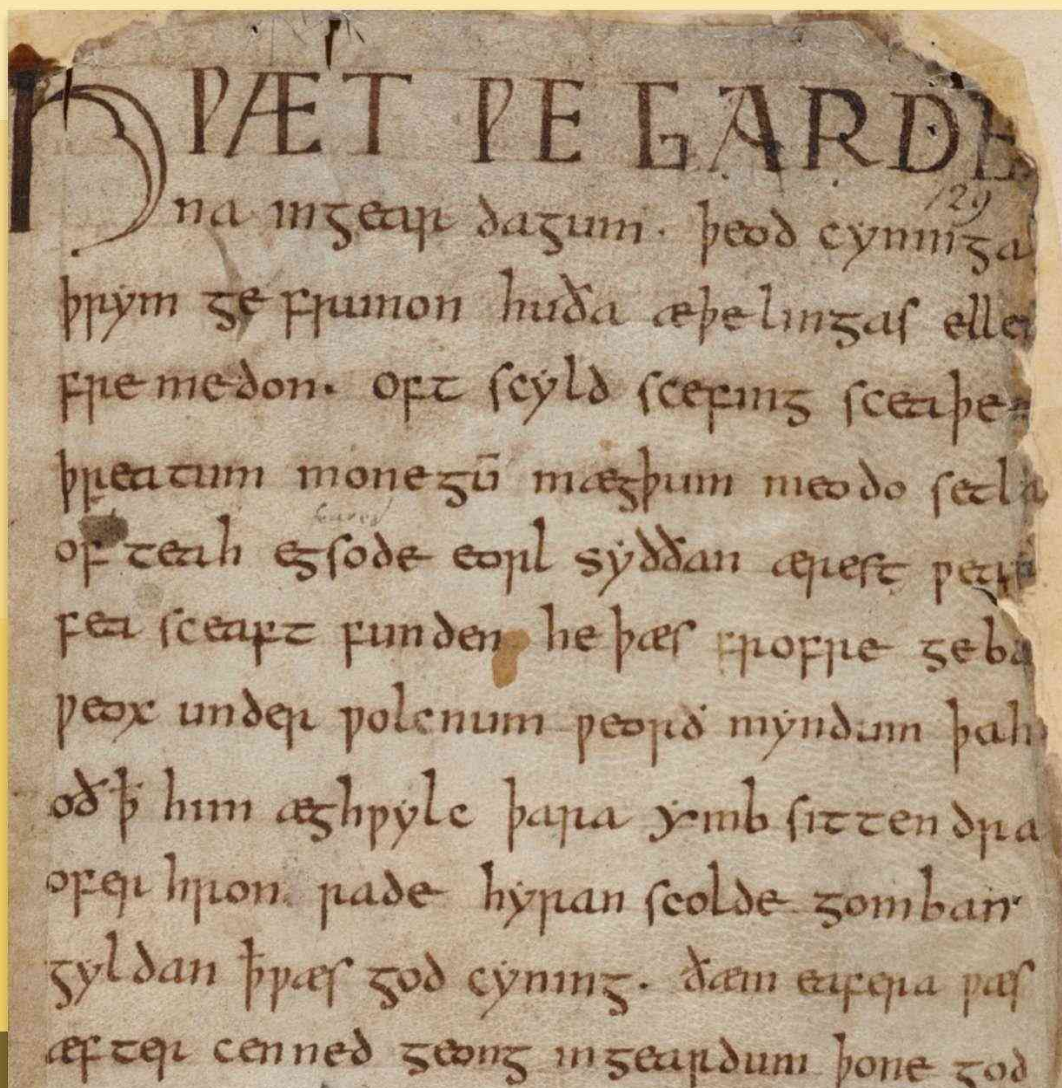


BEOWULF

An Anglo-Saxon Epic Poem

as translated by

J. Lesslie Hall

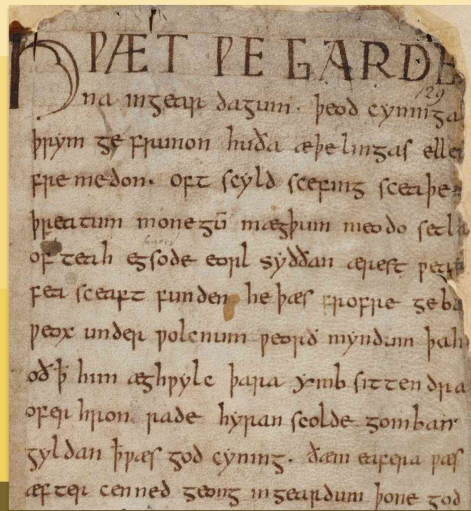


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Title: Beowulf: An Anglo-Saxon Epic Poem

Translator: J. Lesslie Hall

Release date: July 19, 2005 [eBook #16328]

Most recently updated: September 19, 2025

Language: English

Other information and formats:
www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/16328

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BEOWULF

AN ANGLO- SAXON EPIC POEM

*TRANSLATED
FROM THE HEYNE-SOCIN TEXT*

BY

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D.C. HEATH & CO., PUBLISHERS
BOSTON NEW YORK CHICAGO

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1892,
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TO
My Wife

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PREFACE.

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

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

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

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

Perhaps every Anglo-Saxon scholar has his own theory as to how Beowulf should be translated. Some have given us prose versions of what we believe to be a great poem. Is it any reflection on our honored Kemble and Arnold to say that their translations fail to show a layman that Beowulf is justly called our first *epic*? Of

those translators who have used verse, several have written from what would seem a mistaken point of view. Is it proper, for instance, that the grave and solemn speeches of Beowulf and Hrothgar be put in ballad measures, tripping lightly and airily along? Or, again, is it fitting that the rough martial music of Anglo-Saxon verse be interpreted to us in the smooth measures of modern blank verse? Do we hear what has been beautifully called “the clanging tread of a warrior in mail”?

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

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

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

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

(/ x x | /). Anacrusis gives further variety to the types used in the translation.

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

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

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

THE STORY.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

J.L. HALL.

[\[1\]](#) Handbook of Poetics, page 175, 1st edition.

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE NOTES.

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

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GLOSSARY OF PROPER NAMES.

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

Ælfhere.—A kinsman of Wiglaf.—[36](#) [3](#).

Æschere.—Confidential friend of King Hrothgar. Elder brother of Yrmenlaf. Killed by Grendel.—[21](#) [3](#); [30](#) [89](#).

Beanstan.—Father of Breca.—[9](#) [26](#).

Beowulf.—Son of Scyld, the founder of the dynasty of Scyldings. Father of Healfdene, and grandfather of Hrothgar.—[1](#) [18](#); [2](#) [1](#).

Beowulf.—The hero of the poem. Sprung from the stock of Geats, son of Ecgtheow. Brought up by his maternal grandfather Hrethel, and figuring in manhood as a devoted liegeman of his uncle Higelac. A hero from his youth. Has the strength of thirty men. Engages in a swimming-match with Breca. Goes to the help of Hrothgar against the monster Grendel. Vanquishes Grendel and his mother. Afterwards becomes king of the Geats. Late in life attempts to kill a fire-spewing dragon, and is slain. Is buried with great honors. His memorial mound.—[6](#) [26](#); [7](#) [2](#); [7](#) [9](#); [9](#) [3](#); [9](#) [8](#); [12](#) [28](#); [12](#) [43](#); [23](#) [1](#), etc.

Breca.—Beowulf's opponent in the famous swimming-match.—[9](#) [8](#); [9](#) [19](#); [9](#) [21](#); [9](#) [22](#).

Brondings.—A people ruled by Breca.—[9](#) [23](#).

Brosinga mene.—A famous collar once owned by the Brosings.—[19 7](#).

Cain.—Progenitor of Grendel and other monsters.—[2 56](#); [20 11](#).

Dæghrefn.—A warrior of the Hugs, killed by Beowulf.—[35 40](#).

Danes.—Subjects of Scyld and his descendants, and hence often called Scyldings. Other names for them are Victory-Scyldings, Honor-Scyldings, Armor-Danes, Bright-Danes, East-Danes, West-Danes, North-Danes, South-Danes, Ingwins, Hrethmen.—[1 1](#); [2 1](#); [3 2](#); [5 14](#); [7 1](#), etc.

Ecglaf.—Father of Unferth, who taunts Beowulf.—[9 1](#).

Ecgtheow.—Father of Beowulf, the hero of the poem. A widely-known Wægmunding warrior. Marries Hrethel's daughter. After slaying Heatholaf, a Wylfing, he flees his country.—[7 3](#); [5 6](#); [8 4](#).

Ecgwela.—A king of the Danes before Scyld.—[25 60](#).

Elan.—Sister of Hrothgar, and probably wife of Ongentheow, king of the Swedes.—[2 10](#).

Eagle Cape.—A promontory in Geat-land, under which took place Beowulf's last encounter.—[41 87](#).

Eadgils.—Son of Ohthere and brother of Eanmund.—[34 2](#).

Eanmund.—Son of Ohthere and brother of Eadgils. The reference to these brothers is vague, and variously understood. Heyne supposes as follows: Raising a revolt against their father, they are obliged to leave Sweden. They go to the land of the Geats; with what intention, is not known, but probably to conquer and plunder. The Geatish king, Heardred, is slain by one of the brothers, probably Eanmund.—[36 10](#); [31 54](#) to [31 60](#); [33 66](#) to [34 6](#).

Eofor.—A Geatish hero who slays Ongentheow in war, and is rewarded by Hygelac with the hand of his only daughter.—[41 18](#); [41 48](#).

Eormenric.—A Gothic king, from whom Hama took away the famous Broisinga mene.—[19 9](#).

Eomær.—Son of Offa and Thrytho, king and queen of the Angles.—[28 69](#).

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

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

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

Folcwalda.—Father of Finn.—[17 38](#).

Franks.—Introduced occasionally in referring to the death of Higelac.—[19 19](#); [40 21](#); [40 24](#).

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

Freaware.—Daughter of King Hrothgar. Married to Ingeld, a Heathobard prince.—[29 60](#); [30 32](#).

Froda.—King of the Heathobards, and father of Ingeld.—[29 62](#).

Garmund.—Father of Offa.—[28 71](#).

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

Gepids.—Named in connection with the Danes and Swedes.—[35 34](#).

Grendel.—A monster of the race of Cain. Dwells in the fens and moors. Is furiously envious when he hears sounds of joy in Hrothgar's palace. Causes the king untold agony for years. Is finally

conquered by Beowulf, and dies of his wound. His hand and arm are hung up in Hrothgar's hall Heorot. His head is cut off by Beowulf when he goes down to fight with Grendel's mother.—[2 50](#); [3 1](#); [3 13](#); [8 19](#); [11 17](#); [12 2](#); [13 27](#); [15 3](#).

Guthlaf.—A Dane of Hnæf's party.—[18 24](#).

Half-Danes.—Branch of the Danes to which Hnæf belonged.—[17 19](#).

Halga.—Surnamed the Good. Younger brother of Hrothgar.—[2 9](#).

Hama.—Takes the Brosinga mene from Eormenric.—[19 7](#).

Hæreth.—Father of Higelac's queen, Hygd.—[28 39](#); [29 18](#).

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

Helmings.—The race to which Queen Wealhtheow belonged.—[10 63](#).

Heming.—A kinsman of Garmund, perhaps nephew.—[28 54](#); [28 70](#).

Hengest.—A Danish leader. Takes command on the fall of Hnæf.—[17 33](#); [17 41](#).

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

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

Hereric.—Referred to as uncle of Heardred, but otherwise unknown.—[31 60](#).

Hetwars.—Another name for the Franks.—[33 51](#).

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

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

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

Heatholaf.—A Wylfing warrior slain by Beowulf's father.—[8 5](#).

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

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

Hereward.—Son of the above.—[31 17](#).

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

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

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

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

Hoce.—Father of Hildeburg and probably of Hnæf.—[17 26](#).

Hrethel.—King of the Geats, father of Higelac, and grandfather of Beowulf.—[7 4](#); [34 39](#).

Hrethla.—Once used for Hrethel.—[7 82](#).

Hrethmen.—Another name for the Danes.—[7 73](#).

Hrethric.—Son of Hrothgar.—[18 65](#); [27 19](#).

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

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

Hrothmund.—Son of Hrothgar.—[18 65](#).

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

Hrunting.—Unferth's sword, lent to Beowulf.—[22 71](#); [25 9](#).

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

Hun.—A Frisian warrior, probably general of the Hetwars. Gives Hengest a beautiful sword.—[18 19](#).

Hunferth.—Sometimes used for Unferth.

Higelac, Higlac.—King of the Geats, uncle and liegeland of Beowulf, the hero of the poem.—His second wife is the lovely Hygd, daughter of Hæreth. The son of their union is Heardred. Is slain in a war with the Hugs, Franks, and Frisians

combined. Beowulf is regent, and afterwards king of the Geats.—[4 6](#); [5 4](#); [28 34](#); [29 9](#); [29 21](#); [31 56](#).

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

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

Ingwins.—Another name for the Danes.—[16 52](#); [20 69](#).

Jutes.—Name sometimes applied to Finn's people.—[17 22](#); [17 38](#); [18 17](#).

Lafing.—Name of a famous sword presented to Hengest by Hun.—[18 19](#).

Merewing.—A Frankish king, probably engaged in the war in which Higelac was slain.—[40 29](#).

Nægling.—Beowulf's sword.—[36 76](#).

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

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

Onela.—Brother of Ohthere.—[36 15](#); [40 39](#).

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

Oslaf.—A Dane of Hnæf's party.—[18 24](#).

Ravenswood.—The forest near which Hæthcyn was slain.—[40 31](#); [40 41](#).

Scefing.—Applied ([1 4](#)) to Scyld, and meaning 'son of Scef.'

Scyld.—Founder of the dynasty to which Hrothgar, his father, and grandfather belonged. He dies, and his body is put on a vessel, and set adrift. He goes

from Daneland just as he had come to it—in a bark.—[1 4](#); [1 19](#); [1 27](#).

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

Scylfings.—A Swedish royal line to which Wiglaf belonged.—[36 2](#).

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

Swerting.—Grandfather of Higelac, and father of Hrethel.—[19 11](#).

Swedes.—People of Sweden, ruled by the Scylfings.—[35 13](#).

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

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

Wæls.—Father of Sigemund.—[14 60](#).

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

Weders.—Another name for Geats or Wedergeats.

Wayland.—A fabulous smith mentioned in this poem and in other old Teutonic literature.—[7 83](#).

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

Wealhtheow.—Wife of Hrothgar. Her queenly courtesy is well shown in the poem.—[10 55](#).

Weohstan, or Wihstan.—A Wægmunding, and father of Wiglaf.—[36 1](#).

Whale's Ness.—A prominent promontory, on which Beowulf's mound was built.—[38 52](#); [42 76](#).

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

Wonred.—Father of Wulf and Eofor.—[41 20](#); [41 26](#).

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

Wulfgar.—Lord of the Wendels, and retainer of Hrothgar.—[6 18](#); [6 30](#).

Wylfings.—A people to whom belonged Heatholaf, who was slain by Ecgtheow.—[8 6](#); [8 16](#).

Yrmenlaf.—Younger brother of Æschere, the hero whose death grieved Hrothgar so deeply.—[21 4](#).

LIST OF WORDS AND PHRASES NOT IN GENERAL USE.

ATHELING.—Prince, nobleman.

BAIRN.—Son, child.

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

BATTLE-SARK.—Armor.

BEAKER.—Cup, drinking-vessel.

BEGEAR.—Prepare.

BIGHT.—Bay, sea.

BILL.—Sword.

BOSS.—Ornamental projection.

BRACTEATE.—A round ornament on a necklace.

BRAND.—Sword.

BURN.—Stream.

BURNIE.—Armor.

CARLE.—Man, hero.

EARL.—Nobleman, any brave man.

EKE.—Also.

EMPRISE.—Enterprise, undertaking.

ERST.—Formerly.

ERST-WORTHY.—Worthy for a long time past.

FAIN.—Glad.

FERRY.—Bear, carry.

FEY.—Fated, doomed.

FLOAT.—Vessel, ship.

FOIN.—To lunge (Shaks.).

GLORY OF KINGS.—God.
GREWSOME.—Cruel, fierce.
HEFT.—Handle, hilt; used by synecdoche for ‘sword.’
HELM.—Helmet, protector.
HENCHMAN.—Retainer, vassal.
HIGHT.—Am (was) named.
HOLM.—Ocean, curved surface of the sea.
HIMSEEMED.—(It) seemed to him.
LIEF.—Dear, valued.
MERE.—Sea; in compounds, ‘mere-ways,’ ‘mere-currents,’ etc.
MICKLE.—Much.
NATHLESS.—Nevertheless.
NAZE.—Edge (nose).
NESS.—Edge.
NICKER.—Sea-beast.
QUIT, QUITE.—Requite.
RATHE.—Quickly.
REAVE.—Bereave, deprive.
SAIL-ROAD.—Sea.
SETTLE.—Seat, bench.
SKINKER.—One who pours.
SOOTHLY.—Truly.
SWINGE.—Stroke, blow.
TARGE, TARGET.—Shield.
THROUGHLY.—Thoroughly.
TOLD.—Counted.
UNCANNY.—Ill-featured, grizzly.
UNNETHE.—Difficult.

WAR-SPEED.—Success in war.

WEB.—Tapestry (that which is ‘woven’).

WEEDDED.—Clad (cf. widow’s weeds).

WEEN.—Suppose, imagine.

WEIRD.—Fate, Providence.

WHILOM.—At times, formerly, often.

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

WIGHT.—Creature.

WOLD.—Plane, extended surface.

WOT.—Knows.

YOUNKER.—Youth.

BEOWULF.

I.

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF SCYLD.

Lo! the Spear-Danes' glory through
splendid achievements

The famous
race of Spear-
Danes.

The folk-kings' former fame we have
heard of,

How princes displayed then their prowess-in-
battle.

Oft Scyld the Scefing from scathers
in numbers

Scyld, their
mighty king,
in honor of
whom they are
often called
Scyldings. He
is the great-
grandfather of
Hrothgar, so
prominent in
the poem.

5

From many a people their mead-
benches tore.

Since first he found him friendless
and wretched,

The earl had had terror: comfort he
got for it,

Waxed 'neath the welkin, world-honor gained,
Till all his neighbors o'er sea were compelled to

10

Bow to his bidding and bring him their tribute:

An excellent atheling! After was borne him

A son and heir, young in his
dwelling,

A son is born
to him, who
receives the
name of
Beowulf—a
name
afterwards
made so
famous by the
hero of the
poem.

Whom God-Father sent to solace the
people.

He had marked the misery malice
had caused them,

15

¹That reaved of their rulers they
wretched had erstwhile²

Long been afflicted. The Lord, in requital,
Wielder of Glory, with world-honor blessed him.

Famed was Beowulf, far spread the glory
Of Scyld's great son in the lands of the Danemen.

20

So the carle that is young, by
 kindnesses rendered

The ideal
Teutonic king
lavishes gifts
on his vassals.

The friends of his father, with fees in
 abundance

Must be able to earn that when age approacheth
Eager companions aid him requitingly,
When war assaults him serve him as liegemen:

25

By praise-worthy actions must honor be got
'Mong all of the races. At the hour that was fated
Scyld then departed to the All-
 Father's keeping

Scyld dies at
the hour
appointed by
Fate.

Warlike to wend him; away then they
 bare him

To the flood of the current, his fond-loving
 comrades,

30

As himself he had bidden, while the friend of the
 Scyldings

Word-sway wielded, and the well-lovèd land-
 prince

Long did rule them.³ The ring-stemmèd vessel,
Bark of the atheling, lay there at anchor,
Icy in glimmer and eager for sailing;

35

The belovèd leader laid they down
 there,

By his own
request, his
body is laid on
a vessel and
wafted
seaward.

Giver of rings, on the breast of the
 vessel,

The famed by the mainmast. A many of jewels,
Of fretted embossings, from far-lands brought
 over,

Was placed near at hand then; and heard I not ever

40

45

Who when first he was born outward	He leaves
did send him	Daneland on
Lone on the main, the merest of	the breast of a
	bark.

And a gold-fashioned standard they stretched
under heaven

50

Their mood very mournful. Men are not able

Soothly to tell us, they in halls who
reside,⁴

Heroes under heaven, to what haven
he hied.

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

things to support it: (1) v. 1347; (2) it affords a parallel to 'men'
in v. 50.

II.

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

In the boroughs then Beowulf, bairn of the Scyldings, Belovèd land-prince, for long-lasting season	Beowulf succeeds his father Scyld
---	---

Was famed mid the folk (his father departed,
The prince from his dwelling), till afterward
sprang

5

Great-minded Healfdene; the Danes in his lifetime
He graciously governed, grim-mooded, agèd.
Four bairns of his body born in Healfdene's
succession birth.

Woke in the world, war-troopers' leader
Heorogar, Hrothgar, and Halga the good;

10

Heard I that Elan was Ongentheow's consort,
The well-beloved bedmate of the
War-Scylfing leader.

Then glory in battle to Hrothgar was
given,
Waxing of war-fame, that willingly
kinsmen

Obeyed his bidding, till the boys
grew to manhood,

15

A numerous band. It burned in his spirit
To urge his folk to found a great building,
A mead-hall grander than men of the era
Ever had heard of, and in it to share He

He is eager to
build a great

With young and old all of the
blessings

hall in which
he may feast
his retainers

20

The Lord had allowed him, save life and retainers.
Then the work I find afar was assigned
To many races in middle-earth's regions,
To adorn the great folk-hall. In due time it
happened

Early 'mong men, that 'twas finished entirely,

25

The greatest of hall-buildings; Heorot he named it

Who wide-reaching word-sway
wielded 'mong earlmen.

The hall is
completed,
and is called

His promise he brake not, rings he
lavished,

Heort, or
Heorot.

Treasure at banquet. Towered the hall up
High and horn-crested, huge between antlers:

30

It battle-waves bided, the blasting fire-demon;
Ere long then from hottest hatred must sword-
wrath

Arise for a woman's husband and father.

Then the mighty war-spirit¹ endured for a season,

Bore it bitterly, he who bided in
darkness,

The Monster
Grendel is
madly envious
of the
Danemen's
joy.

35

That light-hearted laughter loud in
the building

Greeted him daily; there was dulcet harp-music,
Clear song of the singer. He said that was able

To tell from of old earthmen's
beginnings,

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

That Father Almighty earth had
created,

40

The winsome wold that the water
encircleth,

Set exultingly the sun's and the moon's beams
To lavish their lustre on land-folk and races,
And earth He embellished in all her regions
With limbs and leaves; life He bestowed too

45

On all the kindreds that live under heaven.

So blessed with abundance,	The glee of
brimming with joyance,	the warriors is
The warriors abided, till a certain one	overcast by a
gan to	horrible dread.

Dog them with deeds of direfullest malice,
A foe in the hall-building: this horrible stranger²

50

Was Grendel entitled, the march-stepper famous
Who³ dwelt in the moor-fens, the marsh and the
 fastness;

The wan-mooded being abode for a season
In the land of the giants, when the Lord and
 Creator

Had banned him and branded. For that bitter
 murder,

55

The killing of Abel, all-ruling Father

The kindred of Cain crushed with His	Cain is
vengeance;	referred to as a

In the feud He rejoiced not, but far	progenitor of
away drove him	Grendel, and
	of monsters in
	general.

From kindred and kind, that crime to
 atone for,

Meter of Justice. Thence ill-favored creatures,

60

Elves and giants, monsters of ocean,
Came into being, and the giants that longtime
Grappled with God; He gave them requital.

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

- [2] Some authorities would translate ‘*demon*’ instead of ‘*stranger*.’
- [3] Some authorities arrange differently, and render: *Who dwelt in the moor-fens, the marsh and the fastness, the land of the giant-race.*

III.

GRENDDEL THE MURDERER.

When the sun was sunken, he set out to visit	Grendel attacks the sleeping heroes
The lofty hall-building, how the Ring-Danes had used it	
For beds and benches when the banquet was over. Then he found there reposing many a noble	
5	
Asleep after supper; sorrow the heroes, ¹ Misery knew not. The monster of evil Greedy and cruel tarried but little, Fell and frantic, and forced from their slumbers	He drags off thirty of them, and devours them
Thirty of thanemen; thence he departed	
10	
Leaping and laughing, his lair to return to, With surfeit of slaughter sallying homeward. In the dusk of the dawning, as the day was just breaking,	
Was Grendel's prowess revealed to the warriors: Then, his meal-taking finished, a moan was uplifted,	A cry of agony goes up, when Grendel's horrible deed is fully realized.
15	
Morning-cry mighty. The man-ruler famous,	
The long-worthy atheling, sat very woful,	
Suffered great sorrow, sighed for his liegemen, When they had seen the track of the hateful pursuer,	
The spirit accursèd: too crushing that sorrow,	
20	The monster returns the

Too loathsome and lasting. Not
longer he tarried,

But one night after continued his slaughter
Shameless and shocking, shrinking but little
From malice and murder; they mastered him fully.
He was easy to find then who elsewhere looked
for

25

Told him truly by token apparent
The hall-thane's hatred: he held himself after
Further and faster who the foeman did baffle.

²So ruled he and strongly strove against justice
Lone against all men, till empty uptowered

35

40

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

45

The monster of evil fiercely did
harass,

his
persecutions.

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

So the foe of mankind many of evils
Grievous injuries, often accomplished,
Horrible hermit; Heort he frequented,
Gem-bedecked palace, when night-shades had
fallen

55

Soul-crushing sorrow. Not seldom in
private
Sat the king in his council;
conference held they

The king and
his council
deliberate in
vain.

What the braves should determine 'gainst terrors
unlooked for.

At the shrines of their idols often
they promised the aid of their
gods.

Gifts and offerings, earnestly prayed they
The devil from hell would help them to lighten
Their people's oppression. Such practice they used
then,

65

Judge of their actions, All-wielding
Ruler,

The true God
they do not
know.

No praise could they give the
Guardian of Heaven,

The Wielder of Glory. Woe will be his who
Through furious hatred his spirit shall drive to

70

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

- [1] The translation is based on 'weras,' adopted by H.-So.—K. and Th. read 'wera' and, arranging differently, render 119(2)-120: *They knew not sorrow, the wretchedness of man, aught of misfortune.*—For 'unhælo' (120) R. suggests 'unfælo': *The uncanny creature, greedy and cruel, etc.*
- [2] S. rearranges and translates: *So he ruled and struggled unjustly, one against all, till the noblest of buildings stood useless (it was a long while) twelve years' time: the friend of the Scyldings suffered distress, every woe, great sorrows, etc.*
- [3] For 'syððan,' B. suggests 'sárcwíðum': *Hence in mournful words it became well known, etc.* Various other words beginning with 's' have been conjectured.
- [4] The H.-So. glossary is very inconsistent in referring to this passage.—'Sibbe' (154), which H.-So. regards as an instr., B. takes as accus., obj. of 'wolde.' Putting a comma after Deniga, he renders: *He did not desire peace with any of the Danes, nor did he wish to remove their life-woe, nor to settle for money.*
- [5] Of this difficult passage the following interpretations among others are given: (1) Though Grendel has frequented Heorot as a demon, he could not become ruler of the Danes, on account of his hostility to God. (2) Hrothgar was much grieved that Grendel had not appeared before his throne to receive presents. (3) He was not permitted to devastate the hall, on account of the Creator; *i.e.* God wished to make his visit fatal to him.—Ne ... wisse (169) W. renders: *Nor had he any desire to do so; 'his' being obj. gen. = danach.*

IV.

BEOWULF GOES TO HROTHGAR'S ASSISTANCE.

So Healfdene's kinsman constantly
mused on
His long-lasting sorrow; the battle-
thane clever
Was not anywise able evils to 'scape
from:

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

Too crushing the sorrow that came to the people,

5

Loathsome and lasting the life-grinding torture,
Greatest of night-woes. So Higelac's
liegeman,

Good amid Geatmen, of Grendel's
achievements

Heard in his home:¹ of heroes then
living

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

He was stoutest and strongest, sturdy
and noble.

10

He bade them prepare him a bark that was trusty;
He said he the war-king would seek o'er the
ocean,

The folk-leader noble, since he needed retainers.
For the perilous project prudent companions
Chided him little, though loving him dearly;

15

They egged the brave atheling, augured him glory.
The excellent knight from the folk of
the Geatmen
Had liegemen selected, likest to
prove them

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

Trustworthy warriors; with fourteen companions
The vessel he looked for; a liegeman then showed
them,

20

A sea-crafty man, the bounds of the country.
Fast the days fleeted; the float was a-water,
The craft by the cliff. Clomb to the prow then
Well-equipped warriors: the wave-currents twisted
The sea on the sand; soldiers then carried

25

On the breast of the vessel bright-shining jewels,
Handsome war-armor; heroes outshoved then,
Warmen the wood-ship, on its wished-for
adventure.

The foamy-necked floater fanned by
the breeze,

The vessel
sails like a
bird

Likest a bird, glided the waters,

30

Till twenty and four hours thereafter
The twist-stemmed vessel had
traveled such distance

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

That the sailing-men saw the sloping
embankments,

The sea cliffs gleaming, precipitous mountains,
Nesses enormous: they were nearing the limits

35

At the end of the ocean.² Up thence quickly
The men of the Weders clomb to the mainland,
Fastened their vessel (battle weeds rattled,
War burnies clattered), the Wielder they thanked
That the ways o'er the waters had waxen so
gentle.

40

Then well from the cliff edge the
guard of the Scyldings

They are
hailed by the
Danish coast
guard

Who the sea-cliffs should see to, saw
o'er the gangway

45

Clad in your corslets, come thus a-driving

55

60

65

And farther fare, I fully must know now

What race ye belong to. Ye far-away dwellers,
 Sea-faring sailors, my simple opinion
 Hear ye and hearken: haste is most fitting
 Plainly to tell me what place ye are come from.”

- [1] ‘From hám’ (194) is much disputed. One rendering is: *Beowulf, being away from home, heard of Hrothgar’s troubles, etc.* Another, that adopted by S. and endorsed in the H.-So. notes, is: *B. heard from his neighborhood (neighbors), i.e. in his home, etc.* A third is: *B., being at home, heard this as occurring away from home.* The H.-So. glossary and notes conflict.
- [2] ‘Eoletes’ (224) is marked with a (?) by H.-So.; our rendering simply follows his conjecture.—Other conjectures as to ‘eolet’ are: (1) *voyage*, (2) *toil, labor*, (3) *hasty journey*.
- [3] The lacuna of the MS at this point has been supplied by various conjectures. The reading adopted by H.-So. has been rendered in the above translation. W., like H.-So., makes ‘ic’ the beginning of a new sentence, but, for ‘helmas bæron,’ he reads ‘hringed stefnan.’ This has the advantage of giving a parallel to ‘brontne ceol’ instead of a kenning for ‘go.’—B puts the (?) after ‘holmas’, and begins a new sentence at the middle of the line. Translate: *What warriors are ye, clad in armor, who have thus come bringing the foaming vessel over the water way, hither over the seas? For some time on the wall I have been coast guard, etc.* S. endorses most of what B. says, but leaves out ‘on the wall’ in the last sentence. If W.’s ‘hringed stefnan’ be accepted, change [line 51](#) above to, *A ring-stemmed vessel hither o’ersea.*
- [4] ‘Seld-guma’ (249) is variously rendered: (1) *housecarle*; (2) *home-stayer*; (3) *common man*. Dr. H. Wood suggests *a man-at-arms in another’s house*.

V.

THE GEATS REACH HEOROT.

The chief of the strangers rendered him answer, War-troopers' leader, and word- treasure opened:	Beowulf courteously replies.
"We are sprung from the lineage of the people of Geatland, And Higelac's hearth-friends. To heroes unnumbered	We are Geats.
5 My father was known, a noble head- warrior	My father Ecgtheow was well-known in his day.
Ecgtheow titled; many a winter He lived with the people, ere he passed on his journey, Old from his dwelling; each of the counsellors Widely mid world-folk well remembers him.	
10 We, kindly of spirit, the lord of thy people, The son of King Healfdene, have come here to visit, Folk-troop's defender: be free in thy counsels! To the noble one bear we a weighty commission, The helm of the Danemen; we shall hide, I ween,	Our intentions towards King Hrothgar are of the kindest.
15 Naught of our message. Thou know'st if it happen, As we soothly heard say, that some savage despoiler, Some hidden pursuer, on nights that are murky By deeds very direful 'mid the Danemen exhibits Hatred unheard of, horrid destruction	Is it true that a monster is slaying Danish heroes?

20

And the falling of dead. From feelings least selfish

I am able to render counsel to

Hrothgar,

How he, wise and worthy, may worst
the destroyer,

If the anguish of sorrow should ever
be lessened,¹

Comfort come to him, and care-waves grow
cooler,

I can help
your king to
free himself
from this
horrible
creature.

25

Or ever hereafter he agony suffer

And troublous distress, while towereth upward

The handsomest of houses high on the summit.”

Bestriding his stallion, the strand-
watchman answered,

The doughty retainer: “The
difference surely

The coast-
guard reminds
Beowulf that
it is easier to
say than to do.

30

’Twixt words and works, the warlike shield-bearer

Who judgeth wisely well shall determine.

This band, I hear, beareth no malice

To the prince of the Scyldings. Pass
ye then onward

With weapons and armor. I shall lead
you in person;

I am satisfied
of your good
intentions, and
shall lead you
to the palace.

35

To my war-trusty vassals command I shall issue

To keep from all injury your excellent vessel,

Your fresh-tarred craft, ’gainst every
opposer

Close by the sea-shore, till the
curved-neckèd bark shall

Waft back again the well-beloved hero

Your boat
shall be well
cared for
during your
stay here.

40

O’er the way of the water to Weder dominions.

He again
compliments

To warrior so great 'twill be granted Beowulf.
sure

In the storm of strife to stand secure.”

Onward they fared then (the vessel lay quiet,
The broad-bosomed bark was bound by its cable,
45

Firmly at anchor); the boar-signs glistened²
Bright on the visors vivid with gilding,
Blaze-hardened, brilliant; the boar acted warden.
The heroes hastened, hurried the liegemen,
Descended together, till they saw the The land is
great palace, perhaps
rolling.

50

The well-fashioned wassail-hall wondrous and
gleaming:

'Mid world-folk and kindreds that Heorot flashes
was widest reputed on their view.

Of halls under heaven which the hero abode in;
Its lustre enlightened lands without number.
Then the battle-brave hero showed them the
glittering

55

Court of the bold ones, that they easily thither
Might fare on their journey; the aforementioned
warrior

Turning his courser, quoth as he left them:

“'Tis time I were faring; Father The coast-
Almighty guard, having
Grant you His grace, and give you to discharged his
journey duty, bids
them God-
speed.

60

Safe on your mission! To the sea I will get me
'Gainst hostile warriors as warden to stand.”

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

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

VI.

BEOWULF INTRODUCES HIMSELF AT THE PALACE.

The highway glistened with many-hued pebble,
A by-path led the liegemen together.

¹Firm and hand-locked the war-burnie glistened,
The ring-sword radiant rang 'mid the armor

5

As the party was approaching the palace together
In warlike equipments. 'Gainst the wall of the building

They set their
arms and
armor against
the wall.

Their wide-fashioned war-shields
they weary did set then,

Battle-shields sturdy; benchward they turned then;
Their battle-sarks rattled, the gear of the heroes;

10

The lances stood up then, all in a cluster,
The arms of the seamen, ashen-shafts mounted
With edges of iron: the armor-clad troopers

Were decked with weapons. Then a
proud-mooded hero

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

Asked of the champions questions of
lineage:

15

“From what borders bear ye your battle-shields
plated,

Gilded and gleaming, your gray-colored burnies,
Helmets with visors and heap of war-lances?—

To Hrothgar the king I am servant and liegeman.

'Mong folk from far-lands found I have never

20

Men so many of mien more
courageous.

He expresses
no little
admiration for
the strangers.

I ween that from valor, nowise as outlaws,
But from greatness of soul ye sought for King
Hrothgar.”

Then the strength-famous earlman Beowulf
answer rendered, replies.

The proud-mooded Wederchief replied to his
question,

25 We are
Hardy 'neath helmet: “Higelac’s Higelac’s
mates are we; table-
Beowulf hight I. To the bairn of companions,
Healfdene, and bear an
The famous folk-leader, I freely will important
tell commission to
your prince.

To thy prince my commission, if pleasantly
hearing

He’ll grant we may greet him so gracious to all
men.”

30
Wulfgar replied then (he was prince of the
Wendels,

His boldness of spirit was known unto many,
His prowess and prudence): “The prince of the
Scyldings,

The friend-lord of Danemen, I will Wulfgar, the
ask of thy journey, thane, says
that he will go

The giver of rings, as thou urgest me and ask
do it, Hrothgar
whether he

35 will see the
The folk-chief famous, and inform strangers.

thee early

What answer the good one mindeth to render me.”

He turned then hurriedly where Hrothgar was
sitting,

²Old and hoary, his earlmen attending him;

The strength-famous went till he stood at the
shoulder

The custom he minded. Wulfgar addressed then
His friendly liegelord: "Folk of the Geatmen

45

They make this petition: with thee, O my
chieftain,

Friendly answer refuse not to give them!

50

Who headed the heroes hitherward coming."

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

VII.

HROTHGAR AND BEOWULF.

Hrothgar answered, helm of the
Scyldings:

“I remember this man as the merest of striplings.

His father long dead now was
Ecgtheow tited,

Him Hrethel the Geatman granted at home his

5

One only daughter; his battle-brave son

Is come but now, sought a trustworthy friend.

Seafaring sailors asserted it then,

Who valuable gift-gems of the
Geatmen¹ carried

As peace-offering thither, that he
thirty men's grapple

10

Has in his hand, the hero-in-battle.

The holy Creator usward sent him,

To West-Dane warriors, I ween, for
to render

'Gainst Grendel's grimness gracious assistance:

I shall give to the good one gift-gems for courage.

15

Hasten to bid them hither to speed them,²

To see assembled this circle of kinsmen;

Tell them expressly they're welcome in sooth to

The men of the Danes.” To the door of the building

Wulfgar went then, this word-
message shouted:

20

“My victorious liegelord bade me to tell you,

Hrothgar
remembers
Beowulf as a
youth, and
also
remembers his
father.

Beowulf is reported to have the strength of thirty men.

God hath sent
him to our
rescue.

Wulfgar
invites the
strangers in.

The East-Danes' atheling, that your origin knows
he,

And o'er wave-billows wafted ye welcome are
hither,

Valiant of spirit. Ye straightway may enter
Clad in corslets, cased in your helmets,

25

To see King Hrothgar. Here let your battle-boards,
Wood-spears and war-shafts, await your
conferring."

The mighty one rose then, with many a liegeman,
An excellentthane-group; some there did await
them,

And as bid of the brave one the battle-gear
guarded.

30

Together they hied them, while the hero did guide
them,

'Neath Heorot's roof; the high-minded went then
Sturdy 'neath helmet till he stood in the building.

Beowulf spake (his burnie did glisten,

His armor seamed over by the art of the
craftsman):

35

"Hail thou, Hrothgar! I am Higelac's
kinsman

And vassal forsooth; many a wonder

I dared as a stripling. The doings of
Grendel,

Beowulf
salutes
Hrothgar, and
then proceeds
to boast of his
youthful
achievements.

In far-off fatherland I fully did know of:

Sea-farers tell us, this hall-building standeth,

40

Excellent edifice, empty and useless

To all the earlmen after evenlight's glimmer

'Neath heaven's bright hues hath hidden its glory.

This my earls then urged me, the most excellent of
them,

Carles very clever, to come and assist thee,

45

Folk-leader Hrothgar; fully they knew of

The strength of my body. Themselves they beheld me

His fight with
the nickers.

When I came from the contest, when covered with
gore

Foes I escaped from, where five³ I had bound,

The giant-race wasted, in the waters destroying

50

The nickers by night, bore numberless sorrows,

The Weders avenged (woes had they suffered)

Enemies ravaged; alone now with Grendel

I shall manage the matter, with the
monster of evil,

He intends to
fight Grendel
unaided.

The giant, decide it. Thee I would
therefore

55

Beg of thy bounty, Bright-Danish chieftain,

Lord of the Scyldings, this single petition:

Not to refuse me, defender of warriors,

Friend-lord of folks, so far have I sought thee,

That *I* may unaided, my earlmen assisting me,

60

This brave-mooded war-band, purify Heorot.

I have heard on inquiry, the horrible creature

From veriest rashness recks not for
weapons;

Since the
monster uses
no weapons,

I this do scorn then, so be Higelac
gracious,

My liegelord beloved, lenient of spirit,

65

To bear a blade or a broad-fashioned target,

A shield to the onset; only with hand-grip

The foe I must grapple, fight for my
life then,

I, too, shall
disdain to use
any.

Foeman with foeman; he fain must rely on
The doom of the Lord whom death layeth hold of.

70

I ween he will wish, if he win in the
struggle,

To eat in the war-hall earls of the
Geat-folk,

Should he
crush me, he
will eat my
companions as
he has eaten
thy thanes.

Boldly to swallow⁴ them, as of yore he did often
The best of the Hrethmen! Thou needest not
trouble

A head-watch to give me;⁵ he will have me
dripping

75

And dreary with gore, if death
overtake me,⁶

Will bear me off bleeding, biting and
mouthing me,

In case of my
defeat, thou
wilt not have
the trouble of
burying me.

The hermit will eat me, heedless of pity,
Marking the moor-fens; no more wilt thou need
then

Find me my food.⁷ If I fall in the
battle,

80

Send to Higelac the armor that
serveth

Should I fall,
send my
armor to my
lord, King
Higelac.

To shield my bosom, the best of equipments,
Richest of ring-mails; 'tis the relic of Hrethla,
The work of Wayland. Goes Weird as
she must go!"

Weird is
supreme

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

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

[3] For 420 (b) and 421 (a), B. suggests: *Þær ic (on) fifelgeban ýðde eotena cyn = where I in the ocean destroyed the eoten-race.*—t.B. accepts B.'s "brilliant" 'fifelgeban,' omits 'on,'

emends ‘cyn’ to ‘hám,’ arranging: *Ðær ic fífelgeban ýðde, eotena hám* = *where I desolated the ocean, the home of the eotens*.—This would be better but for changing ‘cyn’ to ‘hám.’—I suggest: *Ðær ic fífelgeband* (cf. nhd. *Bande*) *ýðde, eotena cyn* = *where I conquered the monster band, the race of the eotens*. This makes no change except to read ‘*fífel*’ for ‘*fífe*.’

- [4] ‘Unforhte’ (444) is much disputed.—H.-So. wavers between adj. and adv. Gr. and B. take it as an adv. modifying *etan*: *Will eat the Geats fearlessly*.—Kl. considers this reading absurd, and proposes ‘anforhte’ = timid.—Understanding ‘unforhte’ as an adj. has this advantage, viz. that it gives a parallel to ‘*Geátana leóde*’: but to take it as an adv. is more natural. Furthermore, to call the Geats ‘brave’ might, at this point, seem like an implied thrust at the Danes, so long helpless; while to call his own men ‘timid’ would be befouling his own nest.
- [5] For ‘head-watch,’ cf. H.-So. notes and cf. v. 2910.—Th. translates: *Thou wilt not need my head to hide* (i.e., thou wilt have no occasion to bury me, as Grendel will devour me whole).—Simrock imagines a kind of dead-watch.—Dr. H. Wood suggests: *Thou wilt not have to bury so much as my head* (for Grendel will be a thorough undertaker),—grim humor.
- [6] S. proposes a colon after ‘nimeð’ (l. 447). This would make no essential change in the translation.
- [7] Owing to the vagueness of ‘feorme’ (451), this passage is variously translated. In our translation, H.-So.’s glossary has been quite closely followed. This agrees substantially with B.’s translation (P. and B. XII. 87). R. translates: *Thou needst not take care longer as to the consumption of my dead body*. ‘*Líc*’ is also a crux here, as it may mean living body or dead body.

VIII.

HROTHGAR AND BEOWULF.

—*Continued.*

Hrothgar discoursed, helm of the
Scyldings:

Hrothgar
responds.

“To defend our folk and to furnish assistance,¹
Thou soughtest us hither, good friend Beowulf.

The fiercest of feuds thy father
engaged in,

Reminisce
s of Beowulf’s
father,
Ecgtheow.

5

Heatholaf killed he in hand-to-hand
conflict

’Mid Wilfingish warriors; then the Wederish
people

For fear of a feud were forced to disown him.
Thence flying he fled to the folk of the South-
Danes,

The race of the Scyldings, o’er the roll of the
waters;

10

I had lately begun then to govern the Danemen,
The hoard-seat of heroes held in my youth,
Rich in its jewels: dead was Heregar,
My kinsman and elder had earth-joys forsaken,
Healfdene his bairn. He was better than I am!

15

That feud thereafter for a fee I compounded;
O’er the weltering waters to the Wilfings I sent
Ornaments old; oaths did he swear me.

It pains me in spirit to any to tell it,
What grief in Heorot Grendel hath
caused me,

Hrothgar
recounts to
Beowulf the
horrors of
Grendel’s
persecutions.

20

What horror unlooked-for, by hatred unceasing.
Waned is my war-band, wasted my hall-troop;
Weird hath offcast them to the clutches of
Grendel.

God can easily hinder the scather
From deeds so direful. Oft drunken with beer

25 O'er the ale-vessel promised warriors
in armor
They would willingly wait on the
wassailing-benches

My thanes
have made
many boasts,
but have not
executed
them.

A grapple with Grendel, with grimmest of edges.
Then this mead-hall at morning with murder was
reeking,

The building was bloody at breaking of daylight,
30

The bench-deals all flooded, dripping and
bloodied,

The folk-hall was gory: I had fewer retainers,
Dear-beloved warriors, whom death had laid hold
of.

Sit at the feast now, thy intents unto
heroes,²
Thy victor-fame show, as thy spirit
doth urge thee!"

Sit down to
the feast, and
give us
comfort.

35 For the men of the Geats then
together assembled,
In the beer-hall blithesome a bench
was made ready;

A bench is
made ready
for Beowulf
and his party.

There warlike in spirit they went to be seated,
Proud and exultant. A liegeman did service,
Who a beaker embellished bore with decorum,

40 And gleaming-drink poured. The
gleeman sang whilom

The gleeman
sings

The heroes all
rejoice

Hearty in Heorot; there was heroes' together.
rejoicing,
A numerous war-band of Weders and Danemen.

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

wáere-ryhtum þú, wine mín Béowulf,
and for ár-stafum úsíc sóhtest.

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

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

IX.

UNFERTH TAUNTS BEOWULF.

Unferth spoke up, Ecglaf his son,
Who sat at the feet of the lord of the
Scyldings,
Opened the jousting (the journey¹ of
Beowulf,
Sea-farer doughty, gave sorrow to
Unferth

Unferth, a
thane of
Hrothgar, is
jealous of
Beowulf, and
undertakes to
twit him.

5

And greatest chagrin, too, for granted he never
That any man else on earth should attain to,
Gain under heaven, more glory than he):

“Art thou that Beowulf with Breca
did struggle,
On the wide sea-currents at
swimming contended,

Did you take
part in a
swimming-
match with
Breca?

10

Where to humor your pride the ocean ye tried,
From vainest vaunting adventured
your bodies
In care of the waters? And no one
was able
Nor lief nor loth one, in the least to
dissuade you
Your difficult voyage; then ye ventured a-
swimming,

’Twas mere
folly that
actuated you
both to risk
your lives on
the ocean.

15

Where your arms outstretching the streams ye did
cover,
The mere-ways measured, mixing and stirring
them,
Glided the ocean; angry the waves were,

With the weltering of winter. In the water's
possession,
Ye toiled for a seven-night; he at swimming outdid
thee,

20

In strength excelled thee. Then early at morning
On the Heathoremes' shore the holm-currents
tossed him,
Sought he thenceward the home of his fathers,
Beloved of his liegemen, the land of the
Brondings,
The peace-castle pleasant, where a people he
wielded,

25

Had borough and jewels. The pledge that he made
thee

The son of Beanstan hath soothly accomplished.	Breca outdid you entirely.
---	-------------------------------

Then I ween thou wilt find thee less fortunate
issue,

Though ever triumphant in onset of battle, A grim grappling, if Grendel thou darest	Much more will Grendel outdo you, if you vie with him in prowess.
--	--

30

For the space of a night near-by to wait for!"

Beowulf answered, offspring of Ecgtheow:	Beowulf retaliates.
---	------------------------

"My good friend Unferth, sure freely and wildly,

Thou fuddled with beer of Breca hast spoken, Hast told of his journey! A fact I allege it,	O friend Unferth, you are fuddled with beer, and cannot talk coherently.
---	---

35

That greater strength in the waters I had then,
Ills in the ocean, than any man else had.
We made agreement as the merest of striplings
Promised each other (both of us then were

Younkers in years) that we yet would	We simply
adventure	kept an
40	engagement
Out on the ocean; it all we	made in early
accomplished.	life.
While swimming the sea-floods, sword-blade	
unscabbarded	
Boldly we brandished, our bodies expected	
To shield from the sharks. He sure was unable	
To swim on the waters further than I	He <i>could</i> not
could,	excel me, and
45	I <i>would</i> not
More swift on the waves, nor <i>would</i> I	excel him.
from him go.	
Then we two companions stayed in the ocean	
Five nights together, till the currents	After five
did part us,	days the
The weltering waters, weathers the	currents
bleakest,	separated us.
And nethermost night, and the north-wind	
whistled	
50	
Fierce in our faces; fell were the billows.	
The mere fishes' mood was mightily ruffled:	
And there against foemen my firm-knotted corslet,	
Hand-jointed, hardy, help did afford me;	
My battle-sark braided, brilliantly gilded,	
55	A horrible
Lay on my bosom. To the bottom	sea-beast
then dragged me,	attacked me,
A hateful fiend-scather, seized me	but I slew
and held me,	him.
Grim in his grapple: 'twas granted me, nathless,	
To pierce the monster with the point of my	
weapon,	
My obedient blade; battle offcarried	
60	

The mighty mere-creature by means of my hand-
blow.

- [1] It has been plausibly suggested that 'síð' (in 501 and in 353) means 'arrival.' If so, translate the bracket: *(the arrival of Beowulf, the brave seafarer, was a source of great chagrin to Unferth, etc.)*.

X.

**BEOWULF SILENCES
UNFERTH.—GLEE IS HIGH.**

"So ill-meaning enemies often did cause me
Sorrow the sorest. I served them, in quittance,
With my dear-lovèd sword, as in My dear
 sooth it was fitting; sword always
They missed the pleasure of feasting served me
 abundantly, faithfully.

5
Ill-doers evil, of eating my body,
Of surrounding the banquet deep in the ocean;
But wounded with edges early at morning
They were stretched a-high on the strand of the
ocean,
Put to sleep with the sword, that sea-
going travelers

I put a stop to
the outrages of
the sea-
monsters.

10

No longer thereafter were hindered
from sailing
The foam-dashing currents. Came a light from the
east,
God's beautiful beacon; the billows subsided,
That well I could see the nesses projecting,
The blustering crags. Weird often Fortune helps
saveth the brave earl.

15
The undoomed hero if doughty his valor!
But me did it fortune¹ to fell with my weapon
Nine of the nickers. Of night-struggle harder
'Neath dome of the heaven heard I but rarely,
Nor of wight more woful in the waves of the
ocean;

Yet I 'scaped with my life the grip of the monsters,	
Weary from travel. Then the waters	After that
bare me	escape I
To the land of the Finns, the flood	drifted to
with the current,	Finland.
The weltering waves. Not a word	I have never
hath been told me	heard of your
Of deeds so daring done by thee,	doing any
Unferth,	such bold
	deeds.

25

And of sword-terror none; never hath Breca
At the play of the battle, nor either of you two,
Feat so fearless performèd with weapons
Glinting and gleaming
. I utter no boasting;

30

Though with cold-blooded cruelty	You are a
thou killedst thy brothers,	slayer of
Thy nearest of kin; thou needs must	brothers, and
in hell get	will suffer
Direful damnation, though doughty	damnation,
thy wisdom.	wise as you
	may be.

I tell thee in earnest, offspring of Ecglaf,
Never had Grendel such numberless horrors,

35

The direful demon, done to thy liegelord,
Harrying in Heorot, if thy heart were as sturdy,
Thy mood as ferocious as thou dost
 describe them.

He hath found out fully that the	Had your acts
fierce-burning hatred,	been as brave
The edge-battle eager, of all of your	as your words,
kindred,	Grendel had
	not ravaged
	your land so
	long.

40

Of the Victory-Scyldings, need little dismay him:
Oaths he exacteth, not any he spares

The monster is
not afraid of

Of the folk of the Danemen, but the Danes,
fighteth with pleasure,
Killeth and feasteth, no contest expecteth
From Spear-Danish people. But the but he will
prowess and valor soon learn to
dread the
Geats.

Of the earls of the Geatmen early
shall venture
To give him a grapple. He shall go who is able
Bravely to banquet, when the bright-light of
morning

Which the second day bringeth, the
sun in its ether-robes,
O'er children of men shines from the
southward!"

On the second
day, any
warrior may
go unmolested
to the mead-
banquet.

50
Then the gray-haired, war-famed giver of treasure
Was blithesome and joyous, the Hrothgar's
Bright-Danish ruler spirits are
Expected assistance; the people's revived.
protector

Heard from Beowulf his bold resolution.	The old king trusts Beowulf. The
There was laughter of heroes; loud was the clatter,	heroes are joyful.

55
The words were winsome. Wealhtheow advanced
then,

Consort of Hrothgar, of courtesy mindful, Gold-decked saluted the men in the building,	Queen Wealhtheow plays the hostess.
---	--

And the freeborn woman the beaker presented
To the lord of the kingdom, first of the East-Danes,

She offers the
cup to her
husband first.

60
Bade him be blithesome when beer was a-flowing,
Lief to his liegemen; he lustily tasted

Of banquet and beaker, battle-famed ruler.
The Helmingish lady then graciously circled
'Mid all the liegemen lesser and greater:

65

Treasure-cups tendered, till time was
afforded

She gives
presents to the
heroes.

That the decorous-mooded, diademed folk-queen
Might bear to Beowulf the bumper
o'errunning;

Then she
offers the cup
to Beowulf,
thanking God
that aid has
come.

She greeted the Geat-prince, God she
did thank,

Most wise in her words, that her wish
was accomplished,

70

That in any of earlmen she ever should look for
Solace in sorrow. He accepted the beaker,
Battle-bold warrior, at Wealhtheow's giving,

Then equipped for combat quoth he
in measures,

Beowulf states
to the queen
the object of
his visit.

Beowulf spake, offspring of
Ecgtheow:

75

"I purposed in spirit when I mounted the ocean,
When I boarded my boat with a band
of my liegemen,

I determined
to do or die.

I would work to the fullest the will of your people
Or in foe's-clutches fastened fall in the battle.

Deeds I shall do of daring and prowess,

80

Or the last of my life-days live in this mead-hall."
These words to the lady were welcome and
pleasing,

The boast of the Geatman; with gold trappings
broidered

Went the freeborn folk-queen her fond-lord to sit
by.

Glee is high.

Then again as of yore was heard in the building

85

Courtly discussion, conquerors' shouting,
Heroes were happy, till Healfdene's son would
Go to his slumber to seek for refreshing;
For the horrid hell-monster in the hall-building
knew he

A fight was determined,² since the light of the sun
they

90

No longer could see, and lowering darkness
O'er all had descended, and dark under heaven
Shadowy shapes came shying around them.

The liegemen all rose then. One
saluted the other,

Hrothgar
retires, leaving
Beowulf in
charge of the
hall.

Hrothgar Beowulf, in rhythmical
measures,

95

Wishing him well, and, the wassail-hall giving
To his care and keeping, quoth he departing:
"Not to any one else have I ever entrusted,
But thee and thee only, the hall of the Danemen,
Since high I could heave my hand and my buckler.

100

Take thou in charge now the noblest of houses;
Be mindful of honor, exhibiting prowess,
Watch 'gainst the foeman! Thou shalt want no
enjoyments,
Survive thou safely adventure so glorious!"

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

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

XI.

ALL SLEEP SAVE ONE.

Then Hrothgar departed, his earl-
throng attending him,
Folk-lord of Scyldings, forth from the building;
The war-chieftain wished then Wealhtheow to
look for,
The queen for a bedmate. To keep away Grendel
5
The Glory of Kings had given a hall-
watch,
As men heard recounted: for the king
of the Danemen
He did special service, gave the giant a watcher:
And the prince of the Geatmen implicitly trusted
His warlike strength and the
Wielder's protection.
10
His armor of iron off him he did then,
His helmet from his head, to his henchman
committed
His chased-handled chain-sword, choicest of
weapons,
And bade him bide with his battle-equipments.
The good one then uttered words of defiance,
15
Beowulf Geatman, ere his bed he upmounted:
"I hold me no meaner in matters of
prowess,
In warlike achievements, than
Grendel does himself;
Hence I seek not with sword-edge to sooth him to
slumber,
Of life to bereave him, though well I am able.

Hrothgar
retires.

God has
provided a
watch for the
hall.

Beowulf is
self-confident

He prepares
for rest.

Beowulf
boasts of his
ability to cope
with Grendel.

20

No battle-skill¹ has he, that blows he
should strike me,

We will fight
with nature's
weapons only.

To shatter my shield, though sure he is mighty
In strife and destruction; but struggling by night
we

Shall do without edges, dare he to look for
Weaponless warfare, and wise-mooded Father

25

The glory apportion, God ever-holy,
On which hand soever to him
seemeth proper.”

God may
decide who
shall conquer

Then the brave-mooded hero bent to
his slumber,

The pillow received the cheek of the noble;

And many a martial mere-thane
attending

The Geatish
warriors lie
down.

30

Sank to his slumber. Seemed it unlikely

That ever thereafter any should hope
to

They thought
it very
unlikely that
they should
ever see their
homes again.

Be happy at home, hero-friends visit
Or the lordly troop-castle where he
lived from his childhood;

They had heard how slaughter had snatched from
the wine-hall,

35

Had recently ravished, of the race of the Scyldings

Too many by far. But the Lord to
them granted

But God
raised up a
deliverer.

The weaving of war-speed, to
Wederish heroes

Aid and comfort, that every opponent

By one man's war-might they worsted and
vanquished,

40

God rules the
world.

By the might of himself; the truth is established
That God Almighty hath governed for ages
Kindreds and nations. A night very lurid
The trav'ler-at-twilight came Grendel
 tramping and striding. comes to
 Heorot.
The warriors were sleeping who
 should watch the horned-building,
45
One only excepted. 'Mid earthmen Only one
 'twas 'stablished, warrior is
 awake.
Th' implacable foeman was powerless to hurl
 them
To the land of shadows, if the Lord were
 unwilling;
But serving as warder, in terror to foemen,
He angrily bided the issue of battle.²

45 Only one
One only excepted. 'Mid earthmen warrior is
awake.

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

XII.

GRENDDEL AND BEOWULF.

'Neath the cloudy cliffs came from
the moor then
Grendel going, God's anger bare he.
The monster intended some one of earthmen
In the hall-building grand to entrap and make way
with:

Grendel
comes from
the fens.

5
He went under welkin where well he
knew of

He goes
towards the
joyous
building.

The wine-joyous building, brilliant
with plating,
Gold-hall of earthmen. Not the earliest occasion
He the home and manor of Hrothgar
had sought:
Ne'er found he in life-days later nor
earlier

This was not
his first visit
there.

10
Hardier hero, hall-thanes¹ more sturdy!
Then came to the building the warrior marching,
Bereft of his joyance. The door
quickly opened
On fire-hinges fastened, when his
fingers had touched it;
The fell one had flung then—his fury so bitter—

His horrid
fingers tear
the door open.

15
Open the entrance. Early thereafter
The foeman trod the shining hall-pavement,
Strode he angrily; from the eyes of
him glimmered
A lustre unlovely likeliest to fire.
He beheld in the hall the heroes in numbers,

He strides
furiously into
the hall.

A circle of kinsmen sleeping together,	
A throng of thanemen: then his	He exults over
thoughts were exultant,	his supposed
He minded to sunder from each of	prey.
the thanemen	
The life from his body, horrible demon,	
Ere morning came, since fate had allowed him	
25	Fate has
The prospect of plenty. Providence	decreed that
willed not	he shall
To permit him any more of men	devour no
under heaven	more heroes.
To eat in the night-time. Higelac's	Beowulf
kinsman	suffers from
	suspense.
Great sorrow endured how the dire-mooded	
creature	
In unlooked-for assaults were likely to bear him.	
30	
No thought had the monster of deferring the	
matter,	
But on earliest occasion he quickly	Grendel
laid hold of	immediately
A soldier asleep, suddenly tore him,	seizes a
Bit his bone-prison, the blood drank	sleeping
in currents,	warrior, and
	devours him.
Swallowed in mouthfuls: he soon had the dead	
man's	
35	
Feet and hands, too, eaten entirely.	
Nearer he strode then, the stout-hearted warrior	
Snatched as he slumbered, seizing	Beowulf and
with hand-grip,	Grendel
	grapple.
Forward the foeman foined with his	
hand;	
Caught he quickly the cunning deviser,	
40	
On his elbow he rested. This early discovered	

The master of malice, that in middle-earth's
regions,
'Neath the whole of the heavens, no hand-grapple
greater

In any man else had he ever
encountered:
Fearful in spirit, faint-mooded waxed
he,

The monster is
amazed at
Beowulf's
strength.

45

Not off could betake him; death he was pondering,
Would fly to his covert, seek the
devils' assembly:

He is anxious
to flee.

His calling no more was the same he had followed
Long in his lifetime. The liege-kinsman worthy
Of Higelac minded his speech of the
evening,

Beowulf
recalls his
boast of the
evening, and
determines to
fulfil it.

50

Stood he up straight and stoutly did
seize him.

His fingers crackled; the giant was outward,
The earl stepped farther. The famous one minded
To flee away farther, if he found an occasion,
And off and away, avoiding delay,

55

To fly to the fen-moors; he fully was ware of
The strength of his grapple in the grip of the
foeman.

'Twas an ill-taken journey that the
injury-bringing,

'Twas a
luckless day
for Grendel.

Harrying harmer to Heorot
wandered:

The palace re-echoed; to all of the
Danemen,

The hall
groans.

60

Dwellers in castles, to each of the bold ones,
Earlmen, was terror. Angry they both were,
Archwarders raging.² Rattled the building;

'Twas a marvellous wonder that the wine-hall
withstood then

The bold-in-battle, bent not to earthward,

65

Excellent earth-hall; but within and without it

Was fastened so firmly in fetters of iron,

By the art of the armorer. Off from the sill there

Bent mead-benches many, as men have informed
me,

Adorned with gold-work, where the grim ones did
struggle.

70

The Scylding wise men weened ne'er before

That by might and main-strength a man under
heaven

Might break it in pieces, bone-decked,
resplendent,

Crush it by cunning, unless clutch of the fire

In smoke should consume it. The sound mounted
upward

75

Novel enough; on the North Danes
fastened

Grendel's
cries terrify
the Danes.

A terror of anguish, on all of the men there

Who heard from the wall the weeping and
plaining,

The song of defeat from the foeman of heaven,

Heard him hymns of horror howl, and his sorrow

80

Hell-bound bewailing. He held him too firmly

Who was strongest of main-strength of men of
that era.

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

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

XIII.

GRENDEL IS VANQUISHED.

For no cause whatever would the
 earlmen's defender
Leave in life-joys the loathsome
 newcomer,

Beowulf has
no idea of
letting
Grendel live.

He deemed his existence utterly useless
To men under heaven. Many a noble

5

Of Beowulf brandished his battle-sword old,
Would guard the life of his lord and protector,
The far-famous chieftain, if able to do so;
While waging the warfare, this wist they but little,
Brave battle-thanes, while his body intending

10

To slit into slivers, and seeking his
 spirit:

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

That the relentless foeman nor finest
 of weapons

Of all on the earth, nor any of war-bills
Was willing to injure; but weapons of victory
Swords and suchlike he had sworn to dispense
 with.

15

His death at that time must prove to be wretched,
And the far-away spirit widely should journey
Into enemies' power. This plainly he saw then
Who with mirth¹ of mood malice no little
Had wrought in the past on the race of the
 earthmen

20

(To God he was hostile), that his body would fail
 him,

But Higelac's hardy henchman and kinsman

Held him by the hand; hateful to other
Was each one if living. A body-
wound suffered

Grendel is
sorely
wounded.

The direful demon, damage incurable

25

Was seen on his shoulder, his sinews
were shivered,

His body
bursts.

His body did burst. To Beowulf was given

Glory in battle; Grendel from thenceward

Must flee and hide him in the fen-cliffs and
marshes,

Sick unto death, his dwelling must look for

30

Unwinsome and woful; he wist the more fully

The end of his earthly existence was
nearing,

The monster
flees away to
hide in the
moors.

His life-days' limits. At last for the
Danemen,

When the slaughter was over, their wish was
accomplished.

The comer-from-far-land had cleansed then of
evil,

35

Wise and valiant, the war-hall of Hrothgar,

Saved it from violence. He joyed in the night-
work,

In repute for prowess; the prince of the Geatmen

For the East-Danish people his boast had
accomplished,

Bettered their burdensome bale-sorrows fully,

40

The craft-begot evil they erstwhile had suffered

And were forced to endure from crushing
oppression,

Their manifold misery. 'Twas a manifest token,

When the hero-in-battle the hand
suspended,

Beowulf
suspends
Grendel's

The arm and the shoulder (there was hand and arm
all of the claw in Heorot.

45

Of Grendel together) 'neath great-stretching hall-
roof.

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

XIV.

REJOICING OF THE DANES.

In the mist of the morning many a warrior Stood round the gift-hall, as the story is told me: Folk-princes fared then from far and from near	At early dawn, warriors from far and near come together to hear of the night's adventures.
---	--

Through long-stretching journeys to look at the
wonder,

5

The footprints of the foeman. Few of the warriors Who gazed on the foot-tracks of the inglorious creature His parting from life pained very deeply,	Few warriors lamented Grendel's destruction.
---	---

How, weary in spirit, off from those regions
In combats conquered he carried his traces,

10

Fated and flying, to the flood of the nickers.

There in bloody billows bubbled the currents,	Grendel's blood dyes the waters.
--	--

The angry eddy was everywhere
mingled

And seething with gore, welling with sword-
blood;¹

He death-doomed had hid him, when reaved of his
joyance

15

He laid down his life in the lair he had fled to,
His heathenish spirit, where hell did receive him.
Thence the friends from of old backward turned
them,

And many a younker from merry adventure,

Striding their stallions, stout from the seaward,

20

Heroes on horses. There were heard very often

Beowulf's praises; many often
asserted

Beowulf is the
hero of the
hour.

That neither south nor north, in the
circuit of waters,

O'er outstretching earth-plain, none
other was better

He is regarded
as a probable
successor to
Hrothgar.

'Mid bearers of war-shields, more
worthy to govern,

25

'Neath the arch of the ether. Not any, however,

'Gainst the friend-lord muttered, mocking-words
uttered

Of Hrothgar the gracious (a good
king he).

But no word is
uttered to
derogate from
the old king

Oft the famed ones permitted their
fallow-skinned horses

To run in rivalry, racing and chasing,

30

Where the fieldways appeared to them fair and
inviting,

Known for their excellence; oft athane of the
folk-lord,²

³A man of celebrity, mindful of
rhythms,

The gleeman
sings the
deeds of
heroes.

Who ancient traditions treasured in
memory,

New word-groups found properly bound:

35

The bard after 'gan then Beowulf's venture

Wisely to tell of, and words that were
clever

He sings in
alliterative
measures of
Beowulf's
prowess.

To utter skilfully, earnestly speaking,
Everything told he that he heard as to
Sigmund's

Mighty achievements, many things
hidden,

40

The strife of the Wælsing, the wide-
going ventures

The children of men knew of but little,
The feud and the fury, but Fitela with him,
When suchlike matters he minded to speak of,
Uncle to nephew, as in every contention

45

Each to other was ever devoted:

A numerous host of the race of the scathers
They had slain with the sword-edge. To Sigmund
accrued then

No little of glory, when his life-days were over,
Since he sturdy in struggle had destroyed the great
dragon,

50

The hoard-treasure's keeper; 'neath the hoar-
grayish stone he,

The son of the atheling, unaided adventured
The perilous project; not present was Fitela,
Yet the fortune befell him of forcing his weapon
Through the marvellous dragon, that it stood in the
wall,

55

Well-honored weapon; the worm was slaughtered.
The great one had gained then by his glorious
achievement

To reap from the ring-hoard richest enjoyment,
As best it did please him: his vessel he loaded,
Shining ornaments on the ship's bosom carried,

60

Kinsman of Wæls: the drake in heat melted.

He was farthest famed of fugitive
pilgrims,

Also of
Sigemund,
who has slain
a great fire-
dragon.

Sigemund was
widely famed.

Mid wide-scattered world-folk, for works of great
prowess,

War-troopers' shelter: hence waxed he in honor.⁴

Afterward Heremod's hero-strength
failed him,

Heremod, an
unfortunate
Danish king,
is introduced
by way of
contrast.

65

His vigor and valor. 'Mid venomous
haters

To the hands of foemen he was foully delivered,
Offdriven early. Agony-billows

Oppressed him too long, to his
people he became then,

Unlike
Sigemund and
Beowulf,
Heremod was
a burden to his
people.

To all the athelings, an ever-great
burden;

70

And the daring one's journey in days of yore
Many wise men were wont to deplore,
Such as hoped he would bring them help in their
sorrow,

That the son of their ruler should rise into power,
Holding the headship held by his fathers,

75

Should govern the people, the gold-hoard and
borough,

The kingdom of heroes, the realm of the
Scyldings.

He to all men became then far more
beloved,

Beowulf is an
honor to his
race.

Higelac's kinsman, to kindreds and
races,

To his friends much dearer; him malice assaulted.

—

80

Oft running and racing on roadsters
they measured

The story is
resumed.

The dun-colored highways. Then the light of the
morning

Was hurried and hastened. Went henchmen in
 numbers
 To the beautiful building, bold ones in spirit,
 To look at the wonder; the liegelord himself then
 85
 From his wife-bower wending, warden of
 treasures,
 Glorious trod with troopers unnumbered,
 Famed for his virtues, and with him the queen-
 wife
 Measured the mead-ways, with maidens attending.

- [1] S. emends, suggesting 'déop' for 'déog,' and removing semicolon after 'wéol.' The two half-lines 'welling ... hid him' would then read: *The bloody deep welled with sword-gore*. B. accepts 'déop' for 'déog,' but reads 'déað-fæges': *The deep boiled with the sword-gore of the death-doomed one*.
- [2] Another and quite different rendering of this passage is as follows: *Oft a liegeman of the king, a fame-covered man mindful of songs, who very many ancient traditions remembered (he found other word-groups accurately bound together) began afterward to tell of Beowulf's adventure, skilfully to narrate it, etc.*
- [3] Might 'guma gilp-hladen' mean 'a man laden with boasts of the deeds of others'?
- [4] t.B. accepts B.'s 'hé þæs áron þáh' as given by H.-So., but puts a comma after 'þáh,' and takes 'siððan' as introducing a dependent clause: *He throve in honor since Heremod's strength ... had decreased*.

XV.

HROTHGAR'S GRATITUDE.

Hrothgar discoursed (to the hall-building went he,
He stood by the pillar,¹ saw the steep-rising hall-
roof

Gleaming with gold-gems, and Grendel his hand
there):

“For the sight we behold now, thanks
to the Wielder

Hrothgar gives
thanks for the
overthrow of
the monster.

5

Early be offered! Much evil I bided,
Snaring from Grendel:² God can e'er 'complish
Wonder on wonder, Wielder of Glory!

But lately I reckoned ne'er under
heaven

I had given up
all hope, when
this brave
liegeman
came to our
aid.

Comfort to gain me for any of
sorrows,

10

While the handsomest of houses horrid with
bloodstain

Gory uptowered; grief had offfrightened³

Each of the wise ones who weened not that ever
The folk-troop's defences 'gainst foes they should
strengthen,

'Gainst sprites and monsters. Through the might
of the Wielder

15

A doughty retainer hath a deed now accomplished
Which erstwhile we all with our excellent wisdom
Failed to perform. May affirm very
truly

If his mother
yet liveth, well
may she thank
God for this
son.

What woman soever in all of the
nations

Gave birth to the child, if yet she surviveth,

20

That the long-ruling Lord was lavish to herward
In the birth of the bairn. Now, Beowulf dear,

Most excellent hero, I'll love thee in spirit Hereafter,
Beowulf, thou
shalt be my
son.

As bairn of my body; bear well
henceforward

The relationship new. No lack shall befall thee

25

Of earth-joys any I ever can give thee.

Full often for lesser service I've given

Hero less hardy hoard-treasure precious,

To a weaker in war-strife. By works of distinction Thou hast won
immortal
distinction.

Thou hast gained for thyself now that
thy glory shall flourish

30

Forever and ever. The All-Ruler quite thee

With good from His hand as He hitherto did thee!"

Beowulf answered, Ecgtheow's offspring: Beowulf
replies: I was
most happy to
render thee
this service.

"That labor of glory most gladly
achieved we,

The combat accomplished, unquailing we
ventured

35

The enemy's grapple; I would grant it much rather

Thou wert able to look at the creature in person,

Faint unto falling, the foe in his trappings!

On murder-bed quickly I minded to bind him,

With firm-holding fetters, that forced by my
grapple

40

Low he should lie in life-and-death struggle

'Less his body escape; I was wholly unable,

Since God did not will it, to keep him from going, I could not
keep the
monster from

Not held him that firmly, hated
opposer;
Too swift was the foeman. Yet safety
regarding

escaping, as
God did not
will that I
should.

45

He suffered his hand behind him to linger,
His arm and shoulder, to act as watcher;
No shadow of solace the woe-begone
creature

He left his
hand and arm
behind.

Found him there nathless: the hated
destroyer

Liveth no longer, lashed for his evils,

50

But sorrow hath seized him, in snare-meshes hath
him

Close in its clutches, keepeth him writhing

In baleful bonds: there banished for evil

The man shall wait for the mighty tribunal,

How the God of glory shall give him
his earnings.”

God will give
him his
deserts.

55

Then the soldier kept silent, son of old Ecglaf,

From boasting and bragging of
battle-achievements,

Unferth has
nothing more
to say, for
Beowulf's
actions speak
louder than
words.

Since the princes beheld there the
hand that depended

'Neath the lofty hall-timbers by the
might of the nobleman,

Each one before him, the enemy's fingers;

60

Each finger-nail strong steel most resembled,

The heathen one's hand-spur, the hero-in-battle's

Claw most uncanny; quoth they agreeing,

That not any excellent edges of brave
ones

No sword will
harm the
monster.

Was willing to touch him, the terrible
creature's

Battle-hand bloody to bear away from him.

- [1] B. and t.B. read 'stapole,' and translate *stood on the floor*.
- [2] For 'snaring from Grendel,' 'sorrows at Grendel's hands' has been suggested. This gives a parallel to 'láðes.' 'Grynna' may well be gen. pl. of 'gryn,' by a scribal slip.
- [3] The H.-So punctuation has been followed; but B. has been followed in understanding 'gehwyrcne' as object of 'wíd-scofen (hæfde).' Gr. construes 'wéa' as nom abs.

XVI.

HROTHGAR LAVISHES GIFTS UPON HIS DELIVERER.

Then straight was ordered that
Heorot inside¹

Heorot is
adorned with
hands.

With hands be embellished: a host of
them gathered,

Of men and women, who the wassailing-building
The guest-hall begear. Gold-flashing sparkled

5

Webs on the walls then, of wonders a many

To each of the heroes that look on such objects.

The beautiful building was broken to
pieces

The hall is
defaced,
however.

Which all within with irons was
fastened,

Its hinges torn off: only the roof was

10

Whole and uninjured when the horrible creature

Outlawed for evil off had betaken him,

Hopeless of living. 'Tis hard to avoid it

(Whoever will do it!); but he

doubtless must come to²

[A vague
passage of
five verses.]

The place awaiting, as Wyrð hath
appointed,

15

Soul-bearers, earth-dwellers, earls under heaven,

Where bound on its bed his body shall slumber

When feasting is finished. Full was
the time then

Hrothgar goes
to the banquet.

That the son of Healfdene went to the building;

The excellent atheling would eat of the banquet.

20

25

30

35

40

[illegible]

Commanded that eight steeds with	caparisoned
bridles	steeds be
45	brought to
	Beowulf.

Gold-plated, gleaming, be guided to hallward,
 Inside the building; on one of them stood then
 An art-broidered saddle embellished with jewels;
 'Twas the sovereign's seat, when the son of King
 Healfdene

Was pleased to take part in the play of the edges;
 50

The famous one's valor ne'er failed at the front
 when
 Slain ones were bowing. And to Beowulf granted
 The prince of the Ingwins, power over both,
 O'er war-steeds and weapons; bade him well to
 enjoy them.

In so manly a manner the mighty-famed chieftain,
 55

Hoard-ward of heroes, with horses and jewels
 War-storms requited, that none e'er condemneth
 Who willeth to tell truth with full justice.

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

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

XVII.

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

And the atheling of earlmen to each of the heroes	Each of Beowulf's companions
Who the ways of the waters went with Beowulf.	receives a costly gift.

A costly gift-token gave on the mead-bench,
Offered an heirloom, and ordered that that man

5
With gold should be paid for, whom
Grendel had erstwhile
Wickedly slaughtered, as he more of
them had done

The warrior
killed by
Grendel is to
be paid for in
gold.

Had far-seeing God and the mood of the hero
The fate not averted: the Father then governed
All of the earth-dwellers, as He ever is doing;

10
Hence insight for all men is everywhere fittest,
Forethought of spirit! much he shall suffer
Of lief and of loathsome who long in this present
Useth the world in this woful existence.

There was music and merriment mingling together

15 Hrothgar's
Touching Healfdene's leader; the joy- scop recalls
wood was fingered, events in the
Measures recited, when the singer of reign of his
lord's father.

Hrothgar
On mead-bench should mention the merry hall-
joyance

Of the kinsmen of Finn, when onset surprised
them:

“The Half-Danish hero, Hnæf of the
Scyldings,

20

On the field of the Frisians was fated
to perish.

Sure Hildeburg needed not mention
approving

The faith of the Jutemen: though blameless
entirely,

When shields were shivered she was
shorn of her darlings,

Of bairns and brothers: they bent to
their fate

25

With war-spear wounded; woe was
that woman.

Not causeless lamented the daughter of Hoce

The decree of the Wielder when morning-light
came and

She was able 'neath heaven to behold the
destruction

Of brothers and bairns, where the brightest of
earth-joys

30

She had hitherto had: all the
henchmen of Finn

War had oftaken, save a handful remaining,

That he nowise was able to offer resistance¹

To the onset of Hengest in the parley
of battle,

Nor the wretched remnant to rescue
in war from

35

The earl of the atheling; but they offered
conditions,

Another great building to fully make ready,

Compact
between the
Frisians and
the Danes.

A hall and a high-seat, that half they might rule
with
The sons of the Jutemen, and that Folcwalda's son
would

Day after day the Danemen honor

40

When gifts were giving, and grant of his ring-store
To Hengest's earl-troop ever so freely,
Of his gold-plated jewels, as he encouraged the
Frisians

On the bench of the beer-hall. On
both sides they swore then

Equality of
gifts agreed
on.

A fast-binding compact; Finn unto
Hengest

45

With no thought of revoking vowed then most
solemnly

The woe-begone remnant well to take charge of,
His Witan advising; the agreement should no one
By words or works weaken and shatter,
By artifice ever injure its value,

50

Though reaved of their ruler their ring-giver's
slayer

They followed as vassals, Fate so requiring:

Then if one of the Frisians the quarrel
should speak of

No one shall
refer to old
grudges.

In tones that were taunting, terrible
edges

Should cut in requital. Accomplished the oath
was,

55

And treasure of gold from the hoard was uplifted.

The best of the Scylding braves was
then fully

Danish
warriors are
burned on a
funeral-pyre.

Prepared for the pile; at the pyre was
seen clearly

The blood-gory burnie, the boar with his gilding,
The iron-hard swine, athelings many

60

Fatally wounded; no few had been slaughtered.

Hildeburg bade then, at the burning of Hnæf,

The bairn of her bosom to bear to the Queen
fire, Hildeburg has
her son burnt

That his body be burned and borne to along with
the pyre. Hnæf.

The woe-stricken woman wept on his shoulder,²

65

In measures lamented; upmounted the hero.³

The greatest of dead-fires curled to the welkin,

On the hill's-front crackled; heads were a-melting,

Wound-doors bursting, while the blood was a-
coursing

From body-bite fierce. The fire devoured them,

70

Greediest of spirits, whom war had offcarried

From both of the peoples; their bravest were
fallen.

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

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

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

XVIII.

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

“Then the warriors departed to go to
their dwellings,
Reaved of their friends, Friesland to
visit,

The survivors
go to
Friesland, the
home of Finn.

[illegible]

Hengest
remains there
all winter,
unable to get
away.

5 Wholly unsundered;¹ of fatherland
thought he

Though unable to drive the ring-stemmèd vessel
O'er the ways of the waters; the wave-deeps were
tossing,

Fought with the wind; winter in ice-bonds
Closed up the currents, till there came to the
dwelling

10
A year in its course, as yet it revolveth,
If season propitious one alway regardeth,
World-cheering weathers. Then winter was gone,
Earth's bosom was lovely; the exile would get
him,

The guest from the palace; on
grewsomet vengeance

He devises
schemes of
vengeance.

15
He brooded more eager than on oversea journeys,
Whe'r onset-of-anger he were able to 'complish,
The bairns of the Jutemen therein to remember.
Nowise refused he the duties of liegeman

When Hun of the Frisians the battle-sword Láfing,

20

Fairest of falchions, friendly did give him:

Its edges were famous in folk-talk of Jutland.

And savage sword-fury seized in its clutches

Bold-mooded Finn where he bode in his palace,

When the grewsome grapple Guthlaf and Oslaf

Guthlaf and
Oslaf revenge
Hnæf's
slaughter.

25

Had mournfully mentioned, the
mere-journey over,

For sorrows half-blamed him; the flickering spirit

Could not bide in his bosom. Then the building
was covered²

With corpses of foemen, and Finn too

Finn is slain.

was slaughtered,

The king with his comrades, and the queen made a
prisoner.

30

The troops of the Scyldings bore to
their vessels

The jewels of
Finn, and his
queen are
carried away
by the Danes.

All that the land-king had in his
palace,

Such trinkets and treasures they took as, on
searching,

At Finn's they could find. They ferried to
Daneland

The excellent woman on oversea journey,

35

Led her to their land-folk." The lay
was concluded,

The lay is
concluded,
and the main
story is
resumed.

The gleeman's recital. Shouts again
rose then,

Bench-glee resounded, bearers then offered

Wine from wonder-vats. Wealhtheo
advanced then

Skinkers carry
round the
beaker.

Going 'neath gold-crown, where the good ones
were seated

40

Uncle and nephew; their peace was
yet mutual,

True each to the other. And Unferth
the spokesman

Sat at the feet of the lord of the
Scyldings:

Each trusted his spirit that his mood was
courageous,

Though at fight he had failed in faith to his
kinsmen.

45

Said the queen of the Scyldings: "My lord and
protector,

Treasure-bestower, take thou this beaker;

Joyance attend thee, gold-friend of heroes,

And greet thou the Geatmen with
gracious responses!

Queen
Wealhtheow
greet
Hrothgar, as
he sits beside
Hrothulf, his
nephew.

Be generous
to the Geats.

So ought one to do. Be kind to the Geatmen,

50

In gifts not niggardly; anear and afar now

Peace thou enjoyest. Report hath informed me

Thou'lt have for a bairn the battle-brave hero.

Now is Heorot cleansèd, ring-palace gleaming;

Give while thou mayest many
rewards,

Have as much
joy as possible
in thy hall,
once more
purified.

55

And bequeath to thy kinsmen
kingdom and people,

On wending thy way to the Wielder's splendor.

I know good Hrothulf, that the noble young
troopers

He'll care for and honor, lord of the
Scyldings,

If earth-joys thou endest earlier than
he doth;

I know that
Hrothulf will
prove faithful
if he survive
thee.

60

I reckon that recompense he'll render with
kindness

Our offspring and issue, if that all he remember,
What favors of yore, when he yet was an infant,
We awarded to him for his worship and pleasure.”
Then she turned by the bench where her sons were
carousing,

65

Hrethric and Hrothmund, and the heroes'
offspring,

The war-youth together; there the
good one was sitting

'Twixt the brothers twain, Beowulf
Geatman.

Beowulf is
sitting by the
two royal
sons.

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

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

XIX.

BEOWULF RECEIVES FURTHER HONOR.

A beaker was borne him, and bidding
to quaff it

More gifts are
offered
Beowulf.

Graciously given, and gold that was
twisted

Pleasantly proffered, a pair of arm-jewels,
Rings and corslet, of collars the greatest

5

I've heard of 'neath heaven. Of heroes not any
More splendid from jewels have I heard 'neath the
welkin,

Since Hama off bore the
Brosmingmen's necklace,

A famous
necklace is
referred to, in
comparison
with the gems
presented to
Beowulf.

The bracteates and jewels, from the
bright-shining city,¹

Eormenric's cunning craftiness fled
from,

10

Chose gain everlasting. Geatish Higelac,
Grandson of Swerting, last had this jewel
When tramping 'neath banner the treasure he
guarded,

The field-spoil defended; Fate offcarried him
When for deeds of daring he endured tribulation,

15

Hate from the Frisians; the ornaments bare he
O'er the cup of the currents, costly gem-treasures,
Mighty folk-leader, he fell 'neath his target;
The² corpse of the king then came into charge of
The race of the Frankmen, the mail-shirt and
collar:

20

Warren less noble plundered the fallen,
When the fight was finished; the folk of the
Geatmen

The field of the dead held in possession.
The choicest of mead-halls with cheering
resounded.

Wealhtheow discoursed, the war-troop addressed
she:

25

“This collar enjoy thou, Beowulf
worthy,

Young man, in safety, and use thou
this armor,

Queen
Wealhtheow
magnifies
Beowulf's
achievements.

Gems of the people, and prosper thou fully,
Show thyself sturdy and be to these liegemen
Mild with instruction! I'll mind thy requital.

30

Thou hast brought it to pass that far and near
Forever and ever earthmen shall honor thee,
Even so widely as ocean surroundeth
The blustering bluffs. Be, while thou livest,
A wealth-blessèd atheling. I wish thee most truly

35

Jewels and treasure. Be kind to my
son, thou

May gifts
never fail thee.

Living in joyance! Here each of the nobles
Is true unto other, gentle in spirit,
Loyal to leader. The liegemen are peaceful,
The war-troops ready: well-drunken heroes,³

40

Do as I bid ye.” Then she went to the settle.
There was choicest of banquets, wine drank the
heroes:

Weird they knew not, destiny cruel,
As to many an earlman early it
happened,

They little
know of the
sorrow in
store for them.

When evening had come and Hrothgar had parted

Off to his manor, the mighty to slumber.
Warriors unnumbered warded the building
As erst they did often: the ale-settle bared they,
'Twas covered all over with beds and pillows.
Doomed unto death, down to his
slumber

A doomed
thane is there
with them.

Bowed then a beer-thane. Their battle-shields
placed they,
Bright-shining targets, up by their heads then;
O'er the atheling on ale-bench 'twas easy to see
there
Battle-high helmet, burnie of ring-mail,
And mighty war-spear. 'Twas the
wont of that people

They were
always ready
for battle.

To constantly keep them equipped for the battle,⁴
At home or marching—in either condition—
At seasons just such as necessity ordered
As best for their ruler; that people was worthy.

- [1] C. suggests a semicolon after ‘city,’ with ‘he’ as supplied subject of ‘fled’ and ‘chose.’
- [2] For ‘feorh’ S. suggests ‘feoh’: ‘corpse’ in the translation would then be changed to ‘possessions,’ ‘belongings.’ This is a better reading than one joining, in such intimate syntactical relations, things so unlike as ‘corpse’ and ‘jewels.’
- [3] S. suggests ‘wine-joyous heroes,’ ‘warriors elated with wine.’
- [4] I believe this translation brings out the meaning of the poet, without departing seriously from the H.-So. text. ‘Oft’ frequently means ‘constantly,’ ‘continually,’ not always ‘often.’—Why ‘an (on) wīg gearwe’ should be written ‘ánwīg-gearwe’ (= ready for single combat), I cannot see. ‘Gearwe’ occurs quite frequently with ‘on’; cf. B. 1110 (*ready for the pyre*), El. 222 (*ready for the glad journey*). Moreover, what has the idea of single combat to do with B. 1247 ff.? The poet is giving an inventory of the arms and armor which they lay aside on retiring, and he closes his narration by saying that they were *always prepared for battle both at home and on the march*.

XX.

THE MOTHER OF GRENDEL.

They sank then to slumber. With sorrow one paid
for

His evening repose, as often betid them

While Grendel was holding¹ the gold-bedecked
palace,

Ill-deeds performing, till his end overtook him,

5

Death for his sins. 'Twas seen very clearly,

Known unto earth-folk, that still an
avenger

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

Outlived the loathed one, long since
the sorrow

Caused by the struggle; the mother of Grendel,
Devil-shaped woman, her woe ever minded,

10

Who was held to inhabit the horrible waters,

The cold-flowing currents, after Cain
had become a

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

Slayer-with-edges to his one only
brother,

The son of his sire; he set out then banished,

Marked as a murderer, man-joys avoiding,

15

Lived in the desert. Thence demons unnumbered

Fate-sent awoke; one of them

Grendel,

The poet again
magnifies
Beowulf's
valor.

Sword-cursèd, hateful, who at Heorot
met with

A man that was watching, waiting the struggle,

Where a horrid one held him with hand-grapple
sturdy;

20

Nathless he minded the might of his body,
The glorious gift God had allowed him,
And folk-ruling Father's favor relied on,
His help and His comfort: so he conquered the
foeman,
The hell-spirit humbled: he unhappy departed
then,

25

Reaved of his joyance, journeying to death-haunts,
Foeman of man. His mother moreover
Eager and gloomy was anxious to go on
Her mournful mission, mindful of vengeance

Grendel's
mother comes
to avenge her
son.

For the death of her son. She came then to Heorot
30

Where the Armor-Dane earlmen all through the
building

Were lying in slumber. Soon there became then
Return² to the nobles, when the mother of Grendel
Entered the folk-hall; the fear was less grievous
By even so much as the vigor of maidens,

35

War-strength of women, by warrior is reckoned,
When well-carved weapon, worked with the
hammer,

Blade very bloody, brave with its edges,
Strikes down the boar-sign that stands on the
helmet.

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

40

The brand o'er the benches, broad-lindens many
Hand-fast were lifted; for helmet he recked not,
For armor-net broad, whom terror laid hold of.
She went then hastily, outward would get her
Her life for to save, when some one did spy her;

45

Soon she had grappled one of the
athelings

She seizes a
favorite
liegemen of
Hrothgar's.

Fast and firmly, when fenward she
hied her;

That one to Hrothgar was liefest of heroes
In rank of retainer where waters encircle,
A mighty shield-warrior, whom she murdered at
slumber,

50

A broadly-famed battle-knight. Beowulf was
absent,

But another apartment was erstwhile
devoted

Beowulf was
asleep in
another part of
the palace.

To the glory-decked Geatman when
gold was distributed.

There was hubbub in Heorot. The hand that was
famous

She grasped in its gore;⁴ grief was renewed then

55

In homes and houses: 'twas no happy arrangement
In both of the quarters to barter and purchase
With lives of their friends. Then the well-agèd
ruler,

The gray-headed war-thane, was woful in spirit,
When his long-trusted liegeman lifeless he knew
of,

60

His dearest one gone. Quick from a
room was

Beowulf is
sent for.

Beowulf brought, brave and triumphant.

As day was dawning in the dusk of the morning,
Went then that earlman, champion
noble,

He comes at
Hrothgar's
summons.

Came with comrades, where the
clever one bided

65

Whether God all gracious would grant him a
 respite
 After the woe he had suffered. The war-worthy
 hero
 With a troop of retainers trod then the pavement
 (The hall-building groaned), till he greeted the
 wise one,
 The earl of the Ingwins;⁵ asked if the
 night had
 70
 Fully refreshed him, as fain he would
 have it.

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

- [1] Several eminent authorities either read or emend the MS. so as to make this verse read, *While Grendel was wasting the gold-bedecked palace*. So 20 15 below: *ravaged the desert*.
- [2] For 'sóna' (1281), t.B. suggests 'sára,' limiting 'edhwyrft.' Read then: *Return of sorrows to the nobles, etc.* This emendation supplies the syntactical gap after 'edhwyrft.'
- [3] Some authorities follow Grein's lexicon in treating 'heard ecg' as an adj. limiting 'sweord': H.-So. renders it as a subst. (So v. 1491.) The sense of the translation would be the same.
- [4] B. suggests 'under hróf genam' (v. 1303). This emendation, as well as an emendation with (?) to v. 739, he offers, because 'under' baffles him in both passages. All we need is to take 'under' in its secondary meaning of 'in,' which, though not given by Grein, occurs in the literature. Cf. Chron. 876 (March's A.-S. Gram. § 355) and Oro. Amaz. I. 10, where 'under' = *in the midst of*. Cf. modern Eng. 'in such circumstances,' which interchanges in good usage with 'under such circumstances.'
- [5] For 'néod-laðu' (1321) C. suggests 'néad-láðum,' and translates: *asked whether the night had been pleasant to him after crushing-hostility*.

XXI.

HROTHGAR'S ACCOUNT OF THE MONSTERS.

Hrothgar rejoined, helm of the
Scyldings:

“Ask not of joyance! Grief is
renewed to

The folk of the Danemen. Dead is
Æschere,

Yrmenlaf's brother, older than he,

5

My true-hearted counsellor, trusty adviser,
Shoulder-companion, when fighting in battle
Our heads we protected, when troopers were
clashing,

And heroes were dashing; such an
earl should be ever,

An erst-worthy atheling, as Æschere proved him.

10

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

By cramming discovered.¹ The
quarrel she wreaked then,

That last night igone Grendel thou
killedst

15

In grewsomest manner, with grim-holding
clutches,

Since too long he had lessened my liege-troop and
wasted

My folk-men so foully. He fell in the battle
With forfeit of life, and another has followed,
A mighty crime-worker, her kinsman avenging,

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

He was my
ideal hero.

This horrible
creature came
to avenge
Grendel's
death.

20

And henceforth hath 'stablished her hatred
 unyielding,²

As it well may appear to many a liegeman,
Who mourneth in spirit the treasure-bestower,
Her heavy heart-sorrow; the hand is now lifeless
Which³ availed you in every wish that you
 cherished.

25

Land-people heard I, liegemen, this
 saying,
Dwellers in halls, they had seen very
 often

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

A pair of such mighty march-striding
 creatures,

Far-dwelling spirits, holding the moorlands:
One of them wore, as well they might notice,

30

The image of woman, the other one wretched
In guise of a man wandered in exile,
Except he was huger than any of earthmen;
Earth-dwelling people entitled him Grendel
In days of yore: they know not their father,

35

Whe'r ill-going spirits any were borne him
Ever before. They guard the wolf-
 coverts,

The inhabit
the most
desolate and
horrible
places.

Lands inaccessible, wind-beaten
 nesses,

Fearfullest fen-deeps, where a flood from the
 mountains

'Neath mists of the nesses netherward rattles,

40

The stream under earth: not far is it henceward
Measured by mile-lengths that the mere-water
 standeth,

Which forests hang over, with frost-whiting
covered,⁴

A firm-rooted forest, the floods overshadow.
There ever at night one an ill-meaning portent

45

A fire-flood may see; 'mong children of men
None liveth so wise that wot of the bottom;
Though harassed by hounds the heath-stepper seek
for,

Fly to the forest, firm-antlered he-
deer,

Spurred from afar, his spirit he
yeldeth,

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

50

His life on the shore, ere in he will venture
To cover his head. Uncanny the place is:
Thence upward ascendeth the surging of waters,
Wan to the welkin, when the wind is stirring
The weathers unpleasing, till the air groweth
gloomy,

55

And the heavens lower. Now is help
to be gotten

To thee only
can I look for
assistance.

From thee and thee only! The abode thou know'st
not,

The dangerous place where thou'rt able to meet
with

The sin-laden hero: seek if thou darest!
For the feud I will fully fee thee with money,

60

With old-time treasure, as erstwhile I did thee,
With well-twisted jewels, if away thou shalt get
thee."

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

- [2] The line ‘And ... yielding,’ B. renders: *And she has performed a deed of blood-vengeance whose effect is far-reaching.*
- [3] ‘Sé þe’ (1345) is an instance of masc. rel. with fem. antecedent. So v. 1888, where ‘sé þe’ refers to ‘ylðo.’
- [4] For ‘hrímge’ in the H.-So. edition, Gr. and others read ‘hrínðe’ (=hrínende), and translate: *which rustling forests overhang.*

XXII.

BEOWULF SEEKS GRENDEL'S MOTHER.

Beowulf answered, Ecgtheow's son:

"Grieve not, O wise one! for each it
is better,

His friend to avenge than with
vehemence wail him;

Beowulf
exhorts the old
king to arouse
himself for
action.

Each of us must the end-day abide of

5

His earthly existence; who is able accomplish

Glory ere death! To battle-thane noble

Lifeless lying, 'tis at last most fitting.

Arise, O king, quick let us hasten

To look at the footprint of the kinsman of Grendel!

10

I promise thee this now: to his place he'll escape
not,

To embrace of the earth, nor to mountainous
forest,

Nor to depths of the ocean, wherever he wanders.

Practice thou now patient endurance

Of each of thy sorrows, as I hope for thee
soothly!"

15

Then up sprang the old one, the All-
Wielder thanked he,

Ruler Almighty, that the man had
outspoken.

Hrothgar
rouses
himself. His
horse is
brought.

Then for Hrothgar a war-horse was decked with a
bridle,

Curly-maned courser. The clever folk-leader

Stately proceeded: stepped then an
earl-troop

They start on
the track of

20

the female
monster.

Of linden-wood bearers. Her

footprints were seen then

Widely in wood-paths, her way o'er the bottoms,

Where she faraway fared o'er fen-country murky,

Bore away breathless the best of retainers

Who pondered with Hrothgar the welfare of
country.

25

The son of the athelings then went o'er the stony,

Declivitous cliffs, the close-covered passes,

Narrow passages, paths unfrequented,

Nesses abrupt, nicker-haunts many;

One of a few of wise-mooded heroes,

30

He onward advanced to view the surroundings,

Till he found unawares woods of the mountain

O'er hoar-stones hanging, holt-wood unjoyful;

The water stood under, welling and gory.

'Twas irksome in spirit to all of the Danemen,

35

Friends of the Scyldings, to many a liegeman

Sad to be suffered, a sorrow unlittle

To each of the earlmen, when to

Æschere's head they

Came on the cliff. The current was

seething

With blood and with gore (the troopers gazed on
it).

40

The horn anon sang the battle-song ready.

The troop were all seated; they saw 'long the
water then

Many a serpent, mere-dragons
wondrous

Trying the waters, nickers a-lying

The sight of
Æschere's
head causes
them great
sorrow.

The water is
filled with
serpents and
sea-dragons.

On the cliffs of the nesses, which at noonday full
often

45

Go on the sea-deeps their sorrowful journey,
Wild-beasts and wormkind; away then they
hastened

Hot-mooded, hateful, they heard the
great clamor,

One of them is
killed by
Beowulf.

The war-trumpet winding. One did
the Geat-prince

Sunder from earth-joys, with arrow from
bowstring,

50

From his sea-struggle tore him, that the trusty war-
missile

Pierced to his vitals; he proved in the
currents

The dead
beast is a poor
swimmer

Less doughty at swimming whom
death had offcarried.

Soon in the waters the wonderful swimmer

Was straitened most sorely with sword-pointed
boar-spears,

55

Pressed in the battle and pulled to the cliff-edge;
The liegemen then looked on the loath-fashioned
stranger.

Beowulf donned then his battle-
equipments,

Beowulf
prepares for a
struggle with
the monster.

Cared little for life; inlaid and most
ample,

The hand-woven corslet which could cover his
body,

60

Must the wave-deeps explore, that war might be
powerless

To harm the great hero, and the hating one's grasp
might

Not peril his safety; his head was protected

By the light-flashing helmet that should mix with
the bottoms,

Trying the eddies, treasure-emblazoned,

65

Encircled with jewels, as in seasons long past
The weapon-smith worked it, wondrously made it,
With swine-bodies fashioned it, that
thenceforward no longer

Brand might bite it, and battle-sword hurt it.

And that was not least of helpers in prowess

70

That Hrothgar's spokesman had lent
him when straitened;

He has
Unferth's
sword in his
hand.

And the hilted hand-sword was
Hrunting entitled,

Old and most excellent 'mong all of the treasures;

Its blade was of iron, blotted with poison,

Hardened with gore; it failed not in battle

75

Any hero under heaven in hand who it brandished,

Who ventured to take the terrible journeys,

The battle-field sought; not the earliest occasion

That deeds of daring 'twas destined to 'complish.

Ecglaf's kinsman minded not soothly,

80

Unferth has
little use for
swords.

Exulting in strength, what erst he had
spoken

Drunken with wine, when the weapon he lent to

A sword-hero bolder; himself did not venture

'Neath the strife of the currents his life to
endanger,

To fame-deeds perform; there he forfeited glory,

85

Repute for his strength. Not so with the other

When he clad in his corslet had equipped him for
battle.

XXIII.

BEOWULF'S FIGHT WITH GRENDEL'S MOTHER.

Beowulf spake, Ecgtheow's son:	Beowulf
“Recall now, oh, famous kinsman of	makes a
Healfdene,	parting speech
Prince very prudent, now to part I am	to Hrothgar.
ready,	
Gold-friend of earlmen, what erst we agreed on,	
5	If I fail, act as
Should I lay down my life in lending	a kind
thee assistance,	liegelord to
	my thanes,
When my earth-joys were over, thou	
wouldst evermore serve me	
In stead of a father; my faithful thanemen,	
My trusty retainers, protect thou and care for,	
Fall I in battle: and, Hrothgar beloved,	
10	and send
Send unto Higelac the high-valued	Higelac the
jewels	jewels thou
	hast given me
Thou to me hast allotted. The lord of	
the Geatmen	
May perceive from the gold, the Hrethling may	
see it	
When he looks on the jewels, that a	I should like
gem-giver found I	my king to
Good over-measure, enjoyed him	know how
while able.	generous a
	lord I found
	thee to be.
15	
And the ancient heirloom Unferth permit thou,	
The famed one to have, the heavy-sword splendid ¹	
The hard-edged weapon; with Hrunting to aid me,	
I shall gain me glory, or grim-death shall take	
me.”	

The atheling of Geatmen uttered
these words and

Beowulf is
eager for the
fray.

20

Heroic did hasten, not any rejoinder
Was willing to wait for; the wave-current
swallowed

The doughty-in-battle. Then a day's-
length elapsed ere

He is a whole
day reaching
the bottom of
the sea.

He was able to see the sea at its
bottom.

Early she found then who fifty of winters

25

The course of the currents kept in her fury,
Grisly and greedy, that the grim one's dominion

Some one of men from above was
exploring.

Grendel's
mother knows
that some one
has reached
her domains.

Forth did she grab them, grappled the
warrior

With horrible clutches; yet no sooner she injured

30

His body unscathed: the burnie out-guarded,
That she proved but powerless to pierce through
the armor,
The limb-mail locked, with loath-grabbing fingers.
The sea-wolf bare then, when bottomward came
she,

The ring-prince homeward, that he
after was powerless

She grabs him,
and bears him
to her den.

35

(He had daring to do it) to deal with his weapons,
But many a mere-beast tormented him swimming,
Flood-beasts no few with fierce-
biting tusks did

Sea-monsters
bite and strike
him.

Break through his burnie, the brave
one pursued they.

The earl then discovered he was down in some
cavern

40

Where no water whatever anyway harmed him,
And the clutch of the current could come not anear
him,

Since the roofed-hall prevented; brightness a-
gleaming

Fire-light he saw, flashing resplendent.

The good one saw then the sea-bottom's monster,

45

The mighty mere-woman; he made a
great onset

Beowulf
attacks the
mother of
Grendel.

With weapon-of-battle, his hand not
desisted

From striking, that war-blade struck on her head
then

A battle-song greedy. The stranger perceived then

The sword would not bite, her life
would not injure,

The sword
will not bite.

50

But the falchion failed the folk-prince when
straitened:

Erst had it often onsets encountered,

Oft cloven the helmet, the fated one's armor:

'Twas the first time that ever the excellent jewel

Had failed of its fame. Firm-mooded after,

55

Not heedless of valor, but mindful of glory,

Was Higelac's kinsman; the hero-chief angry

Cast then his carved-sword covered with jewels

That it lay on the earth, hard and steel-pointed;

He hoped in his strength, his hand-
grapple sturdy.

The hero
throws down
all weapons,
and again
trusts to his
hand-grip.

60

So any must act whenever he
thinketh

To gain him in battle glory unending,

And is reckless of living. The lord of the War-
Geats

(He shrank not from battle) seized by the
 shoulder²
 The mother of Grendel; then mighty in struggle
 65
 Swung he his enemy, since his anger was kindled,
 That she fell to the floor. With furious grapple
 She gave him requital³ early Beowulf falls.
 thereafter,
 And stretched out to grab him; the strongest of
 warriors
 Faint-mooded stumbled, till he fell in his traces,
 70 The monster
 Foot-going champion. Then she sat sits on him
 on the hall-guest with drawn
 sword.
 And wielded her war-knife wide-
 bladed, flashing,
 For her son would take vengeance, her one only
 bairn.
 His breast-armor woven bode on his His armor
 shoulder; saves his life.
 It guarded his life, the entrance defended
 75
 'Gainst sword-point and edges. Ecgtheow's son
 there
 Had fatally journeyed, champion of Geatmen,
 In the arms of the ocean, had the armor not given,
 Close-woven corslet, comfort and succor,
 And had God most holy not awarded God arranged
 the victory, for his escape.
 80
 All-knowing Lord; easily did heaven's
 Ruler most righteous arrange it with justice;⁴
 Uprose he erect ready for battle.

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

- [2] Sw., R., and t.B. suggest 'feaxe' for 'eaxe' (1538) and render:
Seized by the hair.
- [3] If 'hand-léan' be accepted (as the MS. has it), the line will read:
She hand-reward gave him early thereafter.
- [4] Sw. and S. change H.-So.'s semicolon (v. 1557) to a comma,
and translate: *The Ruler of Heaven arranged it in justice easily,*
after he arose again.

XXIV.

BEOWULF IS DOUBLE- CONQUEROR.

Then he saw mid the war-gems a Beowulf
 grasps a giant-
 sword,
An ancient giant-sword, of edges a-
 doughty,

Glory of warriors: of weapons 'twas choicest,
Only 'twas larger than any man else was

5

Able to bear to the battle-encounter,
The good and splendid work of the giants.
He grasped then the sword-hilt, knight of the
 Scyldings,

Bold and battle-grim, brandished his ring-sword,
Hopeless of living, hotly he smote her,

10

That the fiend-woman's neck firmly it grappled,
Broke through her bone-joints, the and fells the
 bill fully pierced her female
 monster.

Fate-cursèd body, she fell to the
 ground then:

The hand-sword was bloody, the hero exulted.
The brand was brilliant, brightly it glimmered,

15

Just as from heaven gemlike shineth
The torch of the firmament. He glanced 'long the
 building,

And turned by the wall then, Higelac's vassal
Raging and wrathful raised his battle-sword
Strong by the handle. The edge was not useless

20

To the hero-in-battle, but he speedily wished to
Give Grendel requital for the many assaults he

Had worked on the West-Danes not once, but
often,
When he slew in slumber the subjects of Hrothgar,
Swallowed down fifteen sleeping retainers

25

Of the folk of the Danemen, and fully as many
Carried away, a horrible prey.

He gave him requital, grim-raging champion,

When he saw on his rest-place weary
of conflict

Beowulf sees
the body of
Grendel, and
cuts off his
head.

Grendel lying, of life-joys bereaved,

30

As the battle at Heorot erstwhile had scathed him;
His body far bounded, a blow when he suffered,
Death having seized him, sword-smiting heavy,
And he cut off his head then. Early this noticed
The clever carles who as comrades of Hrothgar

35

The waters are
gory.

Gazed on the sea-deeps, that the
surging wave-currents

Were mightily mingled, the mere-flood was gory:
Of the good one the gray-haired together held
converse,

The hoary of head, that they hoped
not to see again

Beowulf is
given up for
dead.

The atheling ever, that exulting in
victory

40

He'd return there to visit the distinguished folk-
ruler:

Then many concluded the mere-wolf had killed
him.¹

The ninth hour came then. From the ness-edge
departed

The bold-mooded Scyldings; the gold-friend of
heroes

Homeward betook him. The strangers sat down
then

45

Soul-sick, sorrowful, the sea-waves regarding:
They wished and yet weened not their well-loved
friend-lord

To see any more. The sword-blade The giant-
began then, sword melts.

The blood having touched it, contracting and
shriveling

With battle-icicles; 'twas a wonderful marvel

50

That it melted entirely, likest to ice when
The Father unbindeth the bond of the frost and
Unwindeth the wave-bands, He who wieldeth
dominion

Of times and of tides: a truth-firm Creator.

Nor took he of jewels more in the dwelling,

55

Lord of the Weders, though they lay all around
him,

Than the head and the handle handsome with
jewels;

The brand early melted, burnt was the weapon:²

So hot was the blood, the strange-spirit poisonous

That in it did perish. He early swam The hero
off then swims back to
the realms of
day.

60

Who had bided in combat the
carnage of haters,

Went up through the ocean; the eddies were
cleansèd,

The spacious expanses, when the spirit from
farland

His life put aside and this short-lived existence.

The seamen's defender came swimming to land
then

65

Doughty of spirit, rejoiced in his sea-gift,
The bulky burden which he bore in his keeping.
The excellent vassals advanced then to meet him,
To God they were grateful, were glad in their
chieftain,
That to see him safe and sound was granted them.

70

From the high-minded hero, then, helmet and
burnie
Were speedily loosened: the ocean was putrid,
The water 'neath welkin weltered with gore.
Forth did they fare, then, their footsteps retracing,
Merry and mirthful, measured the earth-way,

75

The highway familiar: men very daring³
Bare then the head from the sea-cliff, burdening
Each of the earlmen, excellent-valiant.

Four of them had to carry with labor	It takes four
The head of Grendel to the high	men to carry
towering gold-hall	Grendel's
	head on a
	spear.

80

Upstuck on the spear, till fourteen most-valiant
And battle-brave Geatmen came there going
Straight to the palace: the prince of the people
Measured the mead-ways, their mood-brave
companion.

The atheling of earlmen entered the building,

85

Deed-valiant man, adorned with distinction,
Doughty shield-warrior, to address King Hrothgar:
Then hung by the hair, the head of Grendel
Was borne to the building, where beer-thanes were
drinking,

Loth before earlmen and eke 'fore the lady:

90

The warriors beheld then a wonderful sight.

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

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

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

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

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

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

- [2] ‘Bróden-mæl’ is regarded by most scholars as meaning a damaskeened sword. Translate: *The damaskeened sword burned up.* Cf. 25 16 and note.
- [3] ‘Cyning-balde’ (1635) is the much-disputed reading of K. and Th. To render this, “*nobly bold*,” “*excellently bold*,” have been suggested. B. would read ‘cyning-holde’ (cf. 290), and render: *Men well-disposed towards the king carried the head, etc.* ‘Cynebealde,’ says t.B., endorsing Gr.

XXV.

BEOWULF BRINGS HIS TROPHIES.—HROTHGAR'S GRATITUDE.

Beowulf spake, offspring of

Ecgtheow:

Beowulf
relates his last
exploit.

“Lo! we blithely have brought thee,
bairn of Healfdene,

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

5

I came off alive from this, narrowly 'scaping:
In war 'neath the water the work with great pains I
Performed, and the fight had been finished quite
nearly,

Had God not defended me. I failed in the battle
Aught to accomplish, aided by Hrunting,

10

Though that weapon was worthy, but the Wielder
of earth-folk

Gave me willingly to see on the wall
a

God was
fighting with
me.

Heavy old hand-sword hanging in
splendor

(He guided most often the lorn and the friendless),
That I swung as a weapon. The wards of the house
then

15

I killed in the conflict (when occasion was given
me).

Then the battle-sword burned, the brand that was
lifted,¹

As the blood-current sprang, hottest of war-
sweats;

Seizing the hilt, from my foes I offbore it;
I avenged as I ought to their acts of malignity,

20

The murder of Danemen. I then make thee this
promise,

Thou'lt be able in Heorot careless to
slumber

Heorot is
freed from
monsters.

With thy throng of heroes and the
thanes of thy people

Every and each, of greater and lesser,
And thou needest not fear for them from the
selfsame direction

25

As thou formerly fearedst, oh, folk-lord of
Scyldings,

End-day for earlmen." To the age-hoary man then,

The gray-haired chieftain, the gold-
fashioned sword-hilt,

The famous
sword is
presented to
Hrothgar.

Old-work of giants, was thereupon
given;

Since the fall of the fiends, it fell to the keeping

30

Of the wielder of Danemen, the wonder-smith's
labor,

And the bad-mooded being abandoned this world
then,

Opponent of God, victim of murder,

And also his mother; it went to the keeping

Of the best of the world-kings, where waters
encircle,

35

Who the scot divided in Scylding dominion.

Hrothgar discoursed, the hilt he
regarded,

Hrothgar
looks closely
at the old
sword.

The ancient heirloom where an old-
time contention's

Beginning was graven: the gurgling currents,
The flood slew thereafter the race of the giants,
40

They had proved themselves daring: that people
was loth to

The Lord everlasting, through lash of the billows
The Father gave them final requital.

It had
belonged to a
race hateful to
God.

So in letters of rune on the clasp of the handle
Gleaming and golden, 'twas graven exactly,
45

Set forth and said, whom that sword had been
made for,

Finest of irons, who first it was wrought for,
Wreathed at its handle and gleaming with
serpents.

The wise one then said (silent they all were)

Son of old Healfdene: "He may say
unrefuted

Hrothgar
praises
Beowulf.

50

Who performs 'mid the folk-men fairness and
truth

(The hoary old ruler remembers the past),

That better by birth is this bairn of the nobles!

Thy fame is extended through far-away countries,

Good friend Beowulf, o'er all of the races,

55

Thou holdest all firmly, hero-like strength with
Prudence of spirit. I'll prove myself grateful
As before we agreed on; thou granted for long
shalt

Become a great comfort to kinsmen and comrades,

A help unto heroes. Heremod became
not

Heremod's
career is again
contrasted
with
Beowulf's.

60

Such to the Scyldings, successors of
Ecgwela;

He grew not to please them, but grievous
destruction,

And diresome death-woes to Danemen attracted;
He slew in anger his table-companions,
Trustworthy counsellors, till he turned off lonely

65

From world-joys away, wide-famous ruler:
Though high-ruling heaven in hero-strength raised
him,

In might exalted him, o'er men of all nations
Made him supreme, yet a murderous spirit
Grew in his bosom: he gave then no ring-gems

70

To the Danes after custom; endured
he unjoyful

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

Standing the straits from strife that
was raging,

Longsome folk-sorrow. Learn then from this,
Lay hold of virtue! Though laden with winters,
I have sung thee these measures. 'Tis a marvel to
tell it,

75

How all-ruling God from greatness of
spirit

Hrothgar
moralizes.

Giveth wisdom to children of men,
Manor and earlship: all things He ruleth.
He often permitteth the mood-thought of man of
The illustrious lineage to lean to possessions,

80

Allows him earthly delights at his manor,
A high-burg of heroes to hold in his keeping,
Maketh portions of earth-folk hear him,
And a wide-reaching kingdom so that, wisdom
failing him,

He himself is unable to reckon its boundaries;

85

He liveth in luxury, little debars him,

Nor sickness nor age, no treachery-sorrow
Becloudeth his spirit, conflict nowhere,
No sword-hate, appeareth, but all of the world
doth
Wend as he wisheth; the worse he knoweth not,
90
Till arrant arrogance inward pervading,
Waxeth and springeth, when the warder is
sleeping,
The guard of the soul: with sorrows encompassed,
Too sound is his slumber, the slayer is near him,
Who with bow and arrow aimeth in malice.

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

XXVI.

HROTHGAR MORALIZES.— REST AFTER LABOR.

“Then bruised in his bosom he with A wounded
bitter-toothed missile spirit.

Is hurt 'neath his helmet: from harmful pollution
He is powerless to shield him by the wonderful
mandates

Of the loath-cursèd spirit; what too long he hath
holden

5

Him seemeth too small, savage he hoardeth,
Nor boastfully giveth gold-plated rings,¹
The fate of the future flouts and forgetteth
Since God had erst given him greatness no little,
Wielder of Glory. His end-day anear,

10

It afterward happens that the bodily-dwelling
Fleetingly fadeth, falls into ruins;
Another lays hold who doleth the ornaments,
The nobleman's jewels, nothing lamenting,
Heedeth no terror. Oh, Beowulf dear,

15

Best of the heroes, from bale-strife defend thee,
And choose thee the better, counsels eternal;

Beware of arrogance, world-famous Be not over
champion! proud: life is

But a little-while lasts thy life-vigor's fleeting, and
fulness; its strength
 soon wasteth
 away.

'Twill after hap early, that illness or
sword-edge

20

Shall part thee from strength, or the grasp of the
fire,

Or the wave of the current, or clutch of the edges,
Or flight of the war-spear, or age with its horrors,
Or thine eyes' bright flashing shall fade into
darkness:

'Twill happen full early, excellent hero,

25

That death shall subdue thee. So the
Danes a half-century

Hrothgar gives
an account of
his reign.

I held under heaven, helped them in struggles
'Gainst many a race in middle-earth's regions,
With ash-wood and edges, that enemies none
On earth molested me. Lo! offsetting change, now,

30

Came to my manor, grief after
joyance,

Sorrow after
joy.

When Grendel became my constant visitor,
Inveterate hater: I from that malice
Continually travailed with trouble no little.
Thanks be to God that I gained in my lifetime,

35

To the Lord everlasting, to look on the gory
Head with mine eyes, after long-lasting sorrow!
Go to the bench now, battle-adornèd
Joy in the feasting: of jewels in common
We'll meet with many when morning appeareth."

40

The Geatman was gladsome, ganged he
immediately

To go to the bench, as the clever one bade him.
Then again as before were the famous-for-
prowess,

Hall-inhabiters, handsomely banqueted,
Feasted anew. The night-veil fell then

45

Dark o'er the warriors. The courtiers rose then;
The gray-haired was anxious to go to his
slumbers,

The hoary old Scylding. Hankered the Geatman,
The champion doughty, greatly, to
rest him:

Beowulf is
fagged, and
seeks rest.

An earlman early outward did lead
him,

50

Fagged from his faring, from far-country
springing,

Who for etiquette's sake all of a liegeman's
Needs regarded, such as seamen at that time
Were bounden to feel. The big-hearted rested;
The building uptowered, spacious and gilded,

55

The guest within slumbered, till the sable-clad
raven

Blithely foreboded the beacon of heaven.

Then the bright-shining sun o'er the bottoms came
going;²

The warriors hastened, the heads of the peoples
Were ready to go again to their peoples,

60

The high-mooded farer would
faraway thenceward

The Geats
prepare to
leave Dane-
land.

Look for his vessel. The valiant one
bade then,³

Offspring of Ecglaf, off to bear
Hrunting,

Unferth asks
Beowulf to
accept his
sword as a
gift. Beowulf
thanks him.

To take his weapon, his well-beloved
iron;

He him thanked for the gift, saying
good he accounted

65

The war-friend and mighty, nor chid he with
words then

The blade of the brand: 'twas a brave-mooded
hero.

When the warriors were ready, arrayed in their
trappings,
The atheling dear to the Danemen advanced then
On to the dais, where the other was sitting,
70
Grim-mooded hero, greeted King Hrothgar.

- [1] K. says '*proudly giveth.*'—Gr. says, '*And gives no gold-plated rings, in order to incite the recipient to boastfulness.*'—B. suggests 'gyld' for 'gylp,' and renders: *And gives no beaten rings for reward.*
- [2] If S.'s emendation be accepted, v. 57 will read: *Then came the light, going bright after darkness: the warriors, etc.*
- [3] As the passage stands in H.-So., Unferth presents Beowulf with the sword Hrunting, and B. thanks him for the gift. If, however, the suggestions of Grdtvg. and M. be accepted, the passage will read: *Then the brave one (i.e. Beowulf) commanded that Hrunting be borne to the son of Ecglaf (Unferth), bade him take his sword, his dear weapon; he (B.) thanked him (U.) for the loan, etc.*

XXVII.

SORROW AT PARTING.

Beowulf spake, Ecgtheow's
offspring:

Beowulf's
farewell.

"We men of the water wish to declare now
Fared from far-lands, we're firmly determined
To seek King Higelac. Here have we fitly

5

Been welcomed and feasted, as heart would desire
it;

Good was the greeting. If greater affection
I am anywise able ever on earth to
Gain at thy hands, ruler of heroes,
Than yet I have done, I shall quickly be ready

10

For combat and conflict. O'er the
course of the waters

I shall be ever
ready to aid
thee.

Learn I that neighbors alarm thee with terror,
As haters did whilom, I hither will bring thee
For help unto heroes henchmen by thousands.

I know as to Higelac, the lord of the
Geatmen,

15

My liegelord
will encourage
me in aiding
thee.

Though young in years, he yet will
permit me,

By words and by works, ward of the people,
Fully to furnish thee forces and bear thee
My lance to relieve thee, if liegemen shall fail
thee,

And help of my hand-strength; if Hrethric be
treating,

20

Bairn of the king, at the court of the Geatmen,
He thereat may find him friends in abundance:

Faraway countries he were better to seek for
Who trusts in himself." Hrothgar discoursed then,
Making rejoinder: "These words thou hast uttered

25

All-knowing God hath given thy spirit!

Ne'er heard I an earlman thus early
in life

O Beowulf,
thou art wise
beyond thy
years.

More clever in speaking: thou'rt
cautious of spirit,

Mighty of muscle, in mouth-answers prudent.

I count on the hope that, happen it ever

30

That missile shall rob thee of Hrethel's
descendant,

Edge-horrid battle, and illness or weapon

Deprive thee of prince, of people's protector,

And life thou yet holdest, the Sea-
Geats will never

Should
Higelac die,
the Geats
could find no
better
successor than
thou wouldst
make.

Find a more fitting folk-lord to
choose them,

35

Gem-ward of heroes, than *thou*
mightest prove thee,

If the kingdom of kinsmen thou carest to govern.

Thy mood-spirit likes me the longer the better,

Beowulf dear: thou hast brought it to pass that

To both these peoples peace shall be common,

40

To Geat-folk and Danemen, the strife
be suspended,

Thou hast
healed the
ancient breach
between our
races.

The secret assailings they suffered in
yore-days;

And also that jewels be shared while I govern

The wide-stretching kingdom, and that many shall
visit

Others o'er the ocean with excellent gift-gems:

45

The ring-adorned bark shall bring o'er the currents
Presents and love-gifts. This people I know
Tow'rd foeman and friend firmly established,¹
After ancient etiquette everywise blameless."

Then the warden of earlmen gave him still farther,
50 Parting gifts

Kinsman of Healfdene, a dozen of jewels,
Bade him safely seek with the presents
His well-beloved people, early returning.

Then the noble-born king kissed the distinguished,
Dear-lovèd liegeman, the Dane-
prince saluted him,
55

And claspèd his neck; tears from him fell,
From the gray-headed man: he two things
expected,

Agèd and reverend, but rather the second,

²That bold in council they'd meet thereafter.

The man was so dear that he failed to suppress the
60

Emotions that moved him, but in mood-fetters
fastened

The long-famous hero longeth in secret
Deep in his spirit for the dear-
beloved man

The old king
is deeply
grieved to part
with his
benefactor.

Though not a blood-kinsman. Beowulf
thenceward,

Gold-splendid warrior, walked o'er the meadows
65

Exulting in treasure: the sea-going vessel
Riding at anchor awaited its owner.

As they pressed on their way then, the present of
Hrothgar

Was frequently referred to: a folk-
king indeed that

Giving
liberally is the

Everyway blameless, till age did
debar him

true proof of
kingship.

70

The joys of his might, which hath many oft
injured.

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

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

XXVIII.

THE HOMEWARD JOURNEY. —THE TWO QUEENS.

Then the band of very valiant retainers
Came to the current; they were clad all in armor,
In link-woven burnies. The land- The coast-
warder noticed guard again.
The return of the earlmen, as he erstwhile had
seen them;

5
Nowise with insult he greeted the strangers
From the naze of the cliff, but rode on to meet
them;

Said the bright-armored visitors¹ vesselward
traveled

Welcome to Weders. The wide-bosomed craft then
Lay on the sand, laden with armor,

10
With horses and jewels, the ring-stemmèd sailer:
The mast uptowered o'er the treasure of Hrothgar.
To the boat-ward a gold-bound brand Beowulf gives
he presented, the guard a
That he was afterwards honored on handsome
the ale-bench more highly sword.

As the heirloom's owner. ²Set he out on his vessel,

15
To drive on the deep, Dane-country left he.
Along by the mast then a sea-garment fluttered,
A rope-fastened sail. The sea-boat resounded,
The wind o'er the waters the wave-floater nowise
Kept from its journey; the sea-goer traveled,

20
The foamy-necked floated forth o'er the currents,

The well-fashioned vessel o'er the ways of the
ocean,

Till they came within sight of the
cliffs of the Geatmen,

The Geats see
their own land
again.

The well-known headlands. The
wave-goer hastened

Driven by breezes, stood on the shore.

25

Prompt at the ocean, the port-ward
was ready,

The port-
warden is
anxiously
looking for
them.

Who long in the past outlooked in the
distance,³

At water's-edge waiting well-lovèd heroes;

He bound to the bank then the broad-bosomed
vessel

Fast in its fetters, lest the force of the waters

30

Should be able to injure the ocean-wood winsome.

Bade he up then take the treasure of princes,

Plate-gold and fretwork; not far was it thence

To go off in search of the giver of jewels:

Hrethel's son Higelac at home there remaineth,⁴

35

Himself with his comrades close to the sea-coast.

The building was splendid, the king heroic,

Great in his hall, Hygd very young was,

Fine-mooded, clever, though few
were the winters

Hygd, the
noble queen of
Higelac,
lavish of gifts.

That the daughter of Hæreth had
dwelt in the borough;

40

But she nowise was cringing nor niggard of
presents,

Of ornaments rare, to the race of the Geatmen.

Thrytho nursed anger, excellent⁵
folk-queen,

Offa's consort,
Thrytho, is
contrasted
with Hygd.

Hot-burning hatred: no hero whatever
'Mong household companions, her husband
excepted

45

Dared to adventure to look at the
woman

She is a terror
to all save her
husband.

With eyes in the daytime;⁶ but he knew that death-
chains

Hand-wreathed were wrought him: early
thereafter,

When the hand-strife was over, edges were ready,
That fierce-raging sword-point had to force a
decision,

50

Murder-bale show. Such no womanly custom
For a lady to practise, though lovely her person,
That a weaver-of-peace, on pretence of anger
A beloved liegeman of life should deprive.
Soothly this hindered Heming's kinsman;

55

Other ale-drinking earlmen asserted
That fearful folk-sorrows fewer she wrought them,
Treacherous doings, since first she was given
Adorned with gold to the war-hero youthful,
For her origin honored, when Offa's great palace

60

O'er the fallow flood by her father's instructions
She sought on her journey, where she afterwards
fully,

Famed for her virtue, her fate on the king's-seat
Enjoyed in her lifetime, love did she hold with
The ruler of heroes, the best, it is told me,

65

Of all of the earthmen that oceans encompass,
Of earl-kindreds endless; hence Offa was famous
Far and widely, by gifts and by battles,
Spear-valiant hero; the home of his fathers

He governed with wisdom, whence Eomær did
issue

70

For help unto heroes, Heming's kinsman,
Grandson of Garmund, great in encounters.

- [1] For 'scawan' (1896), 'scaðan' has been proposed. Accepting this, we may render: *He said the bright-armored warriors were going to their vessel, welcome, etc.* (Cf. 1804.)
- [2] R. suggests, 'Gewát him on naca,' and renders: *The vessel set out, to drive on the sea, the Dane-country left.* 'On' bears the alliteration; cf. 'on hafu' (2524). This has some advantages over the H.-So. reading; viz. (1) It adds nothing to the text; (2) it makes 'naca' the subject, and thus brings the passage into keeping with the context, where the poet has exhausted his vocabulary in detailing the actions of the vessel.—B.'s emendation (cf. P. and B. XII. 97) is violent.
- [3] B. translates: *Who for a long time, ready at the coast, had looked out into the distance eagerly for the dear men.* This changes the syntax of 'léofra manna.'
- [4] For 'wunað' (v. 1924) several eminent critics suggest 'wunade' (=remained). This makes the passage much clearer.
- [5] Why should such a woman be described as an 'excellent' queen? C. suggests 'frécnu' = dangerous, bold.
- [6] For 'an dæges' various readings have been offered. If 'and-éges' be accepted, the sentence will read: *No hero ... dared look upon her, eye to eye.* If 'án-dæges' be adopted, translate: *Dared look upon her the whole day.*

XXIX.

BEOWULF AND HIGELAC.

Then the brave one departed, his band along with
him,

Seeking the sea-shore, the sea-
marches treading,

Beowulf and
his party seek
Higelac.

The wide-stretching shores. The
world-candle glimmered,

The sun from the southward; they proceeded then
onward,

5

Early arriving where they heard that the troop-
lord,

Ongentheow's slayer, excellent, youthful
Folk-prince and warrior was distributing jewels,
Close in his castle. The coming of Beowulf
Was announced in a message quickly to Higelaç,

10

That the folk-troop's defender forth to the palace
The linden-companion alive was advancing,
Secure from the combat courtward a-going.
The building was early inward made ready
For the foot-going guests as the good one had
ordered.

15

He sat by the man then who had lived
through the struggle,

Beowulf sits
by his
liegeland.

Kinsman by kinsman, when the king of the people
Had in lordly language saluted the dear one,

In words that were formal. The
daughter of Hæreth

Queen Hygd
receives the
heroes.

Coursed through the building,
carrying mead-cups:¹

20

She loved the retainers, tendered the beakers
To the high-minded Geatmen. Higelac 'gan then
Pleasantly plying his companion with questions Higelac is
In the high-towering palace. A curious interest Beowulf's
adventures.

Tormented his spirit, what meaning to see in
25

The Sea-Geats' adventures: "Beowulf worthy,
How throve your journeying, when thou thoughtest suddenly Give an
Far o'er the salt-streams to seek an encounter, Beowulf dear.

A battle at Heorot? Hast bettered for Hrothgar,
The famous folk-leader, his far-published sorrows
30

Any at all? In agony-billows
I mused upon torture, distrusted the journey My suspense
has been great.

Of the beloved liegeman; I long time did pray thee
By no means to seek out the murderous spirit,
To suffer the South-Danes themselves to decide
on²

35
Grappling with Grendel. To God I am thankful
To be suffered to see thee safe from thy journey."
Beowulf answered, bairn of old Ecgtheow: Beowulf
narrates his
adventures.

"'Tis hidden by no means, Higelac
chieftain,
From many of men, the meeting so famous,
40

What mournful moments of me and of Grendel
Were passed in the place where he pressing
affliction

On the Victory-Scyldings scathefully brought,
Anguish forever; that all I avengèd,

So that any under heaven of the kinsmen of
Grendel

45

Needeth not boast of that cry-in-the-
morning,

Grendel's
kindred have
no cause to
boast.

Who longest liveth of the loth-going
kindred,³

Encompassed by moorland. I came in my journey
To the royal ring-hall, Hrothgar to greet there:

Soon did the famous scion of
Healfdene,

Hrothgar
received me
very cordially.

50

When he understood fully the spirit that led me,
Assign me a seat with the son of his bosom.

The troop was in joyance; mead-glee greater
'Neath arch of the ether not ever beheld I

'Mid hall-building holders. The
highly-famed queen,

The queen
also showed
up no little
honor.

55

Peace-tie of peoples, oft passed
through the building,

Cheered the young troopers; she oft tendered a
hero

A beautiful ring-band, ere she went to her sitting.

Oft the daughter of Hrothgar in view
of the courtiers

Hrothgar's
lovely
daughter.

To the earls at the end the ale-vessel
carried,

60

Whom Freaware I heard then hall-sitters title,

When nail-adorned jewels she gave to the heroes:

Gold-bedecked, youthful, to the glad
son of Froda

She is
betrothed to
Ingeld, in
order to unite
the Danes and
Heathobards.

Her faith has been plighted; the
friend of the Scyldings,

The guard of the kingdom, hath given
his sanction,⁴

And counts it a vantage, for a part of the quarrels,
A portion of hatred, to pay with the woman.

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

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

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

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

[4] See note to v. 1599 above.

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

XXX.

BEOWULF NARRATES HIS ADVENTURES TO HIGELAC.

“It well may discomfit the prince of the
Heathobards
And each of the thanemen of earls that attend him,
When he goes to the building escorting the
woman,
That a noble-born Daneman the knights should be
feasting:

5

There gleam on his person the leavings of elders
Hard and ring-bright, Heathobards’ treasure,
While they wielded their arms, till they misled to
the battle

Their own dear lives and beloved companions.
He saith at the banquet who the collar beholdeth,

10

An ancient ash-warrior who earlmen’s destruction
Clearly recalleth (cruel his spirit),
Sadly beginneth sounding the youthful
Thane-champion’s spirit through the thoughts of
his bosom,
War-grief to waken, and this word-answer
speaketh:

15

‘Art thou able, my friend, to know
when thou seest it

Ingeld is
stirred up to
break the
truce.

The brand which thy father bare to
the conflict

In his latest adventure, ’neath visor of helmet,
The dearly-loved iron, where Danemen did slay
him,

And brave-mooded Scyldings, on the fall of the
heroes,

20

(When vengeance was sleeping) the slaughter-
place wielded?

E'en now some man of the murderer's progeny
Exulting in ornaments enters the building,
Boasts of his blood-shedding, offbeareth the jewel
Which thou shouldst wholly hold in possession!'

25

So he urgeth and mindeth on every occasion
With woe-bringing words, till waxeth the season
When the woman's thane for the works of his
father,

The bill having bitten, blood-gory sleepeth,
Fated to perish; the other one thenceward

30

'Scapeth alive, the land knoweth thoroughly.¹

Then the oaths of the earlmen on each side are
broken,

When rancors unresting are raging in Ingeld
And his wife-love waxeth less warm after sorrow.
So the Heathobards' favor not faithful I reckon,

35

Their part in the treaty not true to the Danemen,
Their friendship not fast. I further shall tell thee

More about Grendel, that thou fully
mayst hear,

Ornament-giver, what afterward
came from

The hand-rush of heroes. When
heaven's bright jewel

Having made
these
preliminary
statements, I
will now tell
thee of
Grendel, the
monster.

40

O'er earthfields had glided, the stranger came
raging,

The horrible night-fiend, us for to visit,

Where wholly unharmed the hall we were
guarding.

To Hondscio happened a hopeless Hondscio fell
contention, first

Death to the doomed one, dead he fell foremost,

45

Girded war-champion; to him Grendel became
then,

To the vassal distinguished, a tooth-weaponed
murderer,

The well-beloved henchman's body all swallowed.

Not the earlier off empty of hand did

The bloody-toothed murderer, mindful of evils,

50

Wish to escape from the gold-giver's palace,

But sturdy of strength he strove to outdo me,

Hand-ready grappled. A glove was suspended

Spacious and wondrous, in art-fetters fastened,

Which was fashioned entirely by touch of the
craftman

55

From the dragon's skin by the devil's devices:

He down in its depths would do me unsadly

One among many, deed-doer raging,

Though sinless he saw me; not so could it happen

When I in my anger upright did stand.

60

'Tis too long to recount how requital I furnished

For every evil to the earlmen's destroyer;

'Twas there, my prince, that I

proudly distinguished

I reflected
honor upon
my people.

Thy land with my labors. He left and
retreated,

He lived his life a little while longer:

65

Yet his right-hand guarded his footstep in Heorot,

And sad-mooded thence to the sea-bottom fell he,

Mournful in mind. For the might-rush of battle
The friend of the Scyldings, with King Hrothgar
gold that was plated, lavished gifts
With ornaments many, much requited upon me.
me,

70

When daylight had dawned, and down to the
banquet
We had sat us together. There was chanting and
joyance:
The age-stricken Scylding asked many questions
And of old-times related; oft light-ringing harp-
strings,
Joy-telling wood, were touched by the brave one;

75

Now he uttered measures, mourning and truthful,
Then the large-hearted land-king a legend of
wonder
Truthfully told us. Now troubled with years
The age-hoary warrior afterward The old king
began to is sad over the
Mourn for the might that marked him loss of his
in youth-days; youthful vigor.

80

His breast within boiled, when burdened with
winters
Much he remembered. From morning till night
then
We joyed us therein as etiquette suffered,
Till the second night season came unto earth-folk.
Then early thereafter, the mother of Grendel

85

Was ready for vengeance, wretched Grendel's
she journeyed; mother.
Her son had death ravished, the wrath of the
Geatmen.
The horrible woman avenged her offspring,

And with mighty mainstrength murdered a hero.

There the spirit of Æschere, agèd
adviser,

Æschere falls
a prey to her
vengeance.

90

Was ready to vanish; nor when morn had lightened
Were they anywise suffered to consume him with
fire,

Folk of the Danemen, the death-weakened hero,
Nor the belovèd liegeman to lay on the pyre;

She the corpse had offcarried in the
clutch of the foeman²

She suffered
not his body to
be burned, but
ate it.

95

'Neath mountain-brook's flood. To Hrothgar 'twas
saddest

Of pains that ever had preyed on the chieftain;

By the life of thee the land-prince then me³

Besought very sadly, in sea-currents' eddies

To display my prowess, to peril my safety,

100

Might-deeds accomplish; much did he promise.

I found then the famous flood-
current's cruel,

I sought the
creature in her
den,

Horrible depth-warder. A while unto
us two

Hand was in common; the currents were seething

With gore that was clotted, and Grendel's fierce
mother's

105

Head I offhacked in the hall at the
bottom

and hewed her
head off.

With huge-reaching sword-edge, hardly I wrested

My life from her clutches; not doomed was I then,

But the warden of earlmen afterward
gave me

Jewels were
freely
bestowed
upon me.

Jewels in quantity, kinsman of
Healfdene.

- [1] For 'lifigende' (2063), a mere conjecture, 'wígende' has been suggested. The line would then read: *Escapeth by fighting, knows the land thoroughly.*
- [2] For 'fæðmum,' Gr.'s conjecture, B. proposes 'færunga.' These three half-verses would then read: *She bore off the corpse of her foe suddenly under the mountain-torrent.*
- [3] The phrase 'þíne lýfe' (2132) was long rendered 'with thy (presupposed) permission.' The verse would read: *The land-prince then sadly besought me, with thy (presupposed) permission, etc.*

XXXI.

GIFT-GIVING IS MUTUAL.

“So the beloved land-prince lived in decorum;
I had missed no rewards, no meeds of my
prowess,
But he gave me jewels, regarding my wishes,
Healfdene his bairn; I’ll bring them to thee, then,
5 All my gifts I
Atheling of earlmen, offer them lay at thy feet.
gladly.
And still unto thee is all my affection:¹
But few of my folk-kin find I surviving
But thee, dear Higelac!” Bade he in then to carry²
The boar-image, banner, battle-high helmet,
10
Iron-gray armor, the excellent weapon,
In song-measures said: “This suit-for- This armor I
the-battle have belonged
Hrothgar presented me, bade me of yore to
expressly, Heregar.
Wise-mooded atheling, thereafter to tell thee³
The whole of its history, said King Heregar owned
it,
15
Dane-prince for long: yet he wished not to give
then
The mail to his son, though dearly he loved him,
Hereward the hardy. Hold all in joyance!”
I heard that there followed hard on the jewels
Two braces of stallions of striking resemblance,
20
Dappled and yellow; he granted him usance
Of horses and treasures. So a kinsman should bear
him,

No web of treachery weave for another,
Nor by cunning craftiness cause the destruction
Of trusty companion. Most precious Higelac loves
to Higelac, his nephew
Beowulf.

25

I am told that to Hygd he proffered the necklace, Wonder-gem rare that Wealhtheow gave him,	Beowulf gives Hygd the necklace that Wealhtheow had given him.
--	--

The troop-leader's daughter, a trio of horses

Slender and saddle-bright; soon did the jewel
Embellish her bosom, when the beer-feast was
over.

War-famous man, by deeds that were valiant,	Beowulf is famous.
--	-----------------------

He lived in honor, beloved companions

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

40

An indolent atheling: to the honor-
blest man there
Came requital for the cuts he had
suffered.

He is required
for the slights
suffered in
earlier days.

45

The folk-troop's defender bade fetch to the
building

The heirloom of Hrethel, embellished with gold,

So the brave one enjoined it; there Higelac
was jewel no richer overwhelms
the conqueror

In the form of a weapon 'mong Geats with gifts.
of that era;

In Beowulf's keeping he placed it and gave him

50

Seven of thousands, manor and lordship.

Common to both was land 'mong the people,

Estate and inherited rights and possessions,

To the second one specially spacious dominions,

To the one who was better. It afterward happened

55

In days that followed, befell the battle-thanes,

After Higelac's death, and when After
Heardred was murdered Heardred's
death,

With weapons of warfare 'neath Beowulf
well-covered targets, becomes king.

When valiant battlemen in victor-band sought
him,

War-Scylfing heroes harassed the nephew

60

Of Hereric in battle. To Beowulf's keeping

Turned there in time extensive dominions:

He fittingly ruled them a fifty of He rules the
winters Geats fifty
years.

(He a man-ruler wise was, manor-
ward old) till

A certain one 'gan, on gloom-darkening nights, a

65

Dragon, to govern, who guarded a
treasure,

The fire-
drake.

A high-rising stone-cliff, on heath that was
grayish:

A path 'neath it lay, unknown unto mortals.

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

70

*	*	*	*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*	*	*	*

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

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

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

XXXII.

THE HOARD AND THE DRAGON.

* * * * *

He sought of himself who sorely did harm him,
But, for need very pressing, the servant of one of
The sons of the heroes hate-blows evaded,

5

Seeking for shelter and the sin-driven warrior
Took refuge within there. He early looked in it,

* * * * *

* * * * *

* * * * * when the onset surprised him,

10

The hoard.

He a gem-vessel saw there: many of suchlike
Ancient ornaments in the earth-cave were lying,
As in days of yore some one of men of
Illustrious lineage, as a legacy monstrous,
There had secreted them, careful and thoughtful,

15

Dear-valued jewels. Death had offsnatched them,
In the days of the past, and the one man moreover
Of the flower of the folk who fared there the
longest,

Was fain to defer it, friend-mourning warder,
A little longer to be left in enjoyment

20

Of long-lasting treasure.¹ A barrow all-ready
Stood on the plain the stream-currents nigh to,
New by the ness-edge, unneth of approaching:
The keeper of rings carried within a

²Ponderous deal of the treasure of nobles,

25

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

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

The ring-giver
bewails the
loss of
retainers.

The earnings of earlmen. Lo! erst in
thy bosom

Worthy men won them; war-death hath ravished,
Perilous life-bale, all my warriors,

30

Liegemen belovèd, who this life have forsaken,
Who hall-pleasures saw. No sword-bearer have I,
And no one to burnish the gold-plated vessel,
The high-valued beaker: my heroes are vanished.
The hardy helmet behung with gilding

35

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

Who were charged to have ready visors-for-battle,
And the burnie that bided in battle-encounter
O’er breaking of war-shields the bite of the edges
Moulds with the hero. The ring-twisted armor,

40

Its lord being lifeless, no longer may journey
Hanging by heroes; harp-joy is vanished,
The rapture of glee-wood, no excellent falcon
Swoops through the building, no swift-footed
charger

Grindeth the gravel. A grievous destruction

45

No few of the world-folk widely hath scattered!”
So, woful of spirit one after all

Lamented mournfully, moaning in sadness
By day and by night, till death with its billows
Dashed on his spirit. Then the ancient
dusk-scather

The fire-
dragon

50

Found the great treasure standing all open,
He who flaming and fiery flies to the barrows,

55

Held upon earth that excellent hoard-
hall,

60

65

When the dragon awoke, the strife was renewed there;

The footprint of foeman; too far had he gone
With cunning craftiness close to the head of

70

Anguish and exile with ease who possesseth
The favor of Heaven. The hoard-warden eagerly
Searched o'er the ground then, would meet with
the person

That caused him sorrow while in slumber
reclining:

75

Gleaming and wild he oft went round the cavern,
All of it outward; not any of earthmen
Was seen in that desert.⁶ Yet he joyed in the battle,
Rejoiced in the conflict: oft he turned to the
barrow,
Sought for the gem-cup;⁷ this he soon perceived
then

80

That some man or other had
discovered the gold,
The famous folk-treasure. Not fain
did the hoard-ward

The dragon
perceives that
some one has
disturbed his
treasure.

Wait until evening; then the ward of the barrow
Was angry in spirit, the loathèd one wished to
Pay for the dear-valued drink-cup with fire.

85

Then the day was done as the dragon would have
it,
He no longer would wait on the wall, but departed
Fire-impelled, flaming. Fearful the
start was
To earls in the land, as it early thereafter
To their giver-of-gold was grievously ended.

The dragon is
infuriated.

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

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

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

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

- [5] The repetition of 'hord' in this passage has led some scholars to suggest new readings to avoid the second 'hord.' This, however, is not under the main stress, and, it seems to me, might easily be accepted.
- [6] The reading of H.-So. is well defended in the notes to that volume. B. emends and renders: *Nor was there any man in that desert who rejoiced in conflict, in battle-work.* That is, the hoard-ward could not find any one who had disturbed his slumbers, for no warrior was there, t.B.'s emendation would give substantially the same translation.
- [7] 'Sinc-fæt' (2301): this word both here and in v. 2232, t.B. renders 'treasure.'

XXXIII.

BRAVE THOUGH AGED.— REMINISCENCES.

The stranger began then to vomit
forth fire,

The dragon
spits fire.

To burn the great manor; the blaze then glimmered
For anguish to earlmen, not anything living
Was the hateful air-goer willing to leave there.

5

The war of the worm widely was noticed,
The feud of the foeman afar and anear,
How the enemy injured the earls of the Geatmen,
Harried with hatred: back he hied to the treasure,
To the well-hidden cavern ere the coming of
daylight.

10

He had circled with fire the folk of those regions,
With brand and burning; in the barrow he trusted,
In the wall and his war-might: the weening
deceived him.

Then straight was the horror to
Beowulf published,
Early forsooth, that his own native
homestead,¹

Beowulf hears
of the havoc
wrought by
the dragon.

15

The best of buildings, was burning and melting,
Gift-seat of Geatmen. 'Twas a grief to the spirit
Of the good-mooded hero, the greatest of sorrows:

The wise one weened then that
wielding his kingdom
'Gainst the ancient commandments,
he had bitterly angered

He fears that
Heaven is
punishing him
for some
crime.

20

The Lord everlasting: with lorn meditations

His bosom welled inward, as was nowise his
custom.

The fire-spewing dragon fully had wasted
The fastness of warriors, the water-land outward,
The manor with fire. The folk-ruling hero,

25

Prince of the Weders, was planning to wreak him.
The warmen's defender bade them to make him,
Earlmen's atheling, an excellent war-shield

Wholly of iron: fully he knew then

He orders an
iron shield to
be made from
him, wood is
useless.

That wood from the forest was
helpless to aid him,

30

Shield against fire. The long-worthy ruler
Must live the last of his limited earth-days,
Of life in the world and the worm along with him,
Though he long had been holding hoard-wealth in
plenty.

Then the ring-prince disdained to
seek with a war-band,

He determines
to fight alone.

35

With army extensive, the air-going ranger;
He felt no fear of the foeman's assaults and
He counted for little the might of the dragon,
His power and prowess: for previously dared he
A heap of hostility, hazarded dangers,

Beowulf's
early triumphs
referred to

40

War-thane, when Hrothgar's palace
he cleansèd,

Conquering combatant, clutched in the battle
The kinsmen of Grendel, of kindred detested.²

'Twas of hand-fights not least where
Higelac was slaughtered,

Higelac's
death recalled.

When the king of the Geatmen with clashings of
battle,

45

Friend-lord of folks in Frisian dominions,

Offspring of Hrethrel perished through sword-
drink,
With battle-swords beaten; thence Beowulf came
then
On self-help relying, swam through the waters;
He bare on his arm, lone-going, thirty

50

Outfits of armor, when the ocean he mounted.
The Hetwars by no means had need to be boastful
Of their fighting afoot, who forward to meet him
Carried their war-shields: not many returned from
The brave-mooded battle-knight back to their
homesteads.

55

Ecgtheow's bairn o'er the bight-courses swam
then,
Lone-goer lorn to his land-folk returning,
Where Hygd to him tendered treasure and
kingdom,
Rings and dominion: her son she not
trusted,
To be able to keep the kingdom
devised him

Heardred's
lack of
capacity to
rule.

60

'Gainst alien races, on the death of King Higelac.
Yet the sad ones succeeded not in
persuading the atheling
In any way ever, to act as a suzerain
To Heardred, or promise to govern the kingdom;
Yet with friendly counsel in the folk he sustained
him,

Beowulf's tact
and delicacy
recalled.

65

Gracious, with honor, till he grew to be older,
Wiilded the Weders. Wide-fleeing
outlaws,
Ohthere's sons, sought him o'er the
waters:

Reference is
here made to a
visit which
Beowulf
receives from
Eanmund and

They had stirred a revolt 'gainst the
helm of the Scylfings,
The best of the sea-kings, who in
Swedish dominions

Eadgils, why
they come is
not known.

70

Distributed treasure, distinguished folk-leader.
'Twas the end of his earth-days; injury fatal³
By swing of the sword he received as a greeting,
Offspring of Higelac; Ongentheow's bairn
Later departed to visit his homestead,

75

When Heardred was dead; let Beowulf rule them,
Govern the Geatmen: good was that folk-king.

[1] 'Hám' (2326), the suggestion of B. is accepted by t.B. and other scholars.

[2] For 'láðan cynnes' (2355), t.B. suggests 'láðan cynne,' apposition to 'mægum.' From syntactical and other considerations, this is a most excellent emendation.

[3] Gr. read 'on feorme' (2386), rendering: *He there at the banquet a fatal wound received by blows of the sword.*

XXXIV.

BEOWULF SEEKS THE DRAGON.—BEOWULF'S REMINISCENCES.

He planned requital for the folk-leader's ruin
In days thereafter, to Eadgils the wretched
Becoming an enemy. Ohthere's son then
Went with a war-troop o'er the wide-stretching
currents

5

With warriors and weapons: with woe-journeys
cold he

After avenged him, the king's life he took.

So he came off uninjured from all of his battles,	Beowulf has been
Perilous fights, offspring of Ecgtheow,	preserved through many perils.

From his deeds of daring, till that day most
momentous

10

When he fate-driven fared to fight with the
dragon.

With eleven companions the prince of the Geatmen	With eleven comrades, he
Went lowering with fury to look at the fire-drake:	seeks the dragon.

Inquiring he'd found how the feud had arisen,
Hate to his heroes; the highly-famed gem-vessel

15

Was brought to his keeping through the hand of
th' informer.

That in the throng was thirteenth of heroes,	A guide leads the way, but
---	-------------------------------

That caused the beginning of conflict so bitter,

Captive and wretched, must sad-mooded
thenceward

Point out the place: he passed then very
unwillingly reluctantly.

20

To the spot where he knew of the notable cavern,
The cave under earth, not far from the ocean,
The anger of eddies, which inward was full of
Jewels and wires: a warden uncanny,
Warrior weaponed, wardered the treasure,

25

Old under earth; no easy possession
For any of earth-folk access to get to.
Then the battle-brave atheling sat on the naze-
edge,

While the gold-friend of Geatmen gracious saluted
His fireside-companions: woe was his spirit,

30

Death-boding, wav'ring; Weird very near him,
Who must seize the old hero, his soul-treasure
look for,

Dragging aloof his life from his body:
Not flesh-hidden long was the folk-leader's spirit.
Beowulf spake, Ecgtheow's son:

35

"I survived in my youth-days many a
conflict,

Beowulf's
retrospect.

Hours of onset: that all I remember.
I was seven-winters old when the jewel-prince
took me,

High-lord of heroes, at the hands of my father,
Hrethel the hero-king had me in keeping,

40

Gave me treasure and feasting, our
kinship remembered;

Hrethel took
me when I
was seven.

Not ever was I *any* less dear to him

He treated me
as a son.

Knight in the boroughs, than the
bairns of his household,
Herebald and Hæthcyn and Higelac mine.
To the eldest unjustly by acts of a kinsman

45

Was murder-bed strewn, since him Hæthcyn from
horn-bow

His sheltering chieftain shot with an
arrow,

One of the
brothers
accidentally
kills another.

Erred in his aim and injured his
kinsman,

One brother the other, with blood-sprinkled spear:
'Twas a feeless fight, finished in
malice,

No fee could
compound for
such a
calamity.

50

Sad to his spirit; the folk-prince
however

Had to part from existence with vengeance
untaken.

So to hoar-headed hero 'tis heavily
crushing¹

[A parallel
case is
supposed.]

To live to see his son as he rideth

Young on the gallows: then measures he chanteth,

55

A song of sorrow, when his son is hanging
For the raven's delight, and aged and hoary
He is unable to offer any assistance.

Every morning his offspring's departure
Is constant recalled: he cares not to wait for

60

The birth of an heir in his borough-enclosures,
Since that one through death-pain the deeds hath
experienced.

He heart-grieved beholds in the house of his son
the

Wine-building wasted, the wind-lodging places
Reaved of their roaring; the riders are sleeping,

The knights in the grave; there's no sound of the
 harp-wood,
 Joy in the yards, as of yore were familiar.

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

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

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

XXXV.

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

“He seeks then his chamber, singeth a woe-song
One for the other; all too extensive
Seemed homesteads and plains. So the helm of the
Wegers

Mindful of Herebald heart-sorrow
carried,

Hrethel
grieves for
Herebald.

5

Stirred with emotion, nowise was able
To wreak his ruin on the ruthless destroyer:
He was unable to follow the warrior with hatred,
With deeds that were direful, though dear he not
held him.

Then pressed by the pang this pain occasioned
him,

10

He gave up glee, God-light elected;
He left to his sons, as the man that is rich does,
His land and fortress, when from life he departed.

Then was crime and hostility ’twixt
Swedes and Geatmen,

Strife between
Swedes and
Geats.

O’er wide-stretching water warring
was mutual,

15

Burdensome hatred, when Hrethel had perished,
And Ongentheow’s offspring were active and
valiant,

Wished not to hold to peace oversea, but
Round Hreosna-beorh often accomplished
Cruelest massacre. This my kinsman avengèd,

20

The feud and fury, as ’tis found on inquiry,

Though one of them paid it with forfeit of life-
joys,

With price that was hard: the struggle Hæthcyn's fall
became then at
Ravenswood.

Fatal to Hæthcyn, lord of the
Geatmen.

Then I heard that at morning one brother the other
25

With edges of irons egged on to murder,
Where Ongentheow maketh onset on Eofor:
The helmet crashed, the hoary-haired Scylfing
Sword-smitten fell, his hand then remembered
Feud-hate sufficient, refused not the death-blow.

30 I requited him
The gems that he gave me, with for the jewels
jewel-bright sword I he gave me.

'Quited in contest, as occasion was offered:
Land he allowed me, life-joy at homestead,
Manor to live on. Little he needed
From Gepids or Danes or in Sweden to look for
35

Trooper less true, with treasure to buy him;
'Mong foot-soldiers ever in front I would hie me,
Alone in the vanguard, and evermore gladly
Warfare shall wage, while this weapon endureth
That late and early often did serve me

40 Beowulf refers
When I proved before heroes the to his having
slayer of Dæghrefn, slain
Dæghrefn.

Knight of the Hugmen: he by no
means was suffered

To the king of the Frisians to carry the jewels,
The breast-decoration; but the banner-possessor
Bowed in the battle, brave-mooded atheling.

45
No weapon was slayer, but war-grapple broke then
The surge of his spirit, his body destroying.

Now shall weapon's edge make war for the
treasure,
And hand and firm-sword." Beowulf spake then,
Boast-words uttered—the latest occasion:

Fame-deeds perform, folk-warden prudent,
If the hateful despoiler forth from his cavern
Seeketh me out!" Each of the heroes,

“No brand would I bear, no blade for the dragon,
Wist I a way my word-boast to ’complish¹
Else with the monster, as with Grendel I did it;

At the wall 'twill befall us as Fate decreeth,

With the wingèd war-hero to away with all
boasting.

70

'Tis no matter of yours, and man cannot do it,
But me and me only, to measure his strength with
The monster of malice, might-deeds to 'complish.
I with prowess shall gain the gold, or the battle,
Direful death-woe will drag off your ruler!"

75

The mighty champion rose by his shield then,
Brave under helmet, in battle-mail went he
'Neath steep-rising stone-cliffs, the strength he
relied on

Of one man alone: no work for a coward.
Then he saw by the wall who a great many battles

80

Had lived through, most worthy, when foot-troops
collided,

Stone-arches standing, stout-hearted
champion,

The place of
strife is
described.

Saw a brook from the barrow
bubbling out thenceward:

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

Not nigh to the hoard, for season the briefest

85

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

The drake was so fiery. The prince of the Weders
Caused then that words came from his bosom,
So fierce was his fury; the firm-hearted shouted:
His battle-clear voice came in resounding

90

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

The hoard-ward distinguished the
speech of a man;

Beowulf calls
out under the
stone arches.

Time was no longer to look out for
friendship.

The breath of the monster issued forth first,

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

95

The terrible
encounter.

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

Lifted his shield, lord of the Geatmen,
Tow'rd the terrible stranger: the ring-twisted
creature's

Heart was then ready to seek for a struggle.

The excellent battle-king first
brandished his weapon,

Beowulf
brandishes his
sword,

100

The ancient heirloom, of edges unblunted,³
To the death-planners twain was terror from other.

The lord of the troopers intrepidly
stood then

and stands
against his
shield.

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

Quickly together: in corslet he bided.

The dragon
coils himself.

105

He went then in blazes, bended and striding,
Hasting him forward. His life and body
The targe well protected, for time-period shorter
Than wish demanded for the well-renowned
leader,

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

110

Famous in battle, as Fate had not willed it.
The lord of the Geatmen uplifted his hand then,
Smiting the fire-drake with sword that was
precious,

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

Bit more feebly than his folk-leader needed,

115

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

When the sword-blow had fallen,	The dragon
was fierce in his spirit,	rages
Flinging his fires, flamings of battle	
Gleamed then afar: the gold-friend of Weders	
Boasted no conquests, his battle-	Beowulf's
sword failed him	sword fails
	him.
120	
Naked in conflict, as by no means it ought to,	
Long-trusty weapon. 'Twas no slight undertaking	
That Ecgtheow's famous offspring would leave	
The drake-cavern's bottom; he must live in some	
region	
Other than this, by the will of the dragon,	
125	
As each one of earthmen existence must forfeit.	
'Twas early thereafter the excellent warriors	
Met with each other. Anew and	The combat is
afresh	renewed.
The hoard-ward took heart (gasps heaved then his	
bosom):	
Sorrow he suffered encircled with	The great hero
fire	is reduced to
	extremities.
130	
Who the people erst governed. His companions by	
no means	
Were banded about him, bairns of the princes,	
With valorous spirit, but they sped to	His comrades
the forest,	flee!
Seeking for safety. The soul-deeps of one were	
Ruffled by care: kin-love can never	Blood is
	thicker than
135	water.
Aught in him waver who well doth	
consider.	

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

- [2] B. emends and translates: *I will not flee the space of a foot from the guard of the barrow, but there shall be to us a fight at the wall, as fate decrees, each one's Creator.*
- [3] The translation of this passage is based on 'unsláw' (2565), accepted by H.-So., in lieu of the long-standing 'ungléaw.' The former is taken as an adj. limiting 'sweord'; the latter as an adj. c. 'gúð-cyning': *The good war-king, rash with edges, brandished his sword, his old relic.* The latter gives a more rhetorical Anglo-Saxon (poetical) sentence.

XXXVI.

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

The son of Weohstan was Wiglaf
entitled,
Shield-warrior precious, prince of the
Scylfings,

Wiglaf
remains true—
the ideal
Teutonic
liegeman.

Ælfhere's kinsman: he saw his dear liegelord
Enduring the heat 'neath helmet and visor.

5

Then he minded the holding that erst he had given
him,

The Wægmunding warriors' wealth-
blessèd homestead,

Wiglaf recalls
Beowulf's
generosity.

Each of the folk-rights his father had
wielded;

He was hot for the battle, his hand seized the
target,

The yellow-bark shield, he unsheathed his old
weapon,

10

Which was known among earthmen as the relic of
Eanmund,

Ohthere's offspring, whom, exiled and friendless,

Weohstan did slay with sword-edge in battle,

And carried his kinsman the clear-shining helmet,

The ring-made burnie, the old giant-weapon

15

That Onela gave him, his boon-fellow's armor,

Ready war-trappings: he the feud did not mention,

Though he'd fatally smitten the son of his brother.

Many a half-year held he the treasures,

The bill and the burnie, till his bairn became able,
20

Like his father before him, fame-deeds to
'comply;

Then he gave him 'mong Geatmen a goodly array
of

Weeds for his warfare; he went from life then
Old on his journey. 'Twas the earliest time then

That the youthful champion might
charge in the battle

This is
Wiglaf's first
battle as
liegeman of
Beowulf.

25
Aiding his liegeland; his spirit was
dauntless.

Nor did kinsman's bequest quail at the battle:
This the dragon discovered on their coming
together.

Wiglaf uttered many a right-saying,
Said to his fellows, sad was his spirit:

30
"I remember the time when, tasting
the mead-cup,

Wiglaf
appeals to the
pride of the
cowards.

We promised in the hall the lord of us
all

Who gave us these ring-treasures, that this battle-
equipment,

Swords and helmets, we'd certainly quite him,
Should need of such aid ever befall him:

35
In the war-band he chose us for this
journey spontaneously,

How we have
forfeited our
liegeland's
confidence!

Stirred us to glory and gave me these
jewels,

Since he held and esteemed us trust-worthy
spearmen,

Hardy helm-bearers, though this hero-achievement
Our lord intended alone to accomplish,

40

Ward of his people, for most of achievements,
Doings audacious, he did among earth-folk.
The day is now come when the ruler Our lord is in
of earthmen sore need of
Needeth the vigor of valiant heroes: us.
Let us wend us towards him, the war-prince to
succor,

45

With my treasure-bestower. Meseemeth not proper
To bear our battle-shields back to our country,

Sorrow should suffer, sink in the battle:

60

65

Wild-mooded stranger, when these words had
been uttered

('Twas the second occasion), seeking his enemies,
Men that were hated, with hot-gleaming fire-
waves;

With blaze-billows burned the board to its edges:
The fight-armor failed then to furnish assistance

70

To the youthful spear-hero: but the young-aged
stripling

Quickly advanced 'neath his kinsman's war-target,
Since his own had been ground in the grip of the
fire.

Then the warrior-king was careful of
glory,

Beowulf
strikes at the
dragon.

He soundly smote with sword-for-
the-battle,

75

That it stood in the head by hatred driven;

Nægling was shivered, the old and iron-made

Brand of Beowulf in battle deceived
him.

His sword
fails him.

'Twas denied him that edges of irons were able
To help in the battle; the hand was too mighty

80

²Which every weapon, as I heard on inquiry,
Outstruck in its stroke, when to struggle he carried
The wonderful war-sword: it waxed him no better.

Then the people-despoiler—third of
his onsets—

The dragon
advances on
Beowulf
again.

Fierce-raging fire-drake, of feud-hate
was mindful,

85

Charged on the strong one, when chance was
afforded,

Heated and war-grim, seized on his neck

With teeth that were bitter; he bloody did wax
with
Soul-gore seething; sword-blood in waves boiled.

- [1] The passage '*Brand ... burnie*,' is much disputed. In the first place, some eminent critics assume a gap of at least two half-verses.—'Úrum' (2660), being a peculiar form, has been much discussed. 'Byrdu-scrúd' is also a crux. B. suggests 'býwdu-scrúd' = *splendid vestments*. Nor is 'bám' accepted by all, 'béon' being suggested. Whatever the individual words, the passage must mean, "*I intend to share with him my equipments of defence.*"
- [2] B. would render: *Which, as I heard, excelled in stroke every sword that he carried to the strife, even the strongest (sword).* For 'Þonne' he reads 'Þone,' rel. pr.

XXXVII.

**THE FATAL STRUGGLE.—
BEOWULF'S LAST
MOMENTS.**

Then I heard that at need of the king
of the people

Wiglaf
defends
Beowulf.

The upstanding earlman exhibited
prowess,

Vigor and courage, as suited his nature;

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

5

Hand was consumed, when he succored his
kinsman,

So he struck the strife-bringing strange-comer
lower.

Earl-thane in armor, that *in* went the weapon

Gleaming and plated, that 'gan then the fire²

Later to lessen. The liegelord himself then

Beowulf
draws his
knife,

10

Retained his consciousness, brandished his war-knife,

Battle-sharp, bitter, that he bare on his armor:

The Weder-lord cut the worm in the middle. and cuts the dragon.

They had felled the enemy (life drove out then³

Puissant prowess), the pair had destroyed him,

15

Land-chiefs related: so a liegeman should prove him,

A thaneman when needed. To the prince 'twas the
last of

His era of conquest by his own great
achievements,

The latest of world-deeds. The
wound then began

Beowulf's
wound swells
and burns.

Which the earth-dwelling dragon
erstwhile had wrought him

20

To burn and to swell. He soon then discovered
That bitterest bale-woe in his bosom was raging,
Poison within. The atheling advanced then,
That along by the wall, he prudent of
spirit

He sits down
exhausted.

Might sit on a settle; he saw the giant-work,

25

How arches of stone strengthened with pillars
The earth-hall eternal inward supported.
Then the long-worthy liegeman laved with his
hand the

Far-famous chieftain, gory from
sword-edge,

Wiglaf bathes
his lord's
head.

Refreshing the face of his friend-lord
and ruler,

30

Sated with battle, unbinding his helmet.
Beowulf answered, of his injury spake he,
His wound that was fatal (he was fully aware
He had lived his allotted life-days enjoying
The pleasures of earth; then past was entirely

35

His measure of days, death very near):

"My son I would give now my battle-
equipments,

Beowulf
regrets that he
has no son.

Had any of heirs been after me
granted,

Along of my body. This people I governed
Fifty of winters: no king 'mong my neighbors

40

Adopt S.'s emendation, remove H.'s parenthesis, read 'ferh-
ellen wræc,' and translate: *He felled the foe, drove out his life-
strength* (that is, made him *hors de combat*), *and then they both,*
etc.

XXXVIII.

**WIGLAF PLUNDERS THE
DRAGON'S DEN.—
BEOWULF'S DEATH.**

Then heard I that Wihstan's son very
quickly,
These words being uttered, heeded
his liegeland
Wounded and war-sick, went in his armor,
His well-woven ring-mail, 'neath the roof of the
barrow.

5
Then the trusty retainer treasure-gems many
Victorious saw, when the seat he The dragon's
 came near to, den.
Gold-treasure sparkling spread on the bottom,
Wonder on the wall, and the worm-creature's
 cavern,

The ancient dawn-flier's, vessels a-standing,

10
Cups of the ancients of cleansers bereavèd,
Robbed of their ornaments: there were helmets in
numbers,

Old and rust-eaten, arm-bracelets many,

Artfully woven. Wealth can easily,

Gold on the sea-bottom, turn into vanity¹

15

Each one of earthmen, arm him who pleaseth!

And he saw there lying an all-golden banner

High o'er the hoard, of hand-wonders greatest,

Linkèd with lacets: a light from it sparkled,

That the floor of the cavern he was able to look
on,

20

To examine the jewels. Sight of the
dragon

The dragon is
not there.

Not any was offered, but edge offcarried him.

Then I heard that the hero the hoard-
treasure plundered,

Wiglaf bears
the hoard
away.

The giant-work ancient reaved in the
cavern,

Bare on his bosom the beakers and platters,

25

As himself would fain have it, and took off the
standard,

The brightest of beacons;² the bill had erst injured
(Its edge was of iron), the old-ruler's weapon,
Him who long had watched as ward of the jewels,
Who fire-terror carried hot for the treasure,

30

Rolling in battle, in middlemost darkness,
Till murdered he perished. The messenger
hastened,

Not loth to return, hurried by jewels:

Curiosity urged him if, excellent-mooded,
Alive he should find the lord of the Weders

35

Mortally wounded, at the place where he left him.

'Mid the jewels he found then the famous old
chieftain,

His liegelord belovèd, at his life's-end gory:

He thereupon 'gan to lave him with water,

Till the point of his word piercèd his breast-hoard.

40

Beowulf spake (the gold-gems he noticed),

The old one in sorrow: "For the
jewels I look on

Beowulf is
rejoiced to see
the jewels.

Thanks do I utter for all to the Ruler,

Wielder of Worship, with words of devotion,

The Lord everlasting, that He let me such
treasures

45

Gain for my people ere death overtook me.
Since I've bartered the aged life to me granted
For treasure of jewels, attend ye henceforward

The wants of the war-thanes; I can He desires to
wait here no longer. be held in
memory by

The battle-famed bid ye to build his people.
them a grave-hill,

50

Bright when I'm burned, at the brim-current's
limit;

As a memory-mark to the men I have governed,
Aloft it shall tower on Whale's-Ness uprising,
That earls of the ocean hereafter may call it
Beowulf's barrow, those who barks ever-dashing

55

From a distance shall drive o'er the darkness of
waters."

The bold-mooded troop-lord took The hero's last
from his neck then gift

The ring that was golden, gave to his liegeman,
The youthful war-hero, his gold-flashing helmet,
His collar and war-mail, bade him well to enjoy
them:

60 and last
"Thou art latest left of the line of our words.
kindred,

Of Wægmunding people: Weird hath offcarried
All of my kinsmen to the Creator's glory,
Earls in their vigor: I shall after them fare."

'Twas the aged liegelord's last-spoken word in

65

His musings of spirit, ere he mounted the fire,
The battle-waves burning: from his bosom
departed

His soul to seek the sainted ones' glory.

- [1] The word 'oferhígian' (2767) being vague and little understood, two quite distinct translations of this passage have arisen. One takes 'oferhígian' as meaning 'to exceed,' and, inserting 'hord' after 'gehwone,' renders: *The treasure may easily, the gold in the ground, exceed in value every hoard of man, hide it who will.* The other takes 'oferhígian' as meaning 'to render arrogant,' and, giving the sentence a moralizing tone, renders substantially as in the body of this work. (Cf. 28 13 et seq.)
- [2] The passage beginning here is very much disputed. 'The bill of the old lord' is by some regarded as Beowulf's sword; by others, as that of the ancient possessor of the hoard. 'Ær gescód' (2778), translated in this work as verb and adverb, is by some regarded as a compound participial adj. = *sheathed in brass.*

XXXIX.

THE DEAD FOES.—WIGLAF'S BITTER TAUNTS.

It had wofully chanced then the	Wiglaf is
youthful retainer	sorely grieved
To behold on earth the most ardent-	to see his lord
belovèd	look so un-
	warlike.

At his life-days' limit, lying there helpless.
The slayer too lay there, of life all bereavèd,

5

Horrible earth-drake, harassed with sorrow:

The round-twisted monster was	The dragon
permitted no longer	has plundered
	his last hoard.

To govern the ring-hoards, but edges
 of war-swords

Mightily seized him, battle-sharp, sturdy
Leavings of hammers, that still from his wounds

10

The flier-from-farland fell to the earth
Hard by his hoard-house, hopped he at midnight
Not e'er through the air, nor exulting in jewels
Suffered them to see him: but he sank then to
 earthward

Through the hero-chief's handwork. I heard sure it
 throve then

15

But few in the land of liegemen of	Few warriors
valor,	dared to face
	the monster.

Though of every achievement bold he had proved
 him,

To run 'gainst the breath of the venomous scather,
Or the hall of the treasure to trouble with hand-
 blows,

If he watching had found the ward of the hoard-
hall

20

On the barrow abiding. Beowulf's part of
The treasure of jewels was paid for with death;
Each of the twain had attained to the end of
Life so unlasting. Not long was the time till

The tardy-at-battle returned from the
thicket,

The cowardly
thanes come
out of the
thicket.

25

The timid truce-breakers ten all
together,

Who durst not before play with the lances
In the prince of the people's pressing emergency;
But blushing with shame, with
shields they betook them,
With arms and armor where the old
one was lying:

They are
ashamed of
their
desertion.

30

They gazed upon Wiglaf. He was sitting
exhausted,

Foot-going fighter, not far from the shoulders
Of the lord of the people, would rouse him with
water;

No whit did it help him; though he hoped for it
keenly,

He was able on earth not at all in the leader

35

Life to retain, and nowise to alter

The will of the Wielder; the World-Ruler's power¹

Would govern the actions of each one of heroes,

As yet He is doing. From the young
one forthwith then

Wiglaf is
ready to
excoriate
them.

Could grim-worded greeting be got
for him quickly

40

Food for the people; each of your warriors
Must needs be bereavèd of rights that he holdeth
In landed possessions, when faraway nobles

65

Shall learn of your leaving your lord so basely,
The dastardly deed. Death is more What is life
 pleasant without
To every earlman than infamous life honor?
 is!”

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

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

XL.

THE MESSENGER OF DEATH.

Then he charged that the battle be
announced at the hedge

Up o'er the cliff-edge, where the
earl-troopers bided

The whole of the morning, mood-
wretched sat them,

Bearers of battle-shields, both things expecting,

5

The end of his lifetime and the coming again of

The liegelord belovèd. Little reserved he

Of news that was known, who the ness-cliff did
travel,

But he truly discoursed to all that could hear him:

“Now the free-giving friend-lord of
the folk of the Weders,

Wiglaf sends
the news of
Beowulf's
death to
liegemen near
by.

10

The folk-prince of Geatmen, is fast in his death-bed.

By the deeds of the dragon in death-bed abideth;

Along with him lieth his life-taking foeman

Slain with knife-wounds: he was wholly unable

To injure at all the ill-planning monster

15

With bite of his sword-edge. Wiglaf
is sitting,

Wiglaf sits by
our dead lord.

Offspring of Wihstan, up over Beowulf,

Earl o'er another whose end-day hath reached
him,

Head-watch holdeth o'er heroes unliving,¹

For friend and for foeman. The folk
now expecteth

Our lord's
death will lead
to attacks

20

A season of strife when the death of from our old
the folk-king foes.

To Frankmen and Frisians in far-lands is
published.

The war-hatred waxed warm 'gainst the Hugmen,
When Higelac came with an army of Higelac's
vessels death recalled.

Faring to Friesland, where the Frankmen in battle
25

Humbled him and bravely with overmight
'complished

That the mail-clad warrior must sink in the battle,
Fell 'mid his folk-troop: no fret-gems presented
The atheling to earlmen; aye was denied us
Merewing's mercy. The men of the Swedelands
30

For truce or for truth trust I but little;
But widely 'twas known that near Ravenswood
Ongentheow

Sundered Hæthcyn the Hrethling Hæthcyn's fall
from life-joys, referred to.

When for pride overweening the War-Scylfings
first did

Seek the Geatmen with savage intentions.
35

Early did Ohthere's age-laden father,
Old and terrible, give blow in requital,
Killing the sea-king, the queen-mother rescued,
The old one his consort deprived of her gold,
Onela's mother and Ohthere's also,
40

And then followed the feud-nursing foemen till
hardly,

Reaved of their ruler, they Ravenswood entered.
Then with vast-numbered forces he assaulted the
remnant,

Weary with wounds, woe often promised

The livelong night to the sad-hearted war-troop:

45

Said he at morning would kill them with edges of
weapons,

Some on the gallows for glee to the fowls.

Aid came after to the anxious-in-spirit

At dawn of the day, after Higelac's bugle

And trumpet-sound heard they, when the good one
proceeded

50

And faring followed the flower of the troopers.

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

XLI.

THE MESSENGER'S RETROSPECT.

“The blood-stained trace of Swedes
and Geatmen,
The death-rush of warmen, widely
was noticed,
How the folks with each other feud
did awaken.

The
messenger
continues, and
refers to the
feuds of
Swedes and
Geats.

The worthy one went then¹ with well-beloved
comrades,

5

Old and dejected to go to the fastness,
Ongentheo earl upward then turned him;
Of Higelac's battle he'd heard on inquiry,
The exultant one's prowess, despaired of
resistance,

With earls of the ocean to be able to struggle,

10

'Gainst sea-going sailors to save the hoard-
treasure,

His wife and his children; he fled after thenceward
Old 'neath the earth-wall. Then was offered
pursuance

To the braves of the Swedemen, the banner² to
Higelac.

They fared then forth o'er the field-of-protection,

15

When the Hrethling heroes hedgeward had
thronged them.

Then with edges of irons was Ongentheow driven,
The gray-haired to tarry, that the troop-ruler had to
Suffer the power solely of Eofor:

Wulf then wildly with weapon assaulted him,

20

Wonred his son, that for swinge of
the edges

Wulf wounds
Ongentheow.

The blood from his body burst out in currents,
Forth 'neath his hair. He feared not however,
Gray-headed Scylfing, but speedily quited

The wasting wound-stroke with
worse exchange,

Ongentheow
gives a stout
blow in return.

25

When the king of thethane-troop thither did turn
him:

The wise-mooded son of Wonred was powerless
To give a return-blow to the age-hoary man,
But his head-shielding helmet first hewed he to
pieces,

That flecked with gore perforce he did totter,

30

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

Then Higelac's vassal, valiant and
dauntless,

Eofor smites
Ongentheow
fiercely.

When his brother lay dead, made his
broad-bladed weapon,

Giant-sword ancient, defence of the giants,

35

Bound o'er the shield-wall; the folk-prince
succumbed then,

Shepherd of people, was pierced to
the vitals.

Ongentheow
is slain.

There were many attendants who bound up his
kinsman,

Carried him quickly when occasion was granted
That the place of the slain they were suffered to
manage.

40

This pending, one hero plundered the other,

Hero-deeds 'complished. Now is
haste most fitting,
That the lord of liegemen we look
upon yonder,

last marks of
respect to our
lord.

65

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

Gold beyond measure, grewsomely purchased
And ending it all ornament-rings too

70

Bought with his life; these fire shall devour,
Flame shall cover, no earlman shall wear
A jewel-memento, nor beautiful virgin
Have on her neck rings to adorn her,
But wretched in spirit bereavèd of gold-gems

75

She shall oft with others be exiled and banished,
Since the leader of liegemen hath laughter
forsaken,

Mirth and merriment. Hence many a war-spear
Cold from the morning shall be clutched in the
fingers,

Heaved in the hand, no harp-music's sound shall

80

Waken the warriors, but the wan-coated raven
Fain over fey ones freely shall gabble,
Shall say to the eagle how he sped in the eating,
When, the wolf his companion, he plundered the
slain."

So the high-minded hero was rehearsing these
stories

85

Loathsome to hear; he lied as to few of
Weirds and of words. All the war-
troop arose then,

The warriors
go sadly to
look at

'Neath the Eagle's Cape sadly betook Beowulf's
them, lifeless body.

Weeping and woful, the wonder to look at.

They saw on the sand then soulless a-lying,

90

His slaughter-bed holding, him who rings had
given them

In days that were done; then the death-bringing
moment

Was come to the good one, that the king very
warlike,

Wielder of Weders, with wonder-death perished.

First they beheld there a creature more wondrous,

95

The worm on the field, in front of
them lying,

They also see
the dragon.

The foeman before them: the fire-spewing dragon,

Ghostly and grisly guest in his terrors,

Was scorched in the fire; as he lay there he
measured

Fifty of feet; came forth in the night-time⁵

100

To rejoice in the air, thereafter departing

To visit his den; he in death was then fastened,

He would joy in no other earth-hollowed caverns.

There stood round about him beakers and vessels,

Dishes were lying and dear-valued weapons,

105

With iron-rust eaten, as in earth's mighty bosom

A thousand of winters there they had rested:

That mighty bequest then with magic
was guarded,

The hoard was
under a magic
spell.

Gold of the ancients, that earlman not
any

The ring-hall could touch, save Ruling-God only,

110

Sooth-king of Vict'ries gave whom He wished to

⁶(He is earth-folk's protector) to open the treasure,
 E'en to such among mortals as seemed to Him proper.

God alone
 could give
 access to it.

- [1] For 'góða,' which seems a surprising epithet for a Geat to apply to the "terrible" Ongentheow, B. suggests 'gomela.' The passage would then stand: *'The old one went then,' etc.*
- [2] For 'segn Higeláce,' K., Th., and B. propose 'segn Higeláces,' meaning: *Higelac's banner followed the Swedes (in pursuit).*—S. suggests 'sæcc Higeláces,' and renders: *Higelac's pursuit.*—The H.-So. reading, as translated in our text, means that the banner of the enemy was captured and brought to Higelac as a trophy.
- [3] The rendering given in this translation represents the king as being generous beyond the possibility of reproach; but some authorities construe 'him' (2996) as plu., and understand the passage to mean that no one reproached the two brothers with having received more reward than they were entitled to.
- [4] The name 'Scyldingas' here (3006) has caused much discussion, and given rise to several theories, the most important of which are as follows: (1) After the downfall of Hrothgar's family, Beowulf was king of the Danes, or Scyldings. (2) For 'Scyldingas' read 'Scylfingas'—that is, after killing Eadgils, the Scylfing prince, Beowulf conquered his land, and held it in subjection. (3) M. considers 3006 a thoughtless repetition of 2053. (Cf. H.-So.)
- [5] B. takes 'nihtes' and 'hwílum' (3045) as separate adverbial cases, and renders: *Joy in the air had he of yore by night, etc.* He thinks that the idea of vanished time ought to be expressed.
- [6] The parenthesis is by some emended so as to read: (1) (*He (i.e. God) is the hope of men*); (2) (*he is the hope of heroes*). Gr.'s reading has no parenthesis, but says: ... *could touch, unless God himself, true king of victories, gave to whom he would to open the treasure, the secret place of enchanters, etc.* The last is rejected on many grounds.

XLII.

WIGLAF'S SAD STORY.—THE HOARD CARRIED OFF.

Then 'twas seen that the journey prospered him
little

Who wrongly within had the ornaments hidden¹
Down 'neath the wall. The warden erst
slaughtered

Some few of the folk-troop: the feud then
thereafter

5

Was hotly avengèd. 'Tis a wonder where,²
When the strength-famous trooper has attained to
the end of

Life-days allotted, then no longer the man may
Remain with his kinsmen where mead-cups are
flowing.

So to Beowulf happened when the ward of the
barrow,

10

Assaults, he sought for: himself had no knowledge
How his leaving this life was likely to happen.
So to doomsday, famous folk-leaders down did
Call it with curses—who 'complished it there—
That that man should be ever of ill-deeds
convicted,

15

Confined in foul-places, fastened in hell-bonds,
Punished with plagues, who this place should e'er
ravage.³

He cared not for gold: rather the Wielder's
Favor preferred he first to get sight of.⁴

Wiglaf
addresses his

Wiglaf discoursed then, Wihstan his comrades.
son:

20

“Oft many an earlman on one man’s account must
Sorrow endure, as to us it hath happened.
The liegelord belovèd we could little prevail on,
Kingdom’s keeper, counsel to follow,
Not to go to the guardian of the gold-hoard, but let
him

25

Lie where he long was, live in his dwelling
Till the end of the world. Met we a destiny
Hard to endure: the hoard has been looked at,
Been gained very grimly; too grievous the fate
that⁵

The prince of the people pricked to come thither.

30

I was therein and all of it looked at,
The building’s equipments, since access was given
me,

Not kindly at all entrance permitted

Within under earth-wall. Hastily
seized I

He tells them
of Beowulf’s
last moments.

And held in my hands a huge-
weighing burden

35

Of hoard-treasures costlly, hither out bare them
To my liegelord belovèd: life was yet in him,
And consciousness also; the old one discoursed
then

Much and mournfully, commanded to greet you,

Bade that remembering the deeds of
your friend-lord

Beowulf’s
dying request.

40

Ye build on the fire-hill of corpses a lofty
Burial-barrow, broad and far-famous,

As 'mid world-dwelling warriors he was widely
most honored

While he reveled in riches. Let us rouse us and
hasten

Again to see and seek for the treasure,

45

The wonder 'neath wall. The way I will show you,

That close ye may look at ring-gems sufficient

And gold in abundance. Let the bier with

promptness

Fully be fashioned, when forth we shall come,

And lift we our lord, then, where long he shall

tarry,

50

Well-beloved warrior, 'neath the Wielder's

protection."

Then the son of Wihstan bade orders

be given,

Mood-valiant man, to many of

heroes,

Holders of homesteads, that they hither from far,

⁶Leaders of liegemen, should look for the good

one

55

With wood for his pyre: "The flame shall now

swallow

(The wan fire shall wax⁷) the warriors' leader

Who the rain of the iron often abided,

When, sturdily hurled, the storm of the arrows

Leapt o'er linden-wall, the lance rendered service,

60

Furnished with feathers followed the arrow."

Now the wise-mooded son of Wihstan did

summon

The best of the braves from the band of the ruler

Seven together; 'neath the enemy's

roof he

Wiglaf
charges them
to build a
funeral-pyre.

He takes
seven thanes,

and enters the
den.

Who fared at the front, a fire-blazing torch-light
Bare in his hand. No lot then decided
Who that hoard should havoc, when hero-earls
saw it

70

They push the
dragon over
the wall.

The hoard is
laid on a wain.

A mass unmeasured, the men-leader off then,
The hero hoary, to Whale's-Ness was carried.

- [1] For ‘gehýdde,’ B. suggests ‘gehýðde’: the passage would stand as above except the change of ‘hidden’ (v. 2) to ‘plundered.’ The reference, however, would be to the thief, not to the dragon.
- [2] The passage ‘Wundur ... búan’ (3063-3066), M. took to be a question asking whether it was strange that a man should die when his appointed time had come.—B. sees a corruption, and makes emendations introducing the idea that a brave man should not die from sickness or from old age, but should find death in the performance of some deed of daring.—S. sees an indirect question introduced by ‘hwár’ and dependent upon ‘wundur’: *A secret is it when the hero is to die, etc.*—Why may the two clauses not be parallel, and the whole passage an Old English cry of ‘*How wonderful is death!*’?—S.’s is the best yet offered, if ‘wundor’ means ‘mystery.’
- [3] For ‘strude’ in H.-So., S. suggests ‘stride.’ This would require ‘ravage’ (v. 16) to be changed to ‘tread.’
- [4] ‘He cared ... sight of’ (17, 18), S. emends so as to read as follows: *He (Beowulf) had not before seen the favor of the avaricious possessor.*

- [5] B. renders: *That which drew the king thither (i.e. the treasure) was granted us, but in such a way that it overcomes us.*
- [6] 'Folc-ágende' (3114) B. takes as dat. sing. with 'gódum,' and refers it to Beowulf; that is, *Should bring fire-wood to the place where the good folk-ruler lay.*
- [7] C. proposes to take 'weaxan' = L. 'vescor,' and translate *devour*. This gives a parallel to 'fretan' above. The parenthesis would be discarded and the passage read: *Now shall the fire consume, the wan-flame devour, the prince of warriors, etc.*

XLIII.

THE BURNING OF BEOWULF.

The folk of the Geatmen got him then Beowulf's
ready pyre.

A pile on the earth strong for the burning,
Behung with helmets, hero-knights' targets,
And bright-shining burnies, as he begged they
should have them;

5

Then wailing war-heroes their world-famous
chieftain,

Their liegelord beloved, laid in the middle.

Soldiers began then to make on the The funeral-
barrow flame.

The largest of dead-fires: dark o'er the vapor
The smoke-cloud ascended, the sad-roaring fire,

10

Mingled with weeping (the wind-roar subsided)

Till the building of bone it had broken to pieces,

Hot in the heart. Heavy in spirit

They mood-sad lamented the men-leader's ruin;

And mournful measures the much-grieving widow

15

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20

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The men of the Weders made
accordingly

The Weders
carry out their
lord's last
request.

A hill on the height, high and
extensive,

Of sea-going sailors to be seen from a distance,
And the brave one's beacon built where the fire
was,

25

In ten-days' space, with a wall surrounded it,
As wisest of world-folk could most worthily plan
it.

They placed in the barrow rings and jewels,
All such ornaments as erst in the treasure Rings and
gems are laid
in the barrow.
War-mooded men had won in
possession:

30

The earnings of earlmen to earth they entrusted,
The gold to the dust, where yet it remaineth
As useless to mortals as in foregoing eras.
'Round the dead-mound rode then the doughty-in-
battle,

Bairns of all twelve of the chiefs of the people,
35 They mourn
for their lord,
and sing his
praises.
More would they mourn, lament for
their ruler,

Speak in measure, mention him with
pleasure,

Weighed his worth, and his warlike achievements
Mightily commended, as 'tis meet one praise his
Liegelord in words and love him in spirit,

40

When forth from his body he fares to destruction.
So lamented mourning the men of the Geats,
Fond-loving vassals, the fall of their lord,
Said he was kindest of kings under An ideal king.
heaven,

Gentlest of men, most winning of manner,

45

Friendliest to folk-troops and fondest of honor.

ADDENDA.

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

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

Bær gelyfan sceal dryhtnes dóme (440).—Under ‘dóm’ H. says ‘the might of the Lord’; while under ‘gelyfan’ he says ‘the judgment of the Lord.’

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

þéow (2225) is omitted from the glossary.

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

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

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

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

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

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