men stood up and fought, and all the weapons were sound; and it is told in songs that the Hjathningar shall so abide till Doomsday." Heorrenda, in this story, is Hjarrandi, the father of Hethin (Heoden). In the High German poem *Kudrun* he is Hôrant, the sweet singer of the court of Hetel, who sails to Ireland to win Hild, daughter of the Irish King Hagen. His song "shames into silence the birds singing in the bushes. Hild is charmed by it; she cannot rest till Hôrant comes to sing to her in her chamber. So Hôrant sings a song of Amilé; the like of which was never known by Christian man before or since, unless he heard it upon the wild waves. Then he throws off his disguise and woos for his lord. 'Noble maid, my lord has in his court twelve who sing far beyond me; and all so sweet as is their song, yet my lord sings best of all.' She consents to flee with the wooers." It is, of course, possible that this is the Hild of line 14, and that 15 refers to Heoden's love for her; but why should he be a Geat?

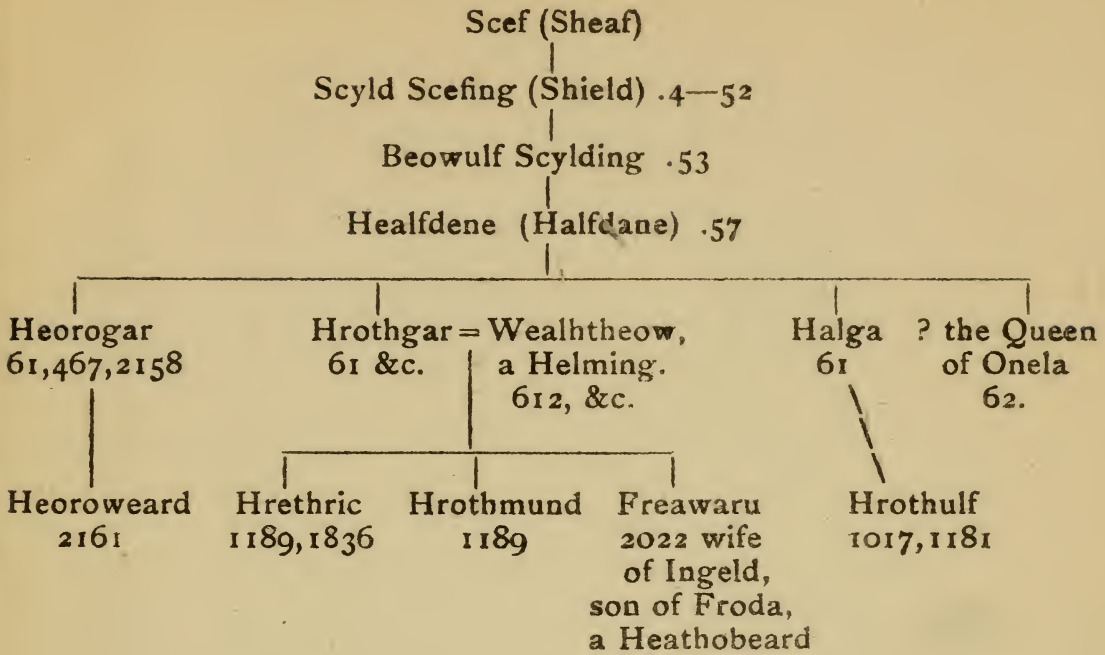
In closing these notes with two large quotations borrowed from Mr. Chambers, I must again express in words a debt to him which is otherwise insoluble.

C. K. S. M.

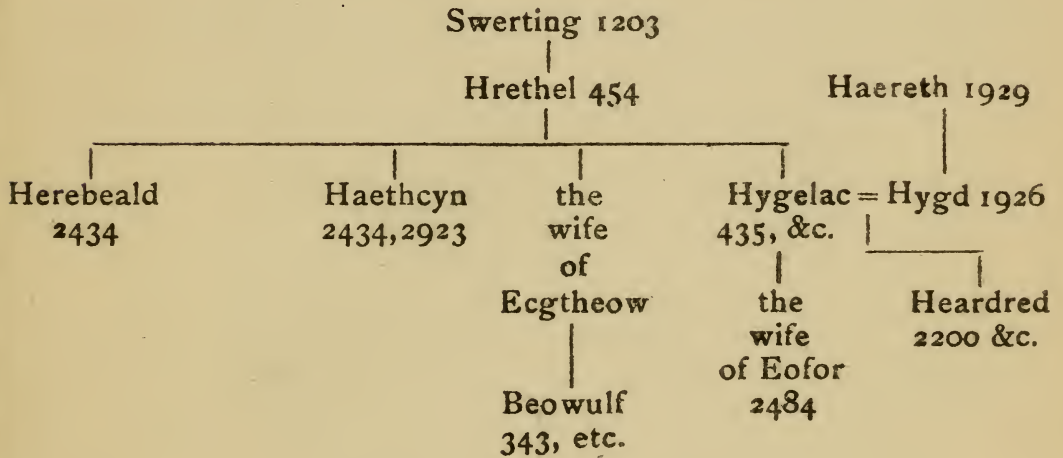
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THE DANISH KINGS



THE GEATISH KINGS



(Numbers refer to lines in *Beowulf*)



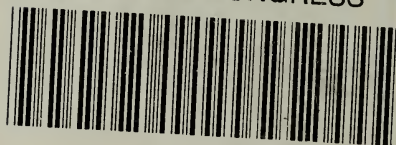
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