

The Online Library of Liberty

A Project Of Liberty Fund, Inc.

Beowulf, *The Tale of Beowulf, sometime King of the Folk of the Weder Geats* [750 AD]



The Online Library Of Liberty

This E-Book (PDF format) is published by Liberty Fund, Inc., a private, non-profit, educational foundation established in 1960 to encourage study of the ideal of a society of free and responsible individuals. 2010 was the 50th anniversary year of the founding of Liberty Fund.

It is part of the Online Library of Liberty web site <http://oll.libertyfund.org>, which was established in 2004 in order to further the educational goals of Liberty Fund, Inc. To find out more about the author or title, to use the site's powerful search engine, to see other titles in other formats (HTML, facsimile PDF), or to make use of the hundreds of essays, educational aids, and study guides, please visit the OLL web site. This title is also part of the Portable Library of Liberty DVD which contains over 1,000 books and quotes about liberty and power, and is available free of charge upon request.

The cuneiform inscription that appears in the logo and serves as a design element in all Liberty Fund books and web sites is the earliest-known written appearance of the word “freedom” (amagi), or “liberty.” It is taken from a clay document written about 2300 B.C. in the Sumerian city-state of Lagash, in present day Iraq.

To find out more about Liberty Fund, Inc., or the Online Library of Liberty Project, please contact the Director at oll@libertyfund.org.

LIBERTY FUND, INC.
8335 Allison Pointe Trail, Suite 300
Indianapolis, Indiana 46250-1684

THE TALE OF BEOWULF
SOMETIME KING OF THE
FOLK OF THE WEDER
GEATS, TRANSLATED BY
WILLIAM MORRIS AND
A. J. WYATT

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.
39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON
NEW YORK, BOMBAY, AND CALCUTTA
MCMX

Edition Used:

The Tale of Beowulf, sometime King of the Folk of the Weder Geats, trans. William Morris and A.J. Wyatt (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1910).

Author: [Beowulf](#)

Translator: [William Morris](#)

Translator: [Alfred John Wyatt](#)

About This Title:

An English translation of the tale. Beowulf is one of the first literary masterpieces of the English language, written in Old English in the eleventh century. The story itself is thought to have been originally composed sometime between 700 and 750.

Although certain places and events are indeed historical, the main character of the story, Beowulf, is thought to be a fictional, archetypal hero. It recounts the life of Prince Beowulf of the Scandinavian Geats, who fights various monsters, returns to his father's kingdom a hero and soon becomes king himself, ruling for fifty years in peace until a frightful dragon appears. Once more Beowulf must fulfill his responsibilities, even unto his own destruction.

About Liberty Fund:

Liberty Fund, Inc. is a private, educational foundation established to encourage the study of the ideal of a society of free and responsible individuals.

Copyright Information:

The text is in the public domain.

Fair Use Statement:

This material is put online to further the educational goals of Liberty Fund, Inc. Unless otherwise stated in the Copyright Information section above, this material may be used freely for educational and academic purposes. It may not be used in any way for profit.

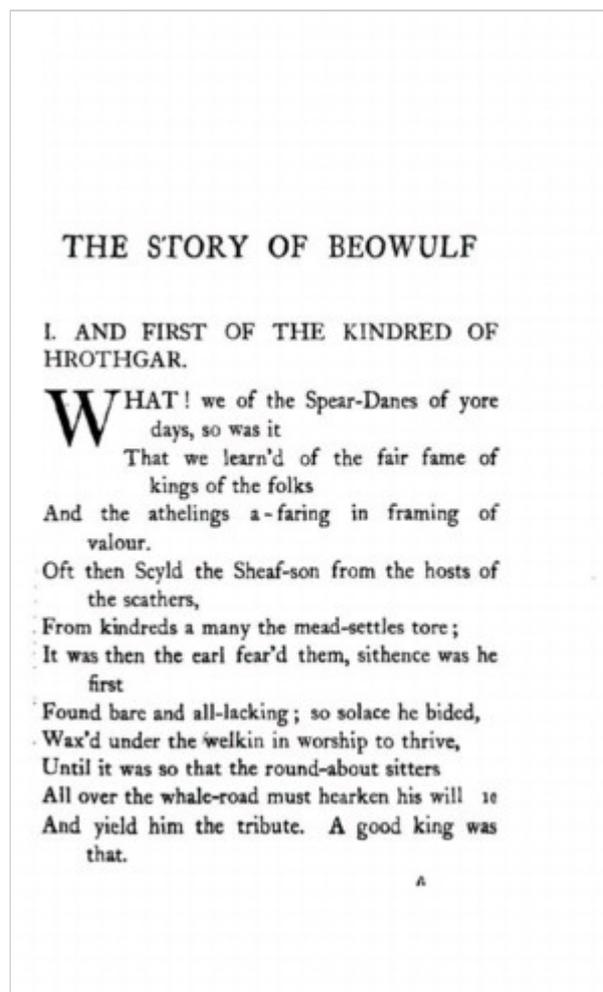


Table Of Contents

[Argument](#)

[The Story of Beowulf](#)

[I.: And First of the Kindred of Hrothgar.](#)

[II.: Concerning Hrothgar, and How He Built the House Called Hart. Also Grendel Is Told Of.](#)

[III.: How Grendel Fell Upon Hart and Wasted It.](#)

[IV.: Now Comes Beowulf Ecgtheow's Son to the Land of the Danes, and the Wall-warden Speaketh With Him.](#)

[V.: Here Beowulf Makes Answer to the Land-warden, Who Showeth Him the Way to the King's Abode.](#)

[VI.: Beowulf and the Geats Come Into Hart.](#)

[VII.: Beowulf Speaketh With Hrothgar, and Telleth How He Will Meet Grendel.](#)

[VIII.: Hrothgar Answereth Beowulf and Biddeth Him Sit to the Feast.](#)

[IX.: Unferth Contendeth In Words With Beowulf.](#)

[X.: Beowulf Makes an End of His Tale of the Swimming. Wealhtheow, Hrothgar's Queen, Greeteth Him; and Hrothgar Delivers to Him the Warding of the Hall.](#)

[XI.: Now Is Beowulf Left In the Hall Alone With His Men.](#)

[XII.: Grendel Cometh Into Hart: of the Strife Betwixt Him and Beowulf.](#)

[XIII.: Beowulf Hath the Victory: Grendel Is Hurt Deadly and Leaveth Hand and Arm In the Hall.](#)

[XIV.: The Danes Rejoice; They Go to Look On the Slot of Grendel, and Come Back to Hart, and On the Way Make Merry With Racing and the Telling of Tales.](#)

[XV.: King Hrothgar and His Thanes Look On the Arm of Grendel. Converse Betwixt Hrothgar and Beowulf Concerning the Battle.](#)

[XVI.: Hrothgar Giveth Gifts to Beowulf.](#)

[XVII.: They Feast In Hart. the Gleeman Sings of Finn and Hengest.](#)

[XVIII.: The Ending of the Tale of Finn.](#)

[XIX.: More Gifts Are Given to Beowulf. the Brising Collar Told Of.](#)

[XX.: Grendel's Dam Breaks Into Hart and Bears Off Aeschere.](#)

[XXI.: Hrothgar Laments the Slaying of Aeschere, and Tells of Grendel's Mother and Her Den.](#)

[XXII.: They Follow Grendel's Dam to Her Lair.](#)

[XXIII.: Beowulf Reacheth the Mere-bottom In a Day's While, and Contends With Grendel's Dam.](#)

[XXIV.: Beowulf Slayeth Grendel's Dam, Smiteth Off Grendel's Head, and Cometh Back With His Thanes to Hart.](#)

[XXV.: Converse of Hrothgar With Beowulf.](#)

[XXVI.: More Converse of Hrothgar and Beowulf: the Geats Make Them Ready For Departure.](#)

[XXVII.: Beowulf Bids Hrothgar Farewell: the Geats Fare to Ship.](#)

[XXVIII.: Beowulf Comes Back to His Land. of the Tale of Thrytho.](#)

- [XXIX.: Beowulf Tells Hygelac of Hrothgar: Also of Freawaru His Daughter.](#)
[XXX.: Beowulf Forebodes Ill From the Wedding of Freawaru: He Tells of Grendel and His Dam.](#)
[XXXI.: Beowulf Gives Hrothgar's Gifts to Hygelac, and By Him Is Rewarded of the Death of Hygelac and of Heardred His Son, and How Beowulf Is King of the Geats: the Worm Is First Told Of.](#)
[XXXII.: How the Worm Came to the Howe, and How He Was Robbed of a Cup; and How He Fell On the Folk.](#)
[XXXIII.: The Worm Burns Beowulf's House, and Beowulf Gets Ready to Go Against Him. Beowulf's Early Deeds In Battle With the Hetware Told Of.](#)
[XXXIV.: Beowulf Goes Against the Worm. He Tells of Herebeald and Hæthcyn.](#)
[XXXV.: Beowulf Tells of Past Feuds, and Bids Farewell to His Fellows. He Falls On the Worm, and the Battle of Them Begins.](#)
[XXXVI.: Wiglaf Son of Weohstan Goes to the Help of Beowulf: Nægling, Beowulf's Sword, Is Broken On the Worm.](#)
[XXXVII.: They Two Slay the Worm. Beowulf Is Wounded Deadly: He Biddeth Wiglaf Bear Out the Treasure.](#)
[XXXVIII.: Beowulf Beholdeth the Treasure and Passeth Away.](#)
[XXXIX.: Wiglaf Casteth Shame On Those Fleers.](#)
[Xl.: Wiglaf Sendeth Tiding to the Host: the Words of the Messenger.](#)
[Xli.: More Words of the Messenger. How He Fears the Swedes When They Wot of Beowulf Dead.](#)
[Xlii.: They Go to Look On the Field of Deed.](#)
[Xliii.: of the Burial of Beowulf.](#)

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

First printed at the Kelmscott Press, January 1895	
Ordinary Edition	August 1898
Reprinted	August 1904
Reprinted	August 1910

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

ARGUMENT

HROTHGAR, king of the Danes, lives happily and peacefully, and bethinks him to build a glorious hall called Hart. But a little after, one Grendel, of the kindred of the evil wights that are come of Cain, hears the merry noise of Hart and cannot abide it; so he enters thereinto by night, and slays and carries off and devours thirty of Hrothgar's thanes. Thereby he makes Hart waste for twelve years, and the tidings of this mishap are borne wide about lands. Then comes to the helping of Hrothgar Beowulf, the son of Ecgtheow, a thane of King Hygelac of the Geats, with fourteen fellows. They are met on the shore by the land-warrior, and by him shown to Hart and the stead of Hrothgar, who receives them gladly, and to whom Beowulf tells his errand, that he will help him against Grendel. They feast in the hall, and one Unferth, son of Ecglaaf, taunts Beowulf through jealousy that he was outdone by Breca in swimming. Beowulf tells the true tale thereof. And a little after, at nightfall, Hrothgar and his folk leave the hall Hart, and it is given in charge to Beowulf, who with his Geats abides there the coming of Grendel.

Soon comes Grendel to the hall, and slays a man of the Geats, hight Handshoe, and then grapples with Beowulf, who will use no weapon against him: Grendel feels himself over-mastered and makes for the door, and gets out, but leaves his hand and arm behind him with Beowulf: men on the wall hear the great noise of this battle and the wailing of Grendel. In the morning the Danes rejoice, and follow the bloody slot of Grendel, and return to Hart racing and telling old tales, as of Sigemund and the Worm. Then come the king and his thanes to look on the token of victory, Grendel's hand and arm, which Beowulf has let fasten to the hall-gable.

The king praises Beowulf and rewards him, and they feast in Hart, and the tale of Finn and Hengest is told. Then Hrothgar leaves Hart, and so does Beowulf also with his Geats, but the Danes keep guard there.

In the night comes in Grendel's Mother, and catches up Aeschere, a thane of Hrothgar, and carries him off to her lair. In the morning is Beowulf fetched to Hrothgar, who tells him of this new grief and craves his help.

Then they follow up the slot and come to a great water-side, and find thereby Aeschere's head, and the place is known for the lair of those two: monsters are playing in the deep, and Beowulf shoots one of them to death. Then Beowulf fights him and leaps into the water, and is a day's while reaching the bottom. There he is straightway caught hold of by Grendel's Mother, who bears him into her hall. When he gets free he falls on her, but the edge of the sword Hrunting (lent to him by Unferth) fails him, and she casts him to the ground and draws her sax to slay him; but he rises up, and sees an old sword of the giants hanging on the wall; he takes it and smites off her head therewith. He sees Grendel lying dead, and his head also he strikes off; but the blade of the sword is molten in his venomous blood. Then Beowulf strikes upward, taking with him the head of Grendel and the hilts of the sword. When he

comes to the shore he finds his Geats there alone; for the Danes fled when they saw the blood floating in the water.

They go up to Hrothgar's stead, and four men must needs bear the head. They come to Hrothgar, and Beowulf gives him the hilts and tells him what he has done. Much praise is given to Beowulf; and they feast together.

On the morrow Beowulf bids farewell to Hrothgar, more gifts are given, and messages are sent to Hygelac: Beowulf departs with the full love of Hrothgar. The Geats come to their ship and reward the ship-warder, and put off and sail to their own land. Beowulf comes to Hygelac's house. Hygelac is told of, and his wife Hygd, and her good conditions, against whom is set as a warning the evil Queen Thrytho.

Beowulf tells all the tale of his doings in full to Hygelac, and gives him his gifts, and the precious-gemmed collar to Hygd. Here is told of Beowulf, and how he was contemned in his youth, and is now grown so renowned.

Time wears; Hygelac is slain in battle; Heardred, his son, reigns in his stead, he is slain by the Swedes, and Beowulf is made king. When he is grown old, and has been king for fifty years, come new tidings. A great dragon finds on the sea-shore a mound wherein is stored the treasure of ancient folk departed. The said dragon abides there, and broods the gold for 300 years.

Now a certain thrall, who had misdane against his lord and was fleeing from his wrath, haps on the said treasure and takes a cup thence, which he brings to his lord to appease his wrath. The Worm waketh, and findeth his treasure lessened, but can find no man who hath done the deed. Therefore he turns on the folk, and wars on them, and burns Beowulf's house.

Now Beowulf will go and meet the Worm. He has an iron shield made, and sets forth with eleven men and the thrall the thirteenth. He comes to the ness, and speaks to his men, telling them of his past days, and gives them his last greeting: then he cries out a challenge to the Worm, who comes forth, and the battle begins: Beowulf's sword will not bite on the Worm. Wiglaf eggs on the others to come to Beowulf's help, and goes himself straightway, and offers himself to Beowulf; the Worm comes on again, and Beowulf breaks his sword Nægling on him, and the Worm wounds Beowulf. Wiglaf smites the Worm in the belly; Beowulf draws his sax, and between them they slay the Worm.

Beowulf now feels his wounds, and knows that he is hurt deadly; he sits down by the wall, and Wiglaf bathes his wounds. Beowulf speaks, tells how he would give his armour to his son if he had one; thanks God that he has not sworn falsely or done guilefully; and prays Wiglaf to bear out the treasure that he may see it before he dies.

Wiglaf fetches out the treasure, and again bathes Beowulf's wounds; Beowulf speaks again, rejoices over the sight of the treasure; gives to Wiglaf his ring and his armour, and bids the manner of his bale-fire. With that he passes away. Now the dastards come thereto and find Wiglaf vainly bathing his dead lord. He casteth shame upon

them with great wrath. Thence he sends a messenger to the barriers of the town, who comes to the host, and tells them of the death of Beowulf. He tells withal of the old feud betwixt the Geats and the Swedes, and how these, when they hear of the death of the king, will be upon them. The warriors go to look on Beowulf, and find him and the Worm lying dead together. Wiglaf chooses out seven of them to go void the treasure-house, after having bidden them gather wood for the bale-fire. They shove the Worm over the cliff into the sea, and bear off the treasure in wains. Then they bring Beowulf's corpse to bale, and they kindle it; a woman called the wife of aforetime, it may be Hygd, widow of Hygelac, bemoans him: and twelve children of the athelings ride round the bale, and bemoan Beowulf and praise him: and thus ends the poem.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

THE STORY OF BEOWULF

I.

AND FIRST OF THE KINDRED OF HROTHGAR.

WHAT! we of the Spear-Danes of yore days, so was it
That we learn'd of the fair fame of kings of the folks
And the athelings a-faring in framing of valour.
Oft then Scyld the Sheaf-son from the hosts of the scathers,
From kindreds a many the mead-settles tore;
It was then the earl fear'd them, sithence was he first
Found bare and all-lacking; so solace he bided,
Wax'd under the welkin in worship to thrive,
Until it was so that the round-about sitters
All over the whale-road must hearken his will
And yield him the tribute. A good king was that.
By whom then thereafter a son was begotten,
A youngling in garth, whom the great God sent thither
To foster the folk; and their crime-need he felt
The load that lay on them while lordless they lived
For a long while and long. He therefore, the Life-lord,
The Wielder of glory, world's worship he gave him:
Brim Beowulf waxed, and wide the weal upsprang
Of the offspring of Scyld in the parts of the Scede-lands.
Such wise shall a youngling with wealth be a-working
With goodly fee-gifts toward the friends of his father,
That after in eld-days shall ever bide with him,
Fair fellows well-willing when wendeth the war-tide,
Their lief lord a-serving. By praise-deeds it shall be
That in each and all kindreds a man shall have thriving.
Then went his ways Scyld when the shapen while was,
All hardy to wend him to the lord and his warding:
Out then did they bear him to the side of the seaflood,
The dear fellows of him, as he himself pray'd them
While yet his word wielded the friend of the Scyldings,
The dear lord of the land; a long while had he own'd it.
With stem all be-ringed at the hythe stood the ship,
All icy and out-fain, the Atheling's ferry.
There then did they lay him, the lord well beloved,
The gold-rings' bestower, within the ship's barm,
The mighty by mast. Much there was the treasure,
From far ways forsooth had the fret-work been led:
Never heard I of keel that was comelier dighted
With weapons of war, and with weed of the battle,

With bills and with byrnies. There lay in his barm
Much wealth of the treasure that with him should be,
And he into the flood's might afar to depart.
No lesser a whit were the wealth-goods they dight him
Of the goods of the folk, than did they who aforetime,
When was the beginning, first sent him away
Alone o'er the billows, and he but a youngling.
Moreover they set him up there a sign golden
High up overhead, and let the holm bear him,
Gave all to the Spearman. Sad mind they had in them,
And mourning their mood was. Now never knew men,
For sooth how to say it, rede-masters in hall,
Or heroes 'neath heaven, to whose hands came the lading.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

II.

CONCERNING HROTHGAR, AND HOW HE BUILT THE HOUSE CALLED HART. ALSO GRENDEL IS TOLD OF.

IN the burgs then was biding Beowulf the Scylding,
Dear King of the people, for long was he dwelling
Far-famed of folks (his father turn'd elsewhere,
From his stead the Chief wended) till awoke to him after
Healfdene the high, and long while he held it,
Ancient and war-eager, o'er the glad Scyldings:
Of his body four bairns are forth to him rimed;
Into the world woke the leader of war-hosts
Heorogar; eke Hrothgar, and Halga the good;
Heard I that Elan queen was she of Ongentheow,
That Scylding of battle, the bed-mate behalsed.
Then was unto Hrothgar the war-speed given,
Such worship of war that his kin and well-willers
Well hearken'd his will till the younglings were waxen,
A kin-host a many. Then into his mind ran
That he would be building for him now a hall-house,
That men should be making a mead-hall more mighty
Than the children of ages had ever heard tell of:
And there within eke should he be out-dealing
To young and to old all things God had given,
Save the share of the folk and the life-days of men.
Then heard I that widely the work was a-banning
To kindreds a many the Middle-garth over
To fret o'er that folk-stead. So befell to him timely
Right soon among men that made was it yarely
The most of hall-houses, and Hart its name shap'd he,
Who wielded his word full widely around.
His behest he belied not; it was he dealt the rings,
The wealth at the high-tide. Then up rose the hall-house,
High up and horn-gabled. Hot surges it bided
Of fire-flame the loathly, nor long was it thenceforth
Ere sorely the edge-hate 'twixt Son and Wife's Father
After the slaughter-strife there should awaken.
Then the ghost heavy-strong bore with it hardly
E'en for a while of time, bider in darkness,
That there on each day of days heard he the mirth-tide
Loud in the hall-house. There was the harp's voice,
And clear song of shaper. Said he who could it
To tell the first fashion of men from aforetime;
Quoth how the Almighty One made the Earth's fashion,

The fair field and bright midst the bow of the Waters,
And with victory beglory'd set Sun and Moon,
Bright beams to enlighten the bidders on land:
And how he adorned all parts of the earth
With limbs and with leaves; and life withal shaped
For the kindred of each thing that quick on earth wendeth.
So liv'd on all happy the host of the kinsmen
In game and in glee, until one wight began,
A fiend out of hell-pit, the framing of evil,
And Grendel forsooth the grim guest was hight,
The mighty mark-strider, the holder of moorland,
The fen and the fastness. The stead of the fifel
That wight all unhappy a while of time warded,
Sithence that the Shaper him had for-written.
On the kindred of Cain the Lord living ever
Awreaked the murder of the slaying of Abel.
In that feud he rejoic'd not, but afar him He banish'd,
The Maker, from mankind for the crime he had wrought.
But offspring uncouth thence were they awoken
Eotens and elf-wights, and ogres of ocean,
And therewith the Giants, who won war against God
A long while; but He gave them their wages therefor.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

III.

HOW GRENDEL FELL UPON HART AND WASTED IT.

NOW went he a-spying, when come was the night-tide,
The house on high builded, and how there the Ring-Danes
Their beer-drinking over had boune them to bed;
And therein he found them, the atheling fellows,
Asleep after feasting. Then sorrow they knew not
Nor the woe of mankind: but the wight of wealth's waning,
The grim and the greedy, soon yare was he gotten,
All furious and fierce, and he raught up from resting
A thirty of thanes, and thence aback got him
Right fain of his gettings, and homeward to fare,
Fulfilled of slaughter his stead to go look on.
Thereafter at dawning, when day was yet early,
The war-craft of Grendel to men grew unhidden,
And after his meal was the weeping uphoven,
Mickle voice of the morning-tide: there the Prince mighty,
The Atheling exceeding good, unblithe he sat,
Tholing the heavy woe; thane-sorrow dreed he
Since the slot of the loathly wight there they had look'd on,
The ghost all accursed. O'er grisly the strife was,
So loathly and longsome. No longer the frist was
But after the wearing of one night; then fram'd he
Murder-bales more yet, and nowise he mourned
The feud and the crime; over fast therein was he.
Then easy to find was the man who would elsewhere
Seek out for himself a rest was more roomsome,
Beds end-long the bowers, when beacon'd to him was,
And soothly out told by manifest token,
The hate of the hell-thane. He held himself sithence
Further and faster who from the fiend gat him.
In such wise he rul'd it and wrought against right,
But one against all, until idle was standing
The best of hall-houses; and mickle the while was,
Twelve winter-tides' wearing; and trouble he tholed,
That friend of the Scyldings, of woes every one
And wide-spreading sorrows: for sithence it fell
That unto men's children unbidden 'twas known
Full sadly in singing, that Grendel won war
'Gainst Hrothgar a while of time, hate-envy waging,
And crime-guilts and feud for seasons no few,
And strife without stinting. For the sake of no kindness
Unto any of men of the main-host of Dane-folk

Would he thrust off the life-bale, or by fee-gild allay it,
Nor was there a wise man that needed to ween
The bright boot to have at the hand of the slayer.
The monster the fell one afflicted them sorely,
That death-shadow darksome the doughty and youthful
Enfetter'd, ensnared; night by night was he faring
The moorlands the misty. But never know men
Of spell-workers of Hell to and fro where they wander.
So crime-guilts a many the foeman of mankind,
The fell alone-farer, fram'd oft and full often,
Cruel hard shames and wrongful, and Hart he abode in,
The treasure-stain'd hall, in the dark of the night-tide;
But never the gift-stool therein might he greet,
The treasure before the Creator he trow'd not.
Mickle wrack was it soothly for the friend of the Scyldings,
Yea heart and mood breaking. Now sat there a many
Of the mighty in rune, and won them the rede
Of what thing for the strong-soul'd were best of all things
Which yet they might frame 'gainst the fear and the horror.
And whiles they behight them at the shrines of the heathen
To worship the idols; and pray'd they in words,
That he, the ghost-slayer, would frame for them helping
'Gainst the folk-threats and evil. So far'd they their wont,
The hope of the heathen; nor hell they remember'd
In mood and in mind. And the Maker they knew not,
The Doomer of deeds: nor of God the Lord wist they,
Nor the Helm of the Heavens knew aught how to hery,
The Wielder of Glory. Woe worth unto that man
Who through hatred the baneful his soul shall shove into
The fire's embrace; nought of fostering weens he,
Nor of changing one whit. But well is he soothly
That after the death-day shall seek to the Lord,
In the breast of the Father all peace ever craving.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

IV.

NOW COMES BEOWULF ECGTHEOW'S SON TO THE LAND OF THE DANES, AND THE WALL-WARDEN SPEAKETH WITH HIM.

SO care that was time-long the kinsman of Healfdene
Still seeth'd without ceasing, nor might the wise warrior
Wend otherwhere woe, for o'er strong was the strife
All loathly so longsome late laid on the people,
Need-wrack and grim nithing, of night-bales the greatest.
Now that from his home heard the Hygelac's thane,
Good midst of the Geat-folk; of Grendel's deeds heard he.
But he was of mankind of might and main mightiest
In the day that we tell of, the day of this life,
All noble, strong-waxen. He bade a wave-wearer
Right good to be gear'd him, and quoth he that the war-king
Over the swan-road he would be seeking,
The folk-lord far-famed, since lack of men had he.
Forsooth of that faring the carles wiser-fashion'd
Laid little blame on him, though lief to them was he;
The heart-hardy whetted they, heeded the omen.
There had the good one, e'en he of the Geat-folk,
Champions out-chosen of them that he keenest
Might find for his needs; and he then the fifteenth
Sought to the sound-wood. A swain thereon show'd him,
A sea-crafty man, all the make of the land-marks.
Wore then a while, on the waves was the floater,
The boat under the berg, and yare then the warriors
Strode up on the stem; the streams were a-winding
The sea 'gainst the sands. Upbore the swains then
Up into the bark's barm the bright-fretted weapons,
The war-array stately; then out the lads shov'd her,
The folk on the welcome way shov'd out the wood-bound.
Then by the wind driven out o'er the wave-holm
Far'd the foamy-neck'd floater most like to a fowl,
Till when was the same tide of the second day's wearing
The wound-about-stemm'd one had waded her way
So that then they that sail'd her had sight of the land,
Bleak shine of the sea-cliffs, bergs steep up above,
Sea-nesses wide reaching; the sound was won over,
The sea-way was ended: then up ashore swiftly
The band of the Weder-folk up on earth wended;
They bound up the sea-wood, their sarks on them rattled,

Their weed of the battle, and God there they thanked
For that easy the wave-ways were waxen unto them.
But now from the wall saw the Scylding-folks' warder,
E'en he who the holm-cliffs should ever be holding,
Men bear o'er the gangway the bright shields a-shining,
Folk-host gear all ready. Then mind-longing wore him,
And stir'd up his mood to wot who were the men-folk.
So shoreward down far'd he his fair steed a-riding,
Hrothgar's Thane, and full strongly then set he a-quaking
The stark wood in his hands, and in council-speech speer'd he:
What men be ye then of them that have war-gear,
With byrnies bewarded, who the keel high up-built
Over the Lake-street thus have come leading,
Hither o'er holm-ways hieing in ring-stem?
End-sitter was I, a-holding the sea-ward,
That the land of the Dane-folk none of the loathly
Faring with ship-horde ever might scathe it.
None yet have been seeking more openly hither
Of shield-havers than ye, and ye of the leave-word
Of the framers of war naught at all wotting,
Or the manners of kinsmen. But no man of earls greater
Saw I ever on earth than one of you yonder,
The warrior in war-gear: no hall-man, so ween I,
Is that weapon-beworthy'd, but his visage belie him,
The sight seen once only. Now I must be wotting
The spring of your kindred ere further ye cast ye,
And let loose your false spies in the Dane-land a-faring
Yet further afield. So now, ye far-dwellers,
Ye wenders o'er sea-flood, this word do ye hearken
Of my one-folded thought: and haste is the handiest
To do me to wit of whence is your coming.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

V.

HERE BEOWULF MAKES ANSWER TO THE LAND- WARDEN, WHO SHOWETH HIM THE WAY TO THE KING'S ABODE.

HE then that was chiefest in thus wise he answer'd,
The war-fellows' leader unlock'd he the word-hoard:
We be a people of the Weder-Geats' man-kin
And of Hygelac be we the hearth-fellows soothly.
My father before me of folks was well-famed
Van-leader and atheling, Ecgtheow he hight.
Many winters abode he, and on the way wended
An old man from the garths, and him well remembers
Every wise man well nigh wide yond o'er the earth.
Through our lief mood and friendly the lord that is thine,
Even Healfdene's son, are we now come a-seeking,
Thy warder of folk. Learn us well with thy leading,
For we have to the mighty an errand full mickle,
To the lord of the Dane-folk: naught dark shall it be,
That ween I full surely. If it be so thou wottest,
As soothly for our parts we now have heard say,
That one midst of the Scyldings, who of scathers I wot not,
A deed-hater secret, in the dark of the night-tide
Setteth forth through the terror the malice untold of,
The shame-wrong and slaughter. I therefore to Hrothgar
Through my mind fashion'd roomsome the rede may now learn him,
How he, old-wise and good, may get the fiend under,
If once more from him awayward may turn
The business of bales, and the boot come again,
And the weltering of care wax cooler once more;
Or for ever sithence time of stress he shall thole,
The need and the wronging, the while yet there abideth
On the high stead aloft the best of all houses.
Then spake out the warden on steed there a-sitting,
The servant all un-fear'd: It shall be of either
That the shield-warrior sharp the sundering wotteth,
Of words and of works, if he think thereof well.
I hear it thus said that this host here is friendly
To the lord of the Scyldings; forth fare ye then, bearing
Your weed and your weapons, of the way will I wise you;
Likewise mine own kinsmen I will now be bidding
Against every foeman your floater before us,
Your craft but new-tarred, the keel on the sand,

With honour to hold, until back shall be bearing
Over the lake-streams this one, the lief man,
The wood of the wunden-neck back unto Wedermark.
Unto such shall be granted amongst the good-doers
To win the way out all whole from the war-race.
Then boun they to faring, the bark biding quiet;
Hung upon hawser the wide-fathom'd ship
Fast at her anchor. Forth shone the boar-shapes
Over the check-guards golden adorned,
Fair-shifting, fire-hard; ward held the farrow.
Snorted the war-moody, hasten'd the warriors
And trod down together until the hall timber'd,
Stately and gold-bestain'd, gat they to look on,
That was the all-mightiest unto earth's dwellers
Of halls 'neath the heavens, wherein bode the mighty;
Glisten'd the gleam thereof o'er lands a many.
Unto them then the war-deer the court of the proud one
Full clearly betaught it, that they therewithal
Might wend their ways thither. Then he of the warriors
Round wended his steed, and spake a word backward:
Time now for my faring; but the Father All-wielder
May He with all helping henceforward so hold you
All whole in your wayfaring. Will I to sea-side
Against the wroth folk to hold warding ever.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

VI.

BEOWULF AND THE GEATS COME INTO HART.

STONE-DIVERSE the street was, straight uplong the path led
The warriors together. There shone the war-byrny
The hard and the hand-lock'd; the ring-iron sheer
Sang over their war-gear, when they to the hall first
In their gear the all-fearful had gat them to ganging.
So then the sea-weary their wide shields set down,
Their war-rounds the mighty, against the hall's wall.
Then bow'd they to bench, and rang there the byrnies,
The war-weed of warriors, and up-stood the spears,
The war-gear of the sea-folk all gather'd together,
The ash-holt grey-headed; that host of the iron
With weapons was worshipful. There then a proud chief
Of those lads of the battle spear'd after their line:
Whence ferry ye then the shields golden-faced,
The grey sarks therewith, and the helms all bevisor'd,
And a heap of the war-shafts? Now am I of Hrothgar
The man and the messenger: ne'er saw I of aliens
So many of men more might-like of mood.
I ween that for pride-sake, no wise for wrack-wending
But for high might of mind, ye to Hrothgar have sought.
Unto him then the heart-hardy answer'd and spake,
The proud earl of the Weders the word gave aback,
The hardy neath helm: Now of Hygelac are we
The board-fellows; Beowulf e'en is my name,
And word will I say unto Healfdene's son,
To the mighty, the folk-lord, what errand is mine,
Yea unto thy lord, if to us he will grant it
That him, who so good is, anon we may greet.
Spake Wulfgar the word, a lord of the Wendels,
And the mood of his heart of a many was kenned,
His war and his wisdom: I therefore the Danes' friend
Will lightly be asking, of the lord of the Scyldings,
The dealer of rings, since the boon thou art bidding,
The mighty folk-lord, concerning thine errand,
And swiftly the answer shall do thee to wit
Which the good one to give thee aback may deem meetest.
Then turn'd he in haste to where Hrothgar was sitting
Right old and all hoary mid the host of his earl-folk:
Went the valour-stark; stood he the shoulders before
Of the Dane-lord: well could he the doughty ones' custom.
So Wulfgar spake forth to his lord the well-friendly:

Hither are ferry'd now, come from afar off
O'er the field of the ocean, a folk of the Geats;
These men of the battle e'en Beowulf name they
Their elder and chiefest, and to thee are they bidding
That they, O dear lord, with thee may be dealing
In word against word. Now win them no naysay
Of thy speech again-given, O Hrothgar the gladman:
For they in their war-gear, methinketh, be worthy
Of good deeming of earls; and forsooth naught but doughty
Is he who hath led o'er the warriors hither.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

VII.

BEOWULF SPEAKETH WITH HROTHGAR, AND TELLETH HOW HE WILL MEET GRENDEL.

WORD then gave out Hrothgar the helm of the Scyldings:
I knew him in sooth when he was but a youngling,
And his father, the old man, was Ecgtheow hight;
Unto whom at his home gave Hrethel the Geat-lord
His one only daughter; and now hath his offspring
All hardy come hither a lief lord to seek him.
For that word they spake then, the sea-faring men,
E'en they who the gift-scat for the Geat-folk had ferry'd,
Brought thither for thanks, that of thirty of men-folk
The craft of might hath he within his own handgrips,
That war-strong of men. Now him holy God
For kind help hath sent off here even to us,
We men of the West Danes, as now I have weening,
'Gainst the terror of Grendel. So I to that good one
For his mighty mood-daring shall the dear treasure bid.
Haste now and be speedy, and bid them in straightway,
The kindred-band gather'd together, to see us,
And in words say thou eke that they be well comen
To the folk of the Danes. To the door of the hall then
Went Wulfgar, and words withinward he flitted:
He bade me to say you, my lord of fair battle,
The elder of East-Danes, that he your blood knoweth,
And that unto him are ye the sea-surges over,
Ye lads hardy-hearted, well come to land hither;
And now may ye wend you all in war-raiment
Under the battle-mask Hrothgar to see.
But here let your battle-boards yet be abiding,
With your war-weed and slaughter-shafts, issue of words.
Then rose up the rich one, much warriors around him,
Chosen heap of the thanes, but there some abided
The war-gear to hold, as the wight one was bidding.
Swift went they together, as the warrior there led them,
Under Hart's roof: went the stout-hearted,
The hardy neath helm, till he stood by the high-seat.
Then Beowulf spake out, on him shone the byrny,
His war-net besown by the wiles of the smith:
Hail to thee, Hrothgar! I am of Hygelac
Kinsman and folk-thane; fair deeds have I many
Begun in my youth-tide, and this matter of Grendel
On the turf of mine own land undarkly I knew.

'Tis the seafarers' say that standeth this hall,
The best house forsooth, for each one of warriors
All idle and useless, after the even-light
Under the heaven-loft hidden becometh.
Then lightly they learn'd me, my people, this lore,
E'en the best that there be of the wise of the churls,
O Hrothgar the kingly, that thee should I seek to,
Whereas of the might of my craft were they cunning;
For they saw me when came I from out of my wargear,
Blood-stain'd from the foe whenas five had I bounden,
Quell'd the kin of the eotens, and in the wave slain
The nicors by night-tide: strait need then I bore,
Wreak'd the grief of the Weders, the woe they had gotten;
I ground down the wrathful; and now against Grendel
I here with the dread one alone shall be dooming,
In Thing with the giant. I now then with thee,
O lord of the bright Danes, will fall to my bidding,
O berg of Scyldings, and bid thee one boon,
Which, O refuge of warriors, gainsay me not now,
Since, O free friend of folks, from afar have I come,
That I alone, I and my band of the earls,
This hard heap of men, may cleanse Hart of ill.
This eke have I heard say, that he, the fell monster,
In his wan-head recks nothing of weapons of war;
Forgo I this therefore (if so be that Hygelac
Will still be my man-lord, and he blithe of mood)
To bear the sword with me, or bear the broad shield,
Yellow-round to the battle; but with naught save the hand-grip
With the foe shall I grapple, and grope for the life
The loathly with loathly. There he shall believe
In the doom of the Lord whom death then shall take.
Now ween I that he, if he may wield matters,
E'en there in the war-hall the folk of the Geats
Shall eat up unafear'd, as oft he hath done it
With the might of the Hrethmen: no need for thee therefore
My head to be hiding; for me will he have
With gore all bestain'd, if the death of men get me;
He will bear off my bloody corpse minded to taste it;
Unmournfully then will the Lone-goer eat it,
Will blood-mark the moor-ways; for the meat of my body
Naught needest thou henceforth in any wise grieve thee.
But send thou to Hygelac, if the war have me,
The best of all war-shrouds that now my breast wardeth,
The goodliest of railings, the good gift of Hrethel,
The hand-work of Weland. Weird wends as she willeth.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

VIII.

HROTHGAR ANSWERETH BEOWULF AND BIDDETH HIM SIT TO THE FEAST.

SPAKE out then Hrothgar the helm of the Scyldings:
Thou Beowulf, friend mine, for battle that wardeth
And for help that is kindly hast sought to us hither.
Fought down thy father the most of all feuds;
To Heatholaf was he forsooth for a hand-bane
Amidst of the Wylfings. The folk of the Weders
Him for the war-dread that while might not hold.
So thence did he seek to the folk of the South-Danes
O'er the waves' wallow, to the Scyldings beworshipp'd.
Then first was I wielding the weal of the Danefolk,
That time was I holding in youth-tide the gemrich
Hoard-burg of the heroes. Dead then was Heorogar,
Mine elder of brethren; unliving was he,
The Healfdene's bairn that was better than I.
That feud then thereafter with fee did I settle;
I sent to the Wylfing folk over the waters' back
Treasures of old time; he swore the oaths to me.
Sorrow is in my mind that needs must I say it
To any of grooms, of Grendel what hath he
Of shaming in Hart, and he with his hate-wiles
Of sudden harms framed; the host of my hallfloor,
The war-heap, is waned; Weird swept them away
Into horror of Grendel. It is God now that may lightly
The scather the doltish from deeds thrust aside.
Full oft have they boasted with beer well bedrunken,
My men of the battle all over the ale-stoup,
That they in the beer-hall would yet be abiding
The onset of Grendel with the terror of edges.
But then was this mead-hall in the tide of the morning,
This warrior-hall, gore-stain'd when day at last gleamed,
All the boards of the benches with blood besteam'd over,
The hall laid with sword-gore: of lieges less had I
Of dear and of doughty, for them death had gotten.
Now sit thou to feast and unbind thy mood freely,
Thy war-fame unto men as the mind of thee whetteth.
Then was for the Geat-folk and them all together
There in the beer-hall a bench bedight roomsome,
There the stout-hearted hied them to sitting
Proud in their might: a thane minded the service,
Who in hand upbare an ale-stoup adorned,

Skinked the sheer mead; whiles sang the shaper
Clear out in Hart-hall; joy was of warriors,
Men doughty no little of Danes and of Weders.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

IX.

UNFERTH CONTENDETH IN WORDS WITH BEOWULF.

SPAKE out then Unferth that bairn was of Ecglaf,
And he sat at the feet of the lord of the Scyldings,
He unbound the battle-rune; was Beowulf's faring,
Of him the proud mere-farer, mickle unliking,
Whereas he begrudg'd it of any man other
That he glories more mighty the middle-garth over
Should hold under heaven than he himself held:
Art thou that Beowulf who won strife with Breca
On the wide sea contending in swimming,
When ye two for pride's sake search'd out the floods
And for a dolt's cry into deep water
Thrust both your life-days? No man the twain of you,
Lief or loth were he, might lay wyte to stay you
Your sorrowful journey, when on the sea row'd ye;
Then when the ocean-stream ye with your arms deck'd,
Meted the mere-streets, there your hands brandish'd!
O'er the Spearman ye glided; the sea with waves welter'd,
The surge of the winter. Ye twain in the waves' might
For a seven nights swink'd. He outdid thee in swimming,
And the more was his might; but him in the morn-tide
To the Heatho-Remes' land the holm bore ashore,
And thence away sought he to his dear land and lovely,
The lief to his people sought the land of the Brondings,
The fair burg peace-warding, where he the folk owned,
The burg and the gold rings. What to thee-ward he boasted,
Beanstan's son, for thee soothly he brought it about.
Now ween I for thee things worser than erewhile,
Though thou in the war-race wert everywhere doughty,
In the grim war, if thou herein Grendel darest
Night-long for a while of time nigh to abide.
Then Beowulf spake out, the Ecgtheow's bairn:
What! thou no few of things, O Unferth my friend,
And thou drunken with beer, about Breca hast spoken,
Saidest out of his journey; so the sooth now I tell:
To wit, that the more might ever I owned,
Hard wearing on wave more than any man else.
We twain then, we quoth it, while yet we were younglings,
And we boasted between us, the twain of us being yet
In our youth-days, that we out onto the Spearman
Our lives would adventure; and e'en so we wrought it.
We had a sword naked, when on the sound row'd we,

Hard in hand, as we twain against the whale-fishes
Had mind to be warding us. No whit from me
In the waves of the sea-flood afar might he float
The hastier in holm, nor would I from him hie me.
Then we two together, we were in the sea
For a five nights, till us twain the flood drave asunder,
The weltering of waves. Then the coldest of weathers
In the dusking of night and the wind from the northward
Battle-grim turn'd against us, rough grown were the billows.
Of the mere-fishes then was the mood all upstirred;
There me 'gainst the loathly the body-sark mine,
The harder and the hand-lock'd, was framing me help,
My battle-rail braided, it lay on my breast
Gear'd graithly with gold. But me to the ground tugg'd
A foe and fiend-scather; fast he had me in hold
That grim one in grip: yet to me was it given,
That the wretch there, the monster, with point might I reach,
With my bill of the battle, and the war-race off bore
The mighty mere-beast through the hand that was mine.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

X.

BEOWULF MAKES AN END OF HIS TALE OF THE SWIMMING. WEALHTHEOW, HROTHGAR'S QUEEN, GREETES HIM; AND HROTHGAR DELIVERS TO HIM THE WARDING OF THE HALL.

THUS oft and oft over the doers of evil
They threaten'd me hard; thane-service I did them
With the dear sword of mine, as forsooth it was meet,
That nowise of their fill did they win them the joy
The evil fordoers in swallowing me down,
Sitting round at the feast nigh the ground of the sea.
Yea rather, a morning-tide, mangled by sword-edge
Along the waves' leaving up there did they lie
Lull'd asleep with the sword, so that never sithence
About the deep floods for the farers o'er ocean
The way have they letted. Came the light from the eastward,
The bright becaon of God, and grew the seas calm,
So that the sea-nesses now might I look on,
The windy walls. Thuswise Weird oft will be saving
The earl that is unfey, when his valour availeth.
Whatever, it happ'd me that I with the sword slew
Nicors nine. Never heard I of fighting a night-tide
'Neath the vault of the heavens was harder than that,
Nor yet on the sea-streams of woefuller wight.
Whatever, forth won I with life from the foes' clutch
All of wayfaring weary. But me the sea upbore,
The flood downlong the tide with the weltering of waters,
All onto the Finnland. No whit of thee ever
Mid such strife of the battle-gear have I heard say
Such terrors of bills. Nor never yet Breca
In the play of the battle, nor both you, nor either,
So dearly the deeds have framed forsooth
With the bright flashing swords; though of this naught I boast me.
But thou of thy brethren the banesman becamest,
Yea thine head-kin forsooth, for which in hell shalt thou
Dree weird of damnation, though doughty thy wit be;
For unto thee say I forsooth, son of Ecglaf,
That so many deeds never Grendel had done,
That monster the loathly, against thine own lord,
The shaming in Hart-hall, if suchwise thy mind were,
And thy soul e'en as battle-fierce, such as thou sayest.
But he, he hath fram'd it that the feud he may heed not,

The fearful edge-onset that is of thy folk,
Nor sore need be fearful of the Victory-Scyldings.
The need-pledges taketh he, no man he spareth
Of the folk of the Danes, driveth war as he lusteth,
Slayeth and feasteth unweening of strife
With them of the Spear-Danes. But I, I shall show it,
The Geats' wightness and might ere the time weareth old,
Shall bide him in war-tide. Then let him go who may go
High-hearted to mead, sithence when the mornlight
O'er the children of men of the second day hence,
The sun clad in heaven's air, shines from the southward.
Then merry of heart was the meter of treasures,
The hoary-man'd war-renown'd, help now he trow'd in;
The lord of the Bright-Danes on Beowulf hearken'd,
The folk-shepherd knew him, his fast-ready mind.
There was laughter of heroes, and high the din rang
And winsome the words were. Went Wealhtheow forth,
The Queen she of Hrothgar, of courtesies mindful,
The gold-array'd greeted the grooms in the hall,
The free and frank woman the beaker there wended,
And first to the East-Dane-folk's fatherland's warder,
And bade him be blithe at the drinking of beer,
To his people beloved, and lustily took he
The feast and the hall-cup, that victory-fam'd King.
Then round about went she, the Dame of the Helmings,
And to doughty and youngsome, each deal of the folk there,
Gave cups of the treasure, till now it betid
That to Beowulf duly the Queen the ring-dighted,
Of mind high uplifted, the mead-beaker bare.
Then she greeted the Geat-lord, and gave God the thank,
She, the wisefast in words, that the will had wax'd in her
In one man of the earls to have trusting and troth
For comfort from crimes. But the cup then he took,
The slaughter-fierce warrior, from Wealhtheow the Queen.
And then rim'd he the word, making ready for war,
And Beowulf spake forth, the Ecgtheow's bairn:
E'en that in mind had I when up on holm strode I,
And in sea-boat sat down with a band of my men,
That for once and for all the will of your people
Would I set me to work, or on slaughter-field cringe
Fast in grip of the fiend; yea and now shall I frame
The valour of earl-folk, or else be abiding
The day of mine end, here down in the mead-hall.
To the wife those his words well liking they were,
The big word of the Geat; and the gold-adorn'd wended,
The frank and free Queen to sit by her lord.
And thereafter within the high hall was as erst
The proud word outspoken and bliss on the people,

Was the sound of the victory-folk, till on a sudden
The Healfdene's son would now be a-seeking
His rest of the even: wotted he for the Evil
Within the high hall was the Hild-play bedight,
Sithence that the sun-light no more should they see,
When night should be darkening, and down over all
The shapes of the shadow-helms should be a-striding
Wan under the welkin. Uprose then all war-folk;
Then greeted the glad-minded one man the other,
Hrothgar to Beowulf, bidding him hail,
And the wine-hall to wield, and withal quoth the word:
Never to any man erst have I given,
Since the hand and the shield's round aloft might I heave,
This high hall of the Dane-folk, save now unto thee.
Have now and hold the best of all houses,
Mind thee of fame, show the might of thy valour!
Wake the wroth one: no lack shall there be to thy willing
If that wight work thou win and life there-withal.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

XI.

NOW IS BEOWULF LEFT IN THE HALL ALONE WITH HIS MEN.

THEN wended him Hrothgar with the band of his warriors,
The high-ward of the Scyldings from out of the hall,
For then would the war-lord go seek unto Wealhtheow
The Queen for a bed-mate. The glory of kingfolk
Against Grendel had set, as men have heard say,
A hall-ward who held him a service apart
In the house of the Dane-lord, for eoten-ward held he.
Forsooth he, the Geat-lord, full gladly he trowed
In the might of his mood and the grace of the Maker.
Therewith he did off him his byrny of iron
And the helm from his head, and his dighted sword gave,
The best of all irons, to the thane that abode him,
And bade him to hold that harness of battle.
Bespake then the good one, a big word he gave out,
Beowulf the Geat, ere on the bed strode he:
Nowise in war I deem me more lowly
In the works of the battle than Grendel, I ween;
So not with the sword shall I lull him to slumber,
Or take his life thuswise, though to me were it easy;
Of that good wise he wots not, to get the stroke on me,
To hew on my shield, for as stark as he shall be
In the works of the foeman. So we twain a night-tide
Shall forgo the sword, if he dare yet to seek
The war without weapons. Sithence the wise God,
The Lord that is holy, on which hand soever
The glory may doom as due to him seemeth.
Bowed down then the war-deer, the cheek-bolster took
The face of the earl; and about him a many
Of sea-warriors bold to their hall-slumber bow'd them;
No one of them thought that thence away should he
Seek ever again to his home the beloved,
His folk or his free burg, where erst he was fed;
For of men had they learn'd that o'er mickle a many
In that wine-hall aforetime the fell death had gotten
Of the folk of the Danes; but the Lord to them gave it,
To the folk of the Weders, the web of war-speeding,
Help fair and good comfort, e'en so that their foeman
Through the craft of one man all they overcame,
By the self-might of one. So is manifest truth
That God the Almighty the kindred of men

Hath wielded wide ever. Now by wan night there came,
There strode in the shade-goer; slept there the shooters,
They who that horn-house should be a-holding,
All men but one man: to men was that known,
That them indeed might not, since will'd not the Maker,
The scather unceasing drag off 'neath the shadow;
But he ever watching in wrath 'gainst the wroth one
Mood-swollen abided the battle-mote ever.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

XII.

GRENDDEL COMETH INTO HART: OF THE STRIFE BETWIXT HIM AND BEOWULF.

CAME then from the moor-land, all under the mist-bents,
Grendel a-going there, bearing God's anger.
The scather the ill one was minded of mankind
To have one in his toils from the high hall aloft.
'Neath the welkin he waded, to the place whence the wine-house,
The gold-hall of men, most yarely he wist
With gold-plates fair colour'd; nor was it the first time
That he unto Hrothgar's high home had betook him.
Never he in his life-days, either erst or thereafter,
Of warriors more hardy or hall-thanes had found.
Came then to the house the wight on his ways,
Of all joys bereft; and soon sprang the door open,
With fire-bands made fast, when with hand he had touch'd it;
Brake the bale-heedy, he with wrath bollen,
The mouth of the house there, and early thereafter
On the shiny-fleck'd floor thereof trod forth the fiend;
On went he then mood-wroth, and out from his eyes stood
Likest to fire-flame light full unfair.
In the high house beheld he a many of warriors,
A host of men sib all sleeping together,
Of man-warriors a heap; then laugh'd out his mood;
In mind deem'd he to sunder, or ever came day,
The monster, the fell one, from each of the men there
The life from the body; for befell him a boding
Of fulfilment of feeding: but weird now it was not
That he any more of mankind thenceforward
Should eat, that night over. Huge evil beheld then
The Hygelac's kinsman, and how the foul scather
All with his fear-grips would fare there before him;
How never the monster was minded to tarry,
For speedily gat he, and at the first stour,
A warrior a-sleeping, and unaware slit him,
Bit his bone-coffer, drank blood a-streaming,
Great gobbets swallow'd in; thenceforth soon had he
Of the unliving one every whit eaten
To hands and feet even: then forth strode he nigher,
And took hold with his hand upon him the high-hearted,
The warrior a-resting; reach'd out to himwards
The fiend with his hand, gat fast on him rathely
With thought of all evil, and besat him his arm.

Then swiftly was finding the herdsman of foul deeds
That forsooth he had met not in Middle-garth ever,
In the parts of the earth, in any man else
A hand-grip more mighty; then wax'd he of mood
Heart-fearful, but none the more outward might he;
Hence-eager his heart was to the darkness to hie him,
And the devil-dray seek: not there was his service
E'en such as he found in his life-days before.
Then to heart laid the good one, the Hygelac's kinsman,
His speech of the even-tide; uplong he stood
And fast with him grappled, till bursted his fingers.
The eoten was out-fain, but on strode the earl.
The mighty fiend minded was, whereso he might,
To wind him about more widely away thence,
And flee fenwards; he found then the might of his fingers
In the grip of the fierce one; sorry faring was that
Which he, the harm-scather, had taken to Hart.
The warrior-hall dinn'd now; unto all Danes there waxed,
To the castle-abiders, to each of the keen ones,
To all earls, as an ale-dearth. Now angry were both
Of the fierce mighty warriors, far rang out the hall-house;
Then mickle the wonder it was that the wine-hall
Withstood the two war-deer, nor welter'd to earth
The fair earthly dwelling; but all fast was it builded
Within and without with the banding of iron
By crafty thought smithy'd. But there from the sill bow'd
Fell many a mead-bench, by hearsay of mine,
With gold well adorned, where strove they the wrothful.
Hereof never ween'd they, the wise of the Scyldings,
That ever with might should any of men
The excellent, bone-dight, break into pieces,
Or unlock with cunning, save the light fire's embracing
In smoke should it swallow. So uprose the roar
New and enough; now fell on the North-Danes
Ill fear and the terror, on each and on all men,
Of them who from wall-top hearken'd the weeping,
Even God's foeman singing the fear-lay,
The triumphless song, and the wound-bewailing
Of the thrall of the Hell; for there now fast held him
He who of men of main was the mightiest
In that day which is told of, the day of this life.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

XIII.

BEOWULF HATH THE VICTORY: GRENDEL IS HURT DEADLY AND LEAVETH HAND AND ARM IN THE HALL.

NAUGHT would the earls' help for anything thenceforth
That murder-comer yet quick let loose of,
Nor his life-days forsooth to any of folk
Told he for useful. Out then drew full many
Of Beowulf's earls the heir-loom of old days,
For their lord and their master's fair life would they ward,
That might of princes, if so might they do it.
For this did they know not when they the strife dreed,
Those hardy-minded men of the battle,
And on every half there thought to be hewing,
And search out his soul, that the ceaseless scather
Not any on earth of the choice of all irons,
Not one of the war-bills, would greet home for ever.
For he had forsworn him from victory-weapons,
And each one of edges. But his sundering of soul
In the days that we tell of, the day of this life,
Should be weary and woeful, the ghost wending elsewhere
To the wielding of fiends to wend him afar.
Then found he out this, he who mickle erst made
Out of mirth of his mood unto children of men
And had fram'd many crimes, he the foeman of God,
That the body of him would not bide to avail him,
But the hardy of mood, even Hygelac's kinsman,
Had him fast by the hand: now was each to the other
All loathly while living: his body-sore bided
The monster: was manifest now on his shoulder
The unceasing wound, sprang the sinews asunder,
The bone-lockers bursted. To Beowulf now
Was the battle-fame given; should Grendel thenceforth
Flee life-sick awayward and under the fen-bents
Seek his unmerry stead: now wist he more surely
That ended his life was, and gone over for ever,
His day-tale told out. But was for all Dane-folk
After that slaughter-race all their will done.
Then had he cleans'd for them, he the far-comer,
Wise and stout-hearted, the high hall of Hrothgar,
And sav'd it from war. So the night-work he joy'd in
And his doughty deed done. Yea, but he for the East-Danes

That lord of the Geat-folk his boast's end had gotten,
Withal their woes bygone all had he booted,
And the sorrow hate-fashion'd that afore they had dreed,
And the hard need and bitter that erst they must bear,
The sorrow unlittle. Sithence was clear token
When the deer of the battle laid down there the hand
The arm and the shoulder, and all there together
Of the grip of that Grendel 'neath the great roof upbuilded.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

XIV.

THE DANES REJOICE; THEY GO TO LOOK ON THE SLOT OF GRENDEL, AND COME BACK TO HART, AND ON THE WAY MAKE MERRY WITH RACING AND THE TELLING OF TALES.

THERE was then on the morning, as I have heard tell it,
Round the gift-hall a many of men of the warriors:
Were faring folk-leaders from far and from near
O'er the wide-away roads the wonder to look on,
The track of the loathly: his life-sundering nowise
Was deem'd for a sorrow to any of men there
Who gaz'd on the track of the gloryless wight;
How he all a-weary of mood thence awayward,
Brought to naught in the battle, to the mere of the nicors,
Now fey and forth-fleeing, his life-steps had flitted.
There all in the blood was the sea-brim a-welling,
The dread swing of the waves was washing all mingled
With hot blood; with the gore of the sword was it welling;
The death-doom'd had dyed it, sithence he unmerry
In his fen-hold had laid down the last of his life,
His soul of the heathen, and hell gat hold on him.
Thence back again far'd they those fellows of old,
With many a young one, from their wayfaring merry,
Full proud from the mere-side on mares there a-riding
The warriors on white steeds. There then was of Beowulf
Set forth the might mighty; oft quoth it a many
That nor northward nor southward beside the twin sea-floods,
Over all the huge earth's face now never another,
Never under the heaven's breadth, was there a better,
Nor of wielders of war-shields a worthier of kingship;
But neither their friendly lord blam'd they one whit,
Hrothgar the glad, for good of kings was he.
There whiles the warriors far-famed let leap
Their fair fallow horses and fare into flyting
Where unto them the earth-ways for fair-fashion'd seemed,
Through their choiceness well kenned; and whiles a king's thane,
A warrior vaunt-laden, of lays grown bemindful,
E'en he who all many of tales of the old days
A multitude minded, found other words also
Sooth-bounden, and boldly the man thus began
E'en Beowulf's wayfare well wisely to stir,
With good speed to set forth the spells well areded

And to shift about words. And well of all told he
That he of Sigemund erst had heard say,
Of the deeds of his might; and many things uncouth:
Of the strife of the Wælsing and his wide way-farings,
Of those that men's children not well yet they wist,
The feud and the crimes, save Fitela with him;
Somewhat of such things yet would he say,
The eme to the nephew; e'en as they aye were
In all strife soever fellows full needful;
And full many had they of the kin of the eotens
Laid low with the sword. And to Sigemund upsprang
After his death-day fair doom unlittle
Sithence that the war-hard the Worm there had quelled,
The herd of the hoard; he under the hoar stone,
The bairn of the Atheling, all alone dar'd it,
That wight deed of deeds; with him Fitela was not.
But howe'er, his hap was that the sword so throughwaded
The Worm the all-wondrous, that in the wall stood
The iron dear-wrought: and the drake died the murder.
There had the warrior so won by wightness,
That he of the ring-hoard the use might be having
All at his own will. The sea-boat he loaded,
And into the ship's barm bore the bright fretwork
Wæls' son. In the hotness the Worm was tomolten.
Now he of all wanderers was widely the greatest
Through the peoples of man-kind, the warder of warriors,
By mighty deeds; erst then and early he throve.
Now sithence the warfare of Heremod waned,
His might and his valour, amidst of the eotens
To the wielding of foemen straight was he betrayed,
And speedily sent forth: by the surges of sorrow
O'er-long was he lam'd, became he to his lieges,
To all of the athelings, a life-care thenceforward.
Withal oft bemoaned in times that were older
The ways of that stout heart many a carle of the wisest,
Who trow'd in him boldly for booting of bales,
And had look'd that the king's bairn should ever be thriving,
His father's own lordship should take, hold the folk,
The hoard and the ward-burg, and realm of the heroes,
The own land of the Scyldings. To all men was Beowulf,
The Hygelac's kinsman to the kindred of menfolk,
More fair unto friends; but on Heremod crime fell.
So whiles the men flyting the fallow street there
With their mares were they meting. There then was the morn-light
Thrust forth and hasten'd; went many a warrior
All hardy of heart to the high hall aloft
The rare wonder to see; and the King's self withal
From the bride-bower wended, the warder of ring-hoards,

All glorious he trod and a mickle troop had he,
He for choice ways beknown; and his Queen therewithal
Meted the mead-path with a meyny of maidens.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

XV.

KING HROTHGAR AND HIS THANES LOOK ON THE
ARM OF GRENDEL. CONVERSE BETWIXT HROTHGAR
AND BEOWULF CONCERNING THE BATTLE.

OUT then spake Hrothgar; for he to the hall went,
By the staple a-standing the steep roof he saw
Shining fair with the gold, and the hand there of Grendel:
For this sight that I see to the All-wielder thanks
Befall now forthwith, for foul evil I bided,
All griefs from this Grendel; but God, glory's Herder,
Wonder on wonder ever can work.
Unyore was it then when I for myself
Might ween never more, wide all through my life-days,
Of the booting of woes; when all blood-besprinkled
The best of all houses stood sword-gory here;
Wide then had the woe thrust off each of the wise
Of them that were looking that never life-long
That land-work of the folk they might ward from the loathly,
From ill wights and devils. But now hath a warrior
Through the might of the Lord a deed made thereunto
Which we, and all we together, in nowise
By wisdom might work. What! well might be saying
That maid whosoever this son brought to birth
According to man's kind, if yet she be living,
That the Maker of old time to her was all-gracious
In the bearing of bairns. O Beowulf, I now
Thee best of all men as a son unto me
Will love in my heart, and hold thou henceforward
Our kinship new-made now; nor to thee shall be lacking
As to longings of world-goods whereof I have wielding;
Full oft I for lesser things guerdon have given,
The worship of hoards, to a warrior was weaker,
A worser in strife. Now thyself for thyself
By deeds hast thou fram'd it that liveth thy fair fame
For ever and ever. So may the All-wielder
With good pay thee ever, as erst he hath done it.
Then Beowulf spake out, the Ecgtheow's bairn:
That work of much might with mickle of love
We framed with fighting, and frowardly ventur'd
The might of the uncouth; now I would that rather
Thou mightest have look'd on the very man there,
The foe in his fret-gear all worn unto falling.

There him in all haste with hard griping did I
On the slaughter-bed deem it to bind him indeed,
That he for my hand-grip should have to be lying
All busy for life: but his body fled off.
Him then I might not (since would not the Maker)
From his wayfaring sunder, nor naught so well sought I
The life-foe; o'er-mickle of might was he yet,
The foeman afoot: but his hand has he left us,
A life-ward, a-warding the ways of his wending,
His arm and his shoulder therewith. Yet in nowise
That wretch of the grooms any solace hath got him,
Nor longer will live the loathly deed-doer,
Beswinked with sins; for the sore hath him now
In the grip of need grievous, in strait hold together'd
With bonds that be baleful: there shall he abide,
That wight dyed with all evil-deeds, the doom mickle,
For what wise to him the bright Maker will write it.
Then a silenter man was the son there of Ecglaf
In the speech of the boasting of works of the battle,
After when every atheling by craft of the earl
Over the high roof had look'd on the hand there,
Yea, the fiend's fingers before his own eyen,
Each one of the nail-steads most like unto steel,
Hand-spur of the heathen one; yea, the own claw
Uncouth of the war-wight. But each one there quoth it,
That no iron of the best, of the hardy of folk,
Would touch him at all, which e'er of the monster
The battle-hand bloody might bear away thence.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

XVI.

HROTHGAR GIVETH GIFTS TO BEOWULF.

THEN was speedily bidden that Hart be withinward
By hand of man well adorn'd; was there a many
Of warriors and wives, who straightway that winehouse,
The guest-house, bedight them: there gold-shotten shone
The webs over the walls, many wonders to look on
For men every one who on such things will stare.
Was that building the bright all broken about
All withinward, though fast in the bands of the iron;
Asunder the hinges rent, only the roof there
Was saved all sound, when the monster of evil
The guilty of crime-deeds had gat him to flight
Never hoping for life. Nay, lightly now may not
That matter be fled from, frame it whoso may frame it.
But by strife man shall win of the bearers of souls,
Of the children of men, compelled by need,
The abiders on earth, the place made all ready,
The stead where his body laid fast on his death-bed
Shall sleep after feast. Now time and place was it
When unto the hall went that Healfdene's son,
And the King himself therein the feast should be sharing;
Never heard I of men-folk in fellowship more
About their wealth-giver so well themselves bearing.
Then bow'd unto bench there the abounders in riches
And were fain of their fill. Full fairly there took
A many of mead-cups the kin of those men,
The sturdy of heart in the hall high aloft,
Hrothgar and Hrothulf. Hart there withinward
Of friends was fulfilled; naught there that was guilesome
The folk of the Scyldings for yet awhile framed.
Gave then to Beowulf Healfdene's bairn
A golden war-ensign, the victory's guerdon,
A staff-banner fair-dight, a helm and a byrny:
The great jewel-sword a many men saw them
Bear forth to the hero. Then Beowulf took
The cup on the floor, and nowise of that fee-gift
Before the shaft-shooters the shame need he have.
Never heard I how friendlier four of the treasures,
All gear'd with the gold about, many men erewhile
On the ale-bench have given to others of men.
Round the roof of the helm, the burg of the head,
A wale wound with wires held ward from without-ward,

So that the file-leavings might not over fiercely,
Were they never so shower-hard, scathe the shield-bold,
When he 'gainst the angry in anger should get him.
Therewith bade the earls' burg that eight of the horses
With cheek-plates adorned be led down the floor
In under the fences; on one thereof stood
A saddle all craft-bedeck'd, seemly with treasure.
That same was the war-seat of the high King full surely
Whenas that the sword-play that Healfdene's son
Would work; never failed in front of the war
The wide-kenn'd one's war-might, whereas fell the slain.
So to Beowulf thereon of either of both
The Ingwines' high warder gave wielding to have,
Both the war-steeds and weapons, and bade him well brook them.
Thuswise and so manly the mighty of princes,
Hoard-warden of heroes, the battle-race paid
With mares and with gems, so as no man shall blame them,
E'en he who will say sooth aright as it is.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

XVII.

THEY FEAST IN HART. THE GLEEMAN SINGS OF FINN AND HENGEST.

THEN the lord of the earl-folk to every and each one
Of them who with Beowulf the sea-ways had worn
Then and there on the mead-bench did handsel them treasure,
An heir-loom to wit; for him also he bade it
That a were-gild be paid, whom Grendel aforetime
By wickedness quell'd, as far more of them would he,
Save from them God all-witting the weird away wended,
And that man's mood withal. But the Maker all wielded
Of the kindred of mankind, as yet now he doeth.
Therefore through-witting will be the best everywhere
And the forethought of mind. Many things must abide
Of lief and of loth, he who here a long while
In these days of the strife with the world shall be dealing.
There song was and sound all gather'd together
Of that Healfdene's warrior and wielder of battle,
The wood of glee greeted, the lay wreaked often,
Whenas the hall-game the minstrel of Hrothgar
All down by the mead-bench tale must be making:
By Finn's sons aforetime, when the fear gat them,
The hero of Half-Danes, Hnæf of the Scyldings,
On the slaughter-field Frisian needs must he fall.
Forsooth never Hildeburh needed to hery
The troth of the Eotens; she all unsinning
Was lorne of her lief ones in that play of the linden,
Her bairns and her brethren, by fate there they fell
Spear-wounded. That was the all-woeful of women.
Not unduly without cause the daughter of Hoc
Mourn'd the Maker's own shaping, sithence came the morn
When she under the heavens that tide came to see,
Murder-bale of her kinsmen, where most had she erewhile
Of world's bliss. The war-tide took all men away
Of Finn's thanes that were, save only a few;
E'en so that he might not on the field of the meeting
Hold Hengest a war-tide, or fight any whit,
Nor yet snatch away thence by war the woeleavings
From the thane of the King; but terms now they bade him
That for them other stead all for all should make room,
A hall and high settle, whereof the half-wielding
They with the Eotens' bairns henceforth might hold,
And with fee-gifts moreover the son of Folkwalda

Each day of the days the Danes should beworthy;
The war-heap of Hengest with rings should he honour
Even so greatly with treasure of treasures,
Of gold all beplated, as he the kin Frisian
Down in the beer-hall duly should dight.
Troth then they struck there each of the two halves,
A peace-troth full fast. There Finn unto Hengest
Strongly, unstrifeful, with oath-swearing swore,
That he the woe-leaving by the doom of the wise ones
Should hold in all honour, that never man henceforth
With word or with work the troth should be breaking,
Nor through craft of the guileful should undo it ever,
Though their ring-giver's bane they must follow in rank
All lordless, e'en so need is it to be:
But if any of Frisians by over-bold speaking
The murderful hatred should call unto mind,
Then naught but the edge of the sword should avenge it.
Then done was the oath there, and gold of the golden
Heav'd up from the hoard. Of the bold Here-Scyldings
All yare on the bale was the best battle-warrior;
On the death-howe beholden was easily there
The sark stain'd with war-sweat, the all-golden swine,
The iron-hard boar; there was many an atheling
With wounds all outworn; some on slaughterfield welter'd.
But Hildeburh therewith on Hnæf's bale she bade them
The own son of herself to set fast in the flame,
His bone-vats to burn up and lay on the bale there:
On his shoulder all woeful the woman lamented,
Sang songs of bewailing, as the warrior strode upward,
Wound up to the welkin that most of death-fires,
Before the howe howled; there molten the heads were,
The wound-gates burst open, there blood was out-springing
From foe-bites of the body; the flame swallow'd all,
The greediest of ghosts, of them that war gat him
Of either of folks; shaken off was their life-breath.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

XVIII.

THE ENDING OF THE TALE OF FINN.

DEPARTED the warriors their wicks to visit
All forlorn of their friends now, Friesland to look on,
Their homes and their high burg. Hengest a while yet
Through the slaughter-dyed winter bode dwelling with Finn
And all without strife: he remember'd his homeland,
Though never he might o'er the mere be a-driving
The high prow be-ringed: with storm the holm welter'd,
Won war 'gainst the winds; winter locked the waves
With bondage of ice, till again came another
Of years into the garth, as yet it is ever,
And the days which the season to watch never cease,
The glory-bright weather; then gone was the winter,
And fair was the earth's barm. Now hasten'd the exile,
The guest from the garths; he on getting of vengeance
Of harms thought more greatly than of the sea's highway,
If he but a wrath-mote might yet be a-wending
Where the bairns of the Eotens might he still remember.
The ways of the world forwent he in nowise
Then, whenas Hunlafing the light of the battle,
The best of all bills, did into his breast,
Whereof mid the Eotens were the edges well known.
Withal to the bold-hearted Finn befell after
Sword-bales the deadly at his very own dwelling,
When the grim grip of war Guthlaf and Oslaf
After the sea-fare lamented with sorrow
And wyted him deal of their woes; nor then might he
In his breast hold his wavering heart. Was the hall dight
With the lives of slain foemen, and slain eke was Finn
The King 'midst of his court-men; and there the Queen, taken,
The shooters of the Scyldings ferry'd down to the sea-ships,
And the house-wares and chattels the earth-king had had,
E'en such as at Finn's home there might they find,
Of collars and cunning gems. They on the seapath
The all-lordly wife to the Danes straightly wended,
Led her home to their people. So sung was the lay,
The song of the gleeman; then again arose game,
The bench-voice wax'd brighter, gave forth the birlers
Wine of the wonder-vats. Then came forth Wealththeow
Under gold ring a-going to where sat the two good ones,
The uncle and nephew, yet of kindred unsunder'd,
Each true to the other. Eke Unferth the spokesman

Sat at feet of the Scyldings' lord; each of his heart trow'd
That of mickle mood was he, though he to his kinsmen
Were un-upright in edge-play. Spake the dame of the Scyldings:
Now take thou this cup, my lord of the kingly,
Bestower of treasures! Be thou in thy joyance,
Thou gold-friend of men! and speak to these Geat-folk
In mild words, as duly behoveth to do;
Be glad toward the Geat-folk, and mindful of gifts;
From anigh and from far peace hast thou as now.
To me one hath said it, that thou for a son wouldst
This warrior be holding. Lo! Hart now is cleansed,
The ring-hall bright-beaming. Have joy while thou mayest
In many a meed, and unto thy kinsmen
Leave folk and dominion, when forth thou must fare
To look on the Maker's own making. I know now
My Hrothulf the gladsome, that he this young man
Will hold in all honour if thou now before him,
O friend of the Scyldings, shall fare from the world;
I ween that good-will yet this man will be yielding
To our offspring that after us be, if he mind him
Of all that which we two, for good-will and for worship,
Unto him erst a child yet have framed of kindness.
Then along by the bench did she turn, where her boys were,
Hrethric and Hrothmund, and the bairns of high warriors,
The young ones together; and there sat the good one,
Beowulf the Geat, betwixt the two brethren.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

XIX.

MORE GIFTS ARE GIVEN TO BEOWULF. THE BRISING COLLAR TOLD OF.

BORNE to him then the cup was, and therewith friendly bidding
In words was put forth; and gold about wounden
All blithely they bade him bear; arm-gearings twain,
Rail and rings, the most greatest of fashion of neck-rings
Of them that on earth I have ever heard tell of:
Not one under heaven wrought better was heard of
Midst the hoard-gems of heroes, since bore away Hama
To the bright burg and brave the neck-gear of the Brisings,
The gem and the gem-chest: from the foeman's guile fled he
Of Eormenic then, and chose rede everlasting.
That ring Hygelac had, e'en he of the Geat-folk,
The grandson of Swerting, the last time of all times
When he under the war-sign his treasure defended,
The slaughter-prey warded. Him weird bore away
Sithence he for pride-sake the war-woe abided,
The feud with the Frisians; the fretwork he flitted,
The gem-stones much worthy, all over the waves' cup.
The King the full mighty cring'd under the shield;
Into grasp of the Franks the King's life was gotten
With the gear of the breast and the ring altogether;
It was worsen war-wolves then reft gear from the slain
After the war-shearing; there the Geats' war-folk
Held the house of the dead men. The Hall took the voices;
Spake out then Wealhtheow; before the host said she:
Brook thou this roundel, lief Beowulf, henceforth,
Dear youth, with all hail, and this rail be thou using,
These gems of folk-treasures, and thrive thou well ever;
Thy might then make manifest! Be to these lads here
Kind of lore, and for that will I look to thy guerdon.
Thou hast won by thy faring, that far and near henceforth,
Through wide time to come, men will give thee the worship,
As widely as ever the sea winds about
The windy land-walls. Be the while thou art living
An atheling wealthy, and well do I will thee
Of good of the treasures; be thou to my son
In deed ever friendly, and uphold thy joyance!
Lo! each of the earls here to the other is trusty,
And mild of his mood and to man-lord full faithful,
Kind friends all the thanes are, the folk ever yare.
Ye well drunk of folk-grooms, now do ye my biddings.

To her settle then far'd she; was the feast of the choicest,
The men drank the wine nothing wotting of weird,
The grim shaping of old, e'en as forth it had gone
To a many of earls; sithence came the even,
And Hrothgar departed to his chamber on high,
The rich to his rest; and aright the house warded
Earls untold of number, as oft did they erewhile.
The bench-boards they bar'd them, and there they spread over
With beds and with bolsters. Of the beerskinkers one
Who fain was and fey bow'd adown to his floorrest.
At their heads then they rested their rounds of the battle,
Their board-woods bright-shining. There on the bench was,
Over the atheling, easy to look on
The battle-steep war-helm, the byrny be-ringed,
The wood of the onset, all-glorious. Their wont was
That oft and oft were they all yare for the war-tide,
Both at home and in hosting, were it one were it either,
And for every such tide as their liege lord unto
The need were befallen: right good was that folk.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

XX.

GRENDEL'S DAM BREAKS INTO HART AND BEARS OFF AESCHERE.

SO sank they to slumber; but one paid full sorely
For his rest of the even, as to them fell full often
Sithence that the gold-hall Grendel had guarded,
And won deed of unright, until that the end came
And death after sinning: but clear was it shown now,
Wide wotted of men, that e'en yet was a wreaker
Living after the loathly, a long while of time
After the battle-care, Grendel's own mother;
The woman, the monster-wife, minded her woe,
She who needs must in horror of waters be winning,
The streams all a-cold, sithence Cain was become
For an edge-bane forsooth to his very own brother,
The own son of his father. Forth bann'd then he fared,
All marked by murder, from man's joy to flee,
And dwelt in the waste-land. Thence woke there a many
Ghosts shapen of old time, of whom one was Grendel,
The fierce wolf, the hateful, who found him at Hart
A man there a-watching, abiding the war-tide;
Where to him the fell ogre to hand-grips befell;
Howe'er he him minded of the strength of his might,
The great gift set fast in him given of God,
And trowed in grace by the All-wielder given,
His fostering, his staying; so the fiend he o'er-came
And bow'd down the Hell's ghost, that all humble he wended
Fordone of all mirth death's house to go look on,
That fiend of all mankind. But yet was his mother,
The greedy, the glum-moody, fain to be going
A sorrowful journey her son's death to wreak.
So came she to Hart whereas now the Ring-Danes
Were sleeping adown the hall; soon there befell
Change of days to the earl-folk, when in she came thrusting,
Grendel's mother: and soothly was minish'd the terror
By even so much as the craft-work of maidens,
The war-terror of wife, is beside the man weapon'd,
When the sword all hard bounden, by hammers to-beaten,
The sword all sweat-stain'd, through the swine o'er the war-helm
With edges full doughty down rightly sheareth.
But therewith in the hall was tugg'd out the hard edge,
The sword o'er the settles, and wide shields a many
Heaved fast in the hand: no one the helm heeded,

Nor the byrny wide-wrought, when the wild fear fell on them.
In haste was she then, and out would she thenceforth
For the saving her life, whenas she should be found there.
But one of the athelings she speedily handled
And caught up full fast, and fenward so fared.
But he was unto Hrothgar the liefest of heroes
Of the sort of the fellows; betwixt the two seafoods
A mighty shield-warrior, whom she at rest brake up,
A war-wight well famed. There Beowulf was not;
Another house soothly had erewhile been dighted
After gift of that treasure to that great one of Geats.
Uprose cry then in Hart, all 'mid gore had she taken
The hand, the well-known, and now care wrought anew
In the wicks was arisen. Naught well was the bargain
That on both halves they needs must be buying that tide
With the life-days of friends. Then the lord king, the wise,
The hoary of war-folk, was harmed of mood
When his elder of thanes and he now unliving,
The dearest of all, he knew to be dead.
To the bower full swiftly was Beowulf brought now,
The man victory-dower'd; together with day-dawn
Went he, one of the earls, that champion beworthy'd,
Himself with his fellows, where the wise was abiding
To wot if the All-wielder ever will to him
After the tale of woe happy change work.
Then went down the floor he the war-worthy
With the host of his hand, while high dinn'd the hall-wood,
Till he there the wise one with words had well greeted,
The lord of the Ingwines, and ask'd had the night been,
Since sore he was summon'd, a night of sweet easement.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

XXI.

HROTHGAR LAMENTS THE SLAYING OF AESCHERE, AND TELLS OF GRENDEL'S MOTHER AND HER DEN.

SPAKE out then Hrothgar the helm of the Scyldings:
Ask no more after bliss; for new-made now is sorrow
For the folk of the Danes; for Aeschere is dead,
He who was Yrmenlaf's elder of brethren,
My wise man of runes, my bearer of redes,
Mine own shoulder-fellow, when we in the war-tide
Warded our heads and the host on the host fell,
And the boars were a-crashing; e'en such should an earl be,
An atheling exceeding good, e'en as was Aeschere.
Now in Hart hath befallen for a hand-bane unto him
A slaughter-ghost wandering; naught wot I whither
The fell one, the carrion-proud, far'd hath her back-fare,
By her fill made all famous. That feud hath she wreaked
Wherein yesternight gone by Grendel thou quelledst
Through thy hardihood fierce with grips hard enow,
For that he over-long the lief people of me
Made to wane and undid. In the war then he cringed,
Being forfeit of life. But now came another,
An ill-scather mighty, her son to awreak;
And further hath she now the feud set on foot,
As may well be deemed of many a thane,
Who after the wealth-giver weepeth in mind,
A hard bale of heart. Now the hand lieth low
Which well-nigh for every joy once did avail you.
The dwellers in land here, my people indeed,
The wise-of-rede hall-folk, have I heard say e'en this:
That they have set eyes on two such-like ere-while,
Two mickle mark-striders the moorland a-holding,
Ghosts come from elsewhere, but of them one there was,
As full certainly might they then know it to be,
In the likeness of woman; and the other shap'd loathly
All after man's image trod the tracks of the exile,
Save that more was he shapen than any man other;
And in days gone away now they named him Grendel,
The dwellers in fold; they wot not if a father
Unto him was born ever in the days of erewhile
Of dark ghosts. They dwell in a dim hidden land,
The wolf-bents they bide in, on the nesses the windy,
The perilous fen-paths where the stream of the fell-side
Midst the mists of the nesses wends netherward ever,

The flood under earth. Naught far away hence,
But a mile-mark forsooth, there standeth the mere,
And over it ever hang groves all berimed,
The wood fast by the roots over-helmeth the water.
But each night may one a dread wonder there see,
A fire in the flood. But none liveth so wise
Of the bairns of mankind, that the bottom may know.
Although the heath-stepper beswinked by hounds,
The hart strong of horns, that holt-wood should seek to
Driven fleeing from far, he shall sooner leave life,
Leave life-breath on the bank, or ever will he
Therein hide his head. No hallow'd stead is it:
Thence the blending of water-waves ever upriseth
Wan up to the welkin, whenso the wind stirreth
Weather-storms loathly, until the lift darkens
And weepeth the heavens. Now along the rede wendeth
Of thee again only. Of that earth yet thou know'st not,
The fearful of steads, wherein thou mayst find
That much-sinning wight; seek then if thou dare,
And thee for that feud will I guerdon with fee,
The treasures of old time, as erst did I do,
With the gold all-bewouden, if away thence thou get thee.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

XXII.

THEY FOLLOW GRENDEL'S DAM TO HER LAIR.

SPAKE out then Beowulf the Ecgtheow's bairn:
O wise of men, mourn not; for to each man 'tis better
That his friend he awaketh than weep overmuch.
Lo! each of us soothly abideth the ending
Of the life of the world. Then let him work who work may
High deeds ere the death: to the doughty of war-lads
When he is unliving shall it best be hereafter.
Rise up, warder of kingdom! and swiftly now wend we
The Grendel Kinswoman's late goings to look on;
And this I behote thee, that to holm shall she flee not,
Nor into earth's fathom, nor into the fell-holt,
Nor the grounds of the ocean, go whereas she will go.
For this one of days patience dree thou a while then
Of each one of thy woes, as I ween it of thee.
Then leapt up the old man, and lightly gave God thank,
That mighty of Lords, for the word which the man spake.
And for Hrothgar straightway then was bitted a horse,
A wave-maned steed: and the wise of the princes
Went stately his ways; and stepp'd out the mantroop,
The linden-board bearers. Now lightly the tracks were
All through the woodland ways wide to be seen there,
Her goings o'er ground; she had gotten her forthright
Over the mirk-moor: bore she of kindred thanes
The best that there was, all bare of his soul,
Of them that with Hrothgar heeded the home.
Overwent then that bairn of the athelings
Steep bents of the stones, and stridings full narrow,
Strait paths nothing pass'd over, ways all uncouth,
Sheer nesses to wit, many houses of nicors.
He one of the few was going before
Of the wise of the men the meadow to look on,
Until suddenly there the trees of the mountains
Over the hoar-stone found he a-leaning,
A wood without gladness: the water stood under
Dreary and troubled. Unto all the Danes was it,
To the friends of the Scyldings, most grievous in mood
To many of thanes such a thing to be tholing,
Sore evil to each one of earls, for of Aeschere
The head did they find e'en there on the holmcliff;
The flood with gore welled (the folk looking on it),
With hot blood. But whiles then the horn fell to singing

A song of war eager. There sat down the band;
They saw down the water a many of worm-kind,
Sea-drakes seldom seen a-kenning the sound;
Likewise on the ness-bents nicors a-lying,
Who oft on the undern-tide wont are to hold them
A course full of sorrow all over the sail-road.
Now the worms and the wild-deer away did they speed
Bitter and wrath-swollen all as they heard it,
The war-horn a-wailing: but one the Geats' warden
With his bow of the shafts from his life-days there sunder'd,
From his strife of the waves; so that stood in his life-parts
The hard arrow of war; and he in the holm was
The slower in swimming as death away swept him.
So swiftly in sea-waves with boar-spears forsooth
Sharp-hook'd and hard-press'd was he thereupon,
Set on with fierce battle, and on to the ness tugg'd,
The wondrous wave-bearer; and men were beholding
The grisly guest. Beowulf therewith he gear'd him
With weed of the earls: nowise of life reck'd he:
Needs must his war-byrny, braided by hands,
Wide, many-colour'd by cunning, the sound seek,
E'en that which his bone-coffer knew how to ward,
So that the war-grip his heart ne'er a while,
The foe-s snatch of the wrathful his life ne'er should scathe;
Therewith the white war-helm warded his head,
E'en that which should mingle with ground of the mere,
And seek the sound-welter, with treasure beworthy'd,
All girt with the lordly chains, as in days gone by
The weapon-smith wrought it most wondrously done,
Beset with the swine-shapes, so that sithence
The brand or the battle-blades never might bite it.
Nor forsooth was that littlest of all of his mainstays,
Which to him in his need lent the spokesman of Hrothgar,
E'en the battle-sword hafted that had to name Hrunting,
That in fore days was one of the treasures of old,
The edges of iron with the poison twigs o'er-stain'd,
With battle-sweat harden'd; in the brunt never fail'd he
Any one of the warriors whose hand wound about him,
Who in grisly wayfarings durst ever to wend him
To the folk-stead of foemen. Not the first of times was it
That battle-work doughty it had to be doing.
Forsooth naught remember'd that son there of Ecglaf,
The crafty in mighty deeds, what ere he quoth
All drunken with wine, when the weapon he lent
To a doughtier sword-wolf: himself naught he durst it
Under war of the waves there his life to adventure
And warrior-ship work. So forwent he the glory,
The fair fame of valour. Naught far'd so the other

Syth he to the war-tide had gear'd him to wend.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

XXIII.

BEOWULF REACHETH THE MERE-BOTTOM IN A DAY'S WHILE, AND CONTENTS WITH GRENDEL'S DAM.

OUT then spake Beowulf, Ecgtheow's bairn:
Forsooth be thou mindful, O great son of Healfdene,
O praise of the princes, now way-fain am I,
O gold-friend of men, what we twain spake afore-time:
If to me for thy need it might so befall
That I cease from my life-days, thou shouldest be ever
To me, forth away wended, in the stead of a father.
Do thou then bear in hand these thanes of my kindred,
My hand-fellows, if so be battle shall have me;
Those same treasures withal, which thou gavest me erst,
O Hrothgar the lief, unto Hygelac send thou;
By that gold then shall wot the lord of the Geat-folk,
Shall Hrethel's son see, when he stares on the treasure,
That I in fair man-deeds a good one have found me,
A ring-giver; while I might, joy made I thereof.
And let thou then Unferth the ancient loom have,
The wave-sword adorned, that man kenned widely,
The blade of hard edges; for I now with Hrunting
Will work me the glory, or else shall death get me.
So after these words the Weder-Geats' chieftain
With might of heart hasten'd; nor for answer then would he
Aught tarry; the sea-welter straightway took hold on
The warrior of men: wore the while of a daytide
Or ever the ground-plain might he set eyes on.
Soon did she find, she who the flood-ring
Sword-ravening had held for an hundred of seasons,
Greedy and grim, that there one man of grooms
The abode of the alien-wights sought from above;
Then toward him she grasp'd and gat hold on the warrior
With fell clutch, but no sooner she scathed within-ward
The hale body; rings from without-ward it warded,
That she could in no wise the war-skin clutch through,
The fast locked limb-sark, with fingers all loathly.
So bare then that sea-wolf when she came unto bottom
The king of the rings to the court-hall adown
In such wise that he might not, though hard-moody was he,
Be wielding of weapons. But a many of wonders
In sea-swimming swink'd him, and many a sea-deer
With his war-tusks was breaking his sark of the battle;
The fell wights him follow'd. 'Twas then the earl found it

That in foe-hall there was he, I wot not of which,
Where never the water might scathe him a whit,
Nor because of the roof-hall might reach to him there
The fear-grip of the flood. Now fire-light he saw,
The bleak beam forsooth all brightly a-shining.
Then the good one, he saw the wolf of the ground,
The mere-wife the mighty, and main onset made he
With his battle-bill; never his hand withheld sword-swing,
So that there on her head sang the ring-sword for-sooth
The song of war greedy. But then found the guest
That the beam of the battle would bite not therewith,
Or scathe life at all, but there failed the edge
The king in his need. It had ere thol'd a many
Of meetings of hand; oft it sheared the helm,
The host-rail of the fey one; and then was the first time
For that treasure dear lov'd that its might lay a-low.
But therewithal steadfast, naught sluggish of valour,
All mindful of high deeds was Hygelac's kinsman.
Cast then the wunden blade bound with the gem-stones
The warrior all angry, that it lay on the earth there,
Stiff-wrought and steel-edged. In strength now he trusted,
The hard hand-grip of might and main; so shall a man do
When he in the war-tide yet looketh to winning
The praise that is longsome, nor aught for life careth.
Then fast by the shoulder, of the feud nothing recking,
The lord of the War-Geats clutch'd Grendel's mother,
Cast down the battle-hard, bollen with anger,
That foe of the life, till she bow'd to the floor;
But swiftly to him gave she back the hand-guerdon
With hand-graspings grim, and griped against him;
Then mood-weary stumbled the strongest of warriors,
The foot-kemp, until that adown there he fell.
Then she sat on the hall-guest and tugg'd out her sax,
The broad and brown-edged, to wreak her her son,
Her offspring her own. But lay yet on his shoulder
The breast-net well braided, the berg of his life,
That 'gainst point and 'gainst edge the entrance withstood.
Gone amiss then forsooth had been Ecgtheow's son
Underneath the wide ground there, the kemp of the Geats,
Save to him his war-byrny had fram'd him a help,
The hard host-net; and save that the Lord God the Holy
Had wielded the war-gain, the Lord the All-wise;
Save that the skies' Ruler had rightwisely doom'd it
All easily. Sithence he stood up again.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

XXIV.

BEOWULF SLAYETH GRENDEL'S DAM, SMITETH OFF
GRENDEL'S HEAD, AND COMETH BACK WITH HIS
THANES TO HART.

MIDST the war-gear he saw then a bill victory-wealthy,
An old sword of eotens full doughty of edges,
The worship of warriors. That was choice of all weapons,
Save that more was it made than any man other
In the battle-play ever might bear it afield,
So goodly, all glorious, the work of the giants.
Then the girdled hilt seiz'd he, the Wolf of the Scyldings,
The rough and the sword-grim, and drew forth the ring-sword,
Naught weening of life, and wrathful he smote then
So that there on her halse the hard edge begripped,
And brake through the bone-rings: the bill all through-waded
Her flesh-sheathing fey; cring'd she down on the floor;
The sword was war-sweaty, the man in his work joy'd.
The bright beam shone forth, the light stood withinward,
E'en as down from the heavens' clear high aloft shineth
The sky's candle. He all along the house scanned;
Then turn'd by the wall along, heav'd up his weapon
Hard by the hilts the Hygelac's thane there,
Ireful one-reded; naught worthless the edge was
Unto the warrior; but rathely now would he
To Grendel make payment of many war-onsets,
Of them that he wrought on the folk of the West Danes
Oftener by mickle than one time alone,
Whenas he the hearthfellows of Hrothgar the King
Slew in their slumber and fretted them sleeping,
Men fifteen to wit of the folk of the Danes,
And e'en such another deal ferry'd off outward,
Loathly prey. Now he paid him his guerdon therefor,
The fierce champion; so well, that abed there he saw
Where Grendel war-weary was lying adown
Forlorn of his life, as him ere had scathed
The battle at Hart; sprang wide the body,
Sithence after death he suffer'd the stroke,
The hard swing of sword. Then he smote the head off him.
Now soon were they seeing, those sage of the carles,
E'en they who with Hrothgar gaz'd down on the holm,
That the surge of the billows was blended about,
The sea stain'd with blood. Therewith the hoar-blended,

The old men, of the good one gat talking together
That they of the Atheling ween'd never eft-soon
That he, glad in his war-gain, should wend him a-seeking
The mighty king, since unto many it seemed
That him the mere-she-wolf had sunder'd and broken.
Came then nones of the day, and the ness there they gave up,
The Scyldings the brisk; and then busk'd him home thence-ward
The gold-friend of men. But the guests, there they sat
All sick of their mood, and star'd on the mere;
They wist not, they ween'd not if him their own friend-lord
Himself they should see.
Now that sword began
Because of the war-sweat into icicles war-made,
The war-bill, to wane: that was one of the wonders
That it melted away most like unto ice
When the bond of the frost the Father lets loosen,
Unwindeth the wave-ropes, e'en he that hath wielding
Of times and of seasons, who is the sooth Shaper.
In those wicks there he took not, the Weder-Geats' champion,
Of treasure-wealth more, though he saw there a many,
Than the off-smitten head and the sword-hilts together
With treasure made shifting; for the sword-blade was molten,
The sword broider'd was burn'd up, so hot was that blood,
So poisonous the alien ghost there that had died.
Now soon was a-swimming he who erst in the strife bode
The war-onset of wrath ones; he div'd up through the water;
And now were the wave-welters cleansed full well,
Yea the dwellings full wide, where the ghost of elsewhither
Let go of his life-days and the waning of living.
Came then unto land the helm of the ship-lads
Swimming stout-hearted, glad of his sea-spoil,
The burden so mighty of that which he bore there.
Yode then against him and gave thanks to God
That fair heap of thanes, and were fain of their lord,
For that hale and sound now they might see him with eyen;
Then was from the bold one the helm and the byrny
All speedily loosen'd. The lake now was laid,
The water 'neath welkin with war-gore bestained.
Forth then they far'd them alongst of the foot-tracks,
Men fain of heart all, as they meted the earth-way,
The street the well known; then those king-bold of men
Away from the holm-cliff the head there they bore
Uneasily ever to each one that bore it,
The full stout-heart of men: it was four of them needs must
On the stake of the slaughter with strong toil there ferry
Unto the gold-hall the head of that Grendel;
Until forthright in haste came into that hall,
Fierce, keen in the hosting, a fourteen of men

Of the Geat-folk a-ganging; and with them their lord,
The moody amidst of the throng, trod the mead-plains;
Came then in a-wending the foreman of thanes,
The man keen of his deeds all beworshipp'd of doom,
The hero, the battle-deer, Hrothgar to greet.
Then was by the fell borne in onto the floor
Grendel's head, whereas men were a-drinking in hall,
Aweful before the earls, yea and the woman.
The sight wondrous to see the warriors there look'd on.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

XXV.

CONVERSE OF HROTHGAR WITH BEOWULF.

SPAKE out then Beowulf, Ecgtheow's bairn:
What! we the sea-spoils here to thee, son of Healfdene,
High lord of the Scyldings, with lust have brought hither
For a token of glory, e'en these thou beholdest.
Now I all unsoftly with life I escaped,
In war under the water dar'd I the work
Full hard to be worked, and well-nigh there was
The sundering of strife, save that me God had shielded.
So it is that in battle naught might I with Hrunting
One whit do the work, though the weapon be doughty;
But to me then he granted, the Wielder of men,
That on wall I beheld there all beauteous hanging
An ancient sword might-endow'd (often he leadeth right
The friendless of men); so forth drew I that weapon.
In that onset I slew there, as hap then appaid me,
The herd of the house; then that bill of the host,
The broider'd sword, burn'd up, and that blood sprang forth
The hottest of battle-sweats; but the hilts thereof thenceforth
From the foemen I ferry'd. I wreaked the foul deeds,
The death-quelling of Danes, e'en as duly behoved.
Now this I behote thee, that here in Hart mayst thou
Sleep sorrowless henceforth with the host of thymen
And the thanes every one that are of thy people
Of doughty and young; that for them need thou dread not,
O high lord of Scyldings, on that behalf soothly
Life-bale for the earls as erst thou hast done.
Then was the hilt golden to the ancient of warriors,
The hoary of host-leaders, into hand given,
The old work of giants; it turn'd to the owning,
After fall of the Devils, of the lord of the Danes,
That work of the wonder-smith, syth gave up the world
The fierce-hearted groom, the foeman of God,
The murder-beguilty, and there eke his mother;
Unto the wielding of world-kings it turned,
The best that there be betwixt of the sea-floods
Of them that in Scaney dealt out the scat.
Now spake out Hrothgar, as he look'd on the hilts there,
The old heir-loom whereon was writ the beginning
Of the strife of the old time, whenas the flood slew,
The ocean a-gushing, that kin of the giants
As fiercely they fared. That was a folk alien

To the Lord everlasting; so to them a last guerdon
Through the welling of waters the Wielder did give.
So was on the sword-guards all of the sheer gold
By dint of the rune-staves rightly remarked,
Set down and said for whom first was that sword wrought,
And the choice of all irons erst had been done,
Wreath-hilted and worm-adorn'd. Then spake the wise one,
Healfdene's son, and all were gone silent:
Lo that may he say, who the right and the soothfast
Amid the folk frameth, and far back all remembers,
The old country's warden, that as for this earl here
Born better was he. Uprear'd is the fame-blast
Through wide ways far yonder, O Beowulf, friend mine,
Of thee o'er all peoples. Thou hold'st all with patience,
Thy might with mood-wisdom; I shall make thee my love good,
As we twain at first spake it. For a comfort thou shalt be
Granted long while and long unto thy people,
For a help unto heroes. Naught such became Heremod
To Ecgwela's offspring, the honourful Scyldings;
For their welfare naught wax'd he, but for felling in slaughter,
For the quelling of death to the folk of the Danes.
Mood-swollen he brake there his board-fellows soothly,
His shoulder-friends, until he sunder'd him lonely,
That mighty of princes, from the mirth of all men-folk.
Though him God the mighty in the joyance of might,
In main strength, exalted high over all men,
And framed him forth, yet fast in his heart grew
A breast-board blood-fierce; none of fair rings he gave
To the Danes as due doom would. Unmerry he dured
So that yet of that strife the trouble he suffer'd,
A folk-bale so longsome. By such do thou learn thee,
Get thee hold of man-valor: this tale for thy teaching
Old in winters I tell thee. 'Tis wonder to say it,
How the high God almighty to the kindred of mankind
Through his mind the wide-fashion'd deals wisdom about,
Home and earlship; he owneth the wielding of all.
At whiles unto love he letteth to turn
The mood-thought of a man that is mighty of kindred,
And in his land giveth him joyance of earth,
And to have and to hold the high ward-burg of men,
And sets so 'neath his wielding the deals of the world,
Dominion wide reaching, that he himself may not
In all his unwisdom of the ending bethink him.
He wonneth well-faring, nothing him wasteth
Sickness nor eld, nor the foe-sorrow to him
Dark in mind waxeth, nor strife any where,
The edge-hate, appeareth; but all the world for him
Wends as he willeth, and the worse naught he wotteth.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

XXVI.

MORE CONVERSE OF HROTHGAR AND BEOWULF: THE GEATS MAKE THEM READY FOR DEPARTURE.

UNTIL that within him a deal of o'erthinking
Waxeth and groweth while sleepeth the warder,
The soul's herdsman; that slumber too fast is forsooth,
Fast bounden by troubles, the banesman all nigh,
E'en he that from arrow-bow evilly shooteth.
Then he in his heart under helm is besmitten
With a bitter shaft; not a whit then may he ward him
From the wry wonder-biddings of the ghost the all-wicked.
Too little he deems that which long he hath holden,
Wrath-greedy he covets; nor e'en for boast-sake gives
The rings fair beplated; and the forth-coming doom
Forgetteth, forheedeth, for that God gave him erewhile,
The Wielder of glory, a deal of the worship.
At the ending-stave then it after befalleth
That the shell of his body sinks fleeting away,
And falleth all fey; and another one fetcheth,
E'en one that undolefully dealeth the treasure,
The earl's gains of aforetime, and fear never heedeth.
From the bale-envy ward thee, lief Beowulf, therefore,
Thou best of all men, and choose thee the better,
The redes everlasting; to o'erthinking turn not,
O mighty of champions! for now thy might breatheth
For a short while of time; but eft-soon it shall be
That sickness or edges from thy strength thee shall sunder,
Or the hold of the fire, or the welling of floods,
Or the grip of the sword-blade, or flight of the spear,
Or eld the all-evil: or the beaming of eyen
Shall fail and shall dim: then shall it be forthright
That thee, lordly man, the death over-masters.
E'en so I the Ring-Danes for an hundred of seasons
Did wield under the welkin and lock'd them by war
From many a kindred the Middle-Garth over
With ash-spears and edges, in such wise that not ever
Under the sky's run of my foemen I reckon'd.
What! to me in my land came a shifting of that,
Came grief after game, sithence Grendel befell,
My foeman of old, mine ingoer soothly.
I from that onfall bore ever unceasing
Mickle mood-care; herefor be thanks to the Maker.
To the Lord everlasting, that in life I abided,

Yea, that I on that head all sword-gory there,
Now the old strife is over, with eyen should stare.
Go fare thou to settle, the feast-joyance dree thou,
O war-worshipp'd! unto us twain yet there will be
Mickle treasure in common when come is the morning.
Glad of mood then the Geat was, and speedy he gat him
To go see the settle, as the sage one commanded.
Then was after as erst, that they of the might-fame,
The floor-sitters, fairly the feasting bedight them
All newly. The helm of the night loured over
Dark over the host-men. Uprose all the doughty,
For he, the hoar-blended, would wend to his bed,
That old man of the Scyldings. The Geat without measure,
The mighty shield-warrior, now willed him rest.
And soon now the hall-thane him of way-faring weary,
From far away come, forth show'd him the road,
E'en he who for courtesy cared for all things
Of the needs of the thane, e'en such as on that day
The farers o'er ocean would fainly have had.
Rested then the wide-hearted; high up the house tower'd
Wide-gaping all gold-dight; within slept the guest;
Until the black raven, the blithe-hearted, boded
The heavens' joy: then was come thither ahastening
The bright sun o'er the plains, and hasten'd the scathers,
The athelings once more aback to their people
All fain to be faring; and far away thence
Would the comer high-hearted go visit his keel.
Bade then the hard one Hrunting to bear,
The Ecglaef's son bade to take him his sword,
The iron well-lov'd; gave him thanks for the lending,
Quoth he that the war-friend for worthy he told,
Full of craft in the war; nor with word blam'd he aught
The edge of the sword. Hah! the high-hearted warrior.
So whenas all way-forward, yare in their war-gear,
Were the warriors, the dear one then went to the Danes,
To the high seat went the Atheling, whereas was the other;
The battle-bold warrior gave greeting to Hrothgar.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

XXVII.

BEOWULF BIDS HROTHGAR FAREWELL: THE GEATS FARE TO SHIP.

OUT then spake Beowulf, Ecgtheow's bairn:
As now we sea-farers have will to be saying,
We from afar come, that now are we faintest
Of seeking to Hygelac. Here well erst were we
Serv'd as our wills would, and well thine avail was.
If I on the earth then, be it e'en but a little,
Of the love of thy mood may yet more be anearning,
O lord of the men-folk, than heretofore might I,
Of the works of the battle yare then soon shall I be.
If I should be learning, I over the flood's run,
That the sitters about thee beset thee with dread,
Even thee hating as otherwhile did they;
Then thousands to theeward of thanes shall I bring
For the helping of heroes. Of Hygelac wot I,
The lord of the Geat-folk, though he be but a youngling,
That shepherd of folk, that me will he further
By words and by works, that well may I ward thee,
And unto thine helping the spear-holt may bear,
A main-staying mighty, whenas men thou art needing.
And if therewith Hrethric in the courts of the Geat-house,
The King's bairn, take hosting, then may he a many
Of friends find him soothly: far countries shall be
Better sought to by him who for himself is doughty.
Out then spake Hrothgar in answer to himward:
Thy word-saying soothly the Lord of all wisdom
Hath sent into thy mind; never heard I more sagely
In a life that so young was a man word be laying;
Strong of might and main art thou and sage of thy mood,
Wise the words of thy framing. Tell I this for a weening,
If it so come to pass that the spear yet shall take,
Or the battle all sword-grim, the son of that Hrethel,
Or sickness or iron thine Alderman have,
Thy shepherd of folk, and thou fast to life hold thee,
Then no better than thee may the Sea-Geats be having
To choose for themselves, no one of the kings,
Hoard-warden of heroes, if then thou wilt hold
Thy kinsman's own kingdom. Me liketh thy mood-heart,
The longer the better, O Beowulf the lief;
In such wise hast thou fared, that unto the folks now,
The folk of the Geats and the Gar-Danes withal,

In common shall peace be, and strife rest appeased
And the hatreds the doleful which erst they have dreed;
Shall become, whiles I wield it, this wide realm of ours,
Treasures common to either folk: many a one other
With good things shall greet o'er the bath of the gannet;
And the ring'd bark withal over sea shall be bringing
The gifts and love-tokens. The twain folks I know
Toward foeman toward friend fast-fashion'd together,
In every way blameless as in the old wise.
Then the refuge of warriors, he gave him withal,
Gave Healfdene's son of treasures yet twelve;
And he bade him with those gifts to go his own people
To seek in all soundness, and swiftly come back.
Then kissed the king, he of noble kin gotten,
The lord of the Scyldings, that best of the thanes,
By the halse then he took him; from him fell the tears
From the blended of hoar hair. Of both things was there hoping
To the old, the old wise one; yet most of the other,
To wit, that they sithence each each might be seeing,
The high-heart in council. To him so lief was he
That he his breast-welling might nowise forbear,
But there in his bosom, bound fast in his heart-bonds,
After that dear man a longing dim-hidden
Burn'd against blood-tie. So Beowulf thence-forth,
The gold-proud of warriors, trod the mould grassy,
Exulting in gold-store. The sea-ganger bided
Its owning-lord whereas at anchor it rode.
Then was there in going the gift of King Hrothgar
Oft highly accounted; yea, that was a king
In every wise blameless, till eld took from him eftsoon
The joyance of might, as it oft scathes a many.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

XXVIII.

BEOWULF COMES BACK TO HIS LAND. OF THE TALE OF THRYTHO.

CAME a many to flood then all mighty of mood,
Of the bachelors were they, and ring-nets they bore,
The limb-sarks belocked. The land-warden noted
The earls' aback-faring, as erst he beheld them;
Then nowise with harm from the nose of the cliff
The guests there he greeted, but rode unto them-ward,
And quoth that full welcome to the folk of the Weders
The bright-coated warriors were wending to ship.
Then was on the sand there the bark the wide-sided
With war-weed beladen, the ring-stemm'd as she lay there
With mares and with treasure; uptower'd the mast
High over Hrothgar's wealth of the hoards.
He then to the boat-warden handsel'd a gold-bounden
Sword, so that sithence was he on mead-bench
Worthy'd the more for that very same wealth,
The heirloom. Sithence in the ship he departed
To stir the deep water; the Dane-land he left.
Then was by the mast there one of the sea-rails,
A sail, with rope made fast; thunder'd the sound-wood.
Not there the wave-floater did the wind o'er the billows
Waft off from its ways; the sea-wender fared,
Floated the foamy-neck'd forth o'er the waves,
The bounden-stemm'd over the streams of the sea;
Till the cliffs of the Geats there they gat them to wit,
The nesses well kenned. Throng'd up the keel then
Driven hard by the lift, and stood on the land.
Then speedy at holm was the hythe-warden yare,
E'en he who a long while after the lief men
Eager at stream's side far off had looked.
To the sand thereon bound he the wide-fathom'd ship
With anchor-bands fast, lest from them the waves' might
The wood that was winsome should drive thence awayward.
Thereon bade he upbear the athelings' treasures,
The fretwork and wrought gold. Not far from them thenceforth
To seek to the giver of treasures it was,
E'en Hygelac, Hrethel's son, where at home wonneth
Himself and his fellows hard by the sea-wall.
Brave was the builded house, bold king the lord was,
High were the walls, Hygd very young,
Wise and well-thriven, though few of winters

Under the burg-locks had she abided,
The daughter of Hæreth; naught was she dastard;
Nowise niggard of gifts to the folk of the Geats,
Of wealth of the treasures. But wrath Thrytho bore,
The folk-queen the fierce, wrought the crime-deed full fearful.
No one there durst it, the bold one, to dare,
Of the comrades beloved, save only her lord,
That on her by day with eyen he stare,
But if to him death-bonds predestin'd he count on,
Hand-wreathed; thereafter all rathely it was
After the hand-grip the sword-blade appointed,
That the cunning-wrought sword should show forth the deed,
Make known the murder-bale. Naught is such queenlike
For a woman to handle, though peerless she be,
That a weaver of peace the life should waylay,
For a shame that was lying, of a lief man of men;
But the kinsman of Hemming, he hinder'd it surely.
Yet the drinkers of ale otherwise said they;
That folk-bales, which were lesser, she framed forsooth,
Lesser enmity-malice, since thence erst she was
Given gold-deck'd to the young one of champions,
She the dear of her lineage, since Offa's floor
Over the fallow flood by the lore of her father
She sought in her wayfaring. Well was she sithence
There on the man-throne mighty with good;
Her shaping of life well brooked she living;
High love she held toward the lord of the heroes;
Of all kindred of men by the hearsay of me
The best of all was he the twain seas beside,
Of the measureless kindred; thereof Offa was
For gifts and for war, the spear-keen of men,
Full widely beworthy'd, with wisdom he held
The land of his heritage. Thence awoke Eomær
For a help unto heroes, the kinsman of Hemming,
The grandson of Garmund, the crafty in war-strife.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

XXIX.

BEOWULF TELLS HYGELAC OF HROTHGAR: ALSO OF
FREAWARU HIS DAUGHTER.

WENT his ways then the hard one, and he with his hand-shoal,
Himself over the sand the sea-plain a-treading,
The warths wide away; shone the world's candle,
The sun slop'd from the southward; so dreed they their journey,
And went their ways stoutly unto where the earls' refuge,
The banesman of Ongentheow all in his burgs there,
The young king of war, the good, as they heard it,
Was dealing the rings. Aright unto Hygelac
Was Beowulf's speeding made knowen full swiftly,
That there into the house-place that hedge of the warriors,
His mate of the linden-board, living was come,
Hale from the battle-play home to him house-ward.
Then rathe was beroomed, as the rich one was bidding,
For the guests a-foot going the floor all within-ward.
Then sat in the face of him he from the fight sav'd,
Kinsman by kinsman, whenas his man-lord
In fair-sounding speech had greeted the faithful
With mightyful words. With mead-skinking turned
Through the high house adown the daughter of Hæreth:
The people she loved: the wine-bucket bare she
To the hands of the men. But now fell to Hygelac
His very house-fellow in that hall the high
To question full fairly, for wit-lust to-brake him,
Of what like were the journeys the Sea-Geats had wended:
How befell you the sea-lode, O Beowulf lief,
When thou on a sudden bethoughtst thee afar
Over the salt water the strife to be seeking,
The battle in Hart? or for Hrothgar forsooth
The wide-kenned woe some whit didst thou mend,
For that mighty of lords? I therefore the moodcare
In woe-wellings seethed; trow'd not in the wending
Of thee the lief man. A long while did I pray thee
That thou the death-guest there should greet not a whit;
Wouldst let those same South-Danes their own selves to settle
The war-tide with Grendel. Now to God say I thank
That thee, and thee sound, now may I see.
Out then spake Beowulf, Ecgtheow's bairn:
All undark it is, O Hygelac lord,
That meeting the mighty, to a many of men;
Of what like was the meeting of Grendel and me

On that field of the deed, where he many a deal
For the Victory-Scyldings of sorrow had framed,
And misery for ever; but all that I awreaked,
So that needeth not boast any kinsman of Grendel
Any one upon earth of that uproar of dawn-dusk,
Nay not who lives longest of that kindred the loathly
Encompass'd of fenland. Thither first did I come
Unto that ring-hall Hrothgar to greet;
Soon unto me the great Healfdene's son,
So soon as my heart he was wotting forsooth,
Right against his own son a settle there showed.
All that throng was in joy, nor life-long saw I ever
Under vault of the heavens amidst any hall-sitters
More mirth of the mead. There the mighty Queen whiles,
Peace-sib of the folk, went all over the floor,
To the young sons bade heart up; oft she there the ring-wreath
Gave unto a man ere to settle she wended.
At whiles fore the doughty the daughter of Hrothgar
To the earls at the end the ale-bucket bore;
E'en she whom Freawaru the floor-sitters thereat
Heard I to name; where she the nail'd treasure
Gave to the warriors. She was behight then
Youngling and gold-dight to the glad son of Froda.
This hath seemed fair to the friend of the Scyldings,
The herd of the realm, and good rede he accounts it,
That he with that wife of death-feuds a deal
And of strifes should allay. Oft unseldom eachwhere
After a lord's fall e'en but for a little
Bows down the bane-spear, though doughty the bride be.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

XXX.

BEOWULF FOREBODES ILL FROM THE WEDDING OF FREAWARU: HE TELLS OF GRENDEL AND HIS DAM.

ILL-LIKING this may be to the lord of the Heathobards,
And to each of the thanes of that same people,
When he with fair bride on the floor of hall wendeth,
That the Dane's noble bairn his doughty should wait on,
As on him glisten there the heirlooms of the aged,
Hard and with rings bedight, Heathobards' treasure,
Whileas the weapons yet they might wield;
Till astray did they lead there at the lind-play
Their own fellows belov'd and their very own lives.
For then saith at the beer, he who seeth the ring,
An ancient ash-warrior who mindeth of all
The spear-death of men; grim is he of mind;
Sad of mood he beginneth to tell the young champion,
Through the thought of his heart his mind there to try,
The war-bale to waken, and sayeth this word:
Mayest thou, friend mine, wot of the war-sword,
That which thy father bore in the fight
Under the war-mask e'en on the last time,
That the dear iron, whereas the Danes slew him,
Wielded the death-field, since Withergyld lay,
After fall of the heroes, the keen-hearted Scyldings?
Now here of those banesmen the son, whoseso he be,
All merry in fretwork forth on floor fareth;
Of the murder he boasteth, and that jewel he beareth,
E'en that which of right thou shouldest arede.
Thus he mindeth and maketh word every of times,
With sore words he telleth, until the time cometh
That the thane of the fair bride for the deeds of his father
After bite of the bill sleepeth all blood-stain'd,
All forfeit of life; but thenceforth the other
Escapeth alive; the land well he kenneth;
Then will be broken on both sides forsooth
The oath-swearing of earls, whenas unto Ingeld
Well up the death-hatreds, and the wife-loves of him
Because of the care-wellings cooler become.
Therefore the Heathobards' faith I account not,
Their deal of the folk-peace, unguileful to Danes,
Their fast-bounden friendship. Henceforth must I speak on
Again about Grendel, that thou get well to know it,
O treasure-out-dealer, how sithence betided

The hand-race of heroes: sithence heaven's gem
All over the grounds glided, came the wroth guest,
The dire night-angry one us to go look on,
Whereas we all sound were warding the hall.
There then for Handshoe was battle abiding,
Life-bale to the fey; he first lay a low,
The war-champion girded; unto him became Grendel,
To the great thane of kindreds, a banesman of mouth,
Of the man well-beloved the body he swallow'd;
Nor the sooner therefor out empty-handed
The bloody-tooth'd banesman, of bales all bemindful,
Out from that gold-hall yet would he get him;
But he, mighty of main, made trial of me,
And gripp'd ready-handed. His glove hung aloft,
Wondrous and wide, in wily bands fast,
With cunning wiles was it be geared forsooth,
With crafts of the devils and fells of the dragons;
He me withinwards there, me the unsinning,
The doer of big deeds would do me to be
As one of the many; but naught so it might be,
Sithence in mine anger upright I stood.
'Tis over-long telling how I to the folkscather
For each one of evils out paid the hand-gild.
There I, O my lord king, them thy leal people
Worthy'd with works: but away he gat loosed
Out thence for a little while, brooked yet lifejoys;
But his right hand held ward of his track howsoever,
High upon Hart-hall, and thence away humble
He sad of his mood to the mere-ground fell downward.
Me for that slaughter-race the friend of the Scyldings
With gold that beplated was mickle deal paid,
With a many of treasures, sithence came the morning,
And we to the feast-tide had sat us adown;
Song was and glee there; the elder of Scyldings,
Asking of many things, told of things o'erpast;
Whiles hath the battle-deer there the harp's joy,
The wood of mirth greeted; whiles the lay said he
Soothfast and sorrowful; whiles a spell seldom told
Told he by right, the king roomy-hearted;
Whiles began afterward he by eld bounden,
The aged hoar warrior, of his youth to bewail him,
Its might of the battle; his breast well'd within him,
When he, wont in winters, of many now minded.
So we there withinward the livelong day's wearing
Took pleasure amongst us, till came upon men
Another of nights; then eftsoons again
Was yare for the harm-wreak the mother of Grendel:
All sorry she wended, for her son death had taken,

The war-hate of the Weders: that monster of women
Awreaked her bairn, and quelled a warrior
In manner all mighty. Then was there from Aeschere,
The wise man of old, life waning away;
Nor him might they even when come was the morning,
That death-weary wight, the folk of the Danes
Burn up with the brand, nor lade on the bale
The man well-belov'd, for his body she bare off
In her fathom the fiendly all under the fell-stream.
That was unto Hrothgar of sorrows the heaviest
Of them which the folk-chieftain long had befallen.
Then me did the lord king, and e'en by thy life,
Mood-heavy beseech me that I in the holmthrong
Should do after earlship, my life to adventure,
And frame me main-greatness, and meed he behight me.
Then I of the welling flood, which is well kenned,
The grim and the grisly ground-herder did find.
There to us for a while was the blending of hands;
The holm welled with gore, and the head I becarved
In that hall of the ground from the Mother of Grendel
With the all-eked edges; unsoftly out thence
My life forth I ferry'd, for not yet was I fey.
But the earls' burg to me was giving thereafter
Much sort of the treasures, e'en Healfdene's son.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

XXXI.

BEOWULF GIVES HROTHGAR'S GIFTS TO HYGELAC,
AND BY HIM IS REWARDED. OF THE DEATH OF
HYGELAC AND OF HEARDRED HIS SON, AND HOW
BEOWULF IS KING OF THE GEATS: THE WORM IS
FIRST TOLD OF.

SO therewith the folk-king far'd, living full seemly;
By those wages forsooth ne'er a whit had I lost,
By the meed of my main, but to me treasure gave he,
The Healfdene's son, to the doom of myself;
Which to thee, king of bold ones, will I be a-bringing,
And gladly will give thee; for of thee is all gotten
Of favours along, and but little have I
Of head-kinsmen forsooth, saving, Hygelac, thee.
Then he bade them bear in the boar-shape, the head-sign,
The battle-steep war-helm, the byrny all hoary,
The sword stately-good, and spell after he said:
This raiment of war Hrothgar gave to my hand,
The wise of the kings, and therewithal bade me,
That I first of all of his favour should flit thee;
He quoth that first had it King Heorogar of old,
The king of the Scyldings, a long while of time;
But no sooner would he give it unto his son,
Heoroward the well-whet, though kind to him were he,
This weed of the breast. Do thou brook it full well.
On these fretworks, so heard I, four horses therewith,
All alike, close followed after the track,
Steeds apple-fallow. Fair grace he gave him
Of horses and treasures. E'en thus shall do kinsman,
And nowise a wile-net shall weave for another
With craft of the darkness, or do unto death
His very hand-fellow. But now unto Hygelac
The bold in the battle was his nephew full faithful,
And either to other of good deeds was mindful.
I heard that the neck-ring to Hygd did he give,
E'en the wonder-gem well-wrought, that Wealhtheow gave him,
The king's daughter; gave he three steeds therewithal
Slender, and saddle-bright; sithence to her was,
After the ring-gift, the breast well beworthy'd.
Thus boldly he bore him, the Ecgtheow's bairn,
The groom kenned in battle, in good deeds a-doing;
After due doom he did, and ne'er slew he the drunken

Hearth-fellows of him: naught rough was his heart;
But of all men of mankind with the greatest of might
The gift fully and fast set, which had God to him given,
That war-deer did hold. Long was he contemned,
While the bairns of the Geats naught told him for good,
Nor him on the mead-bench worthy of mickle
The lord of the war-hosts would be a-making.
Weened they strongly that he were but slack then,
An atheling unkeen; then came about change
To the fame-happy man for every foul harm.
Bade then the earls' burg in to be bringing,
The king battle-famed, the leaving of Hrethel,
All geared with gold; was not 'mid the Geats then
A treasure-gem better of them of the sword-kind,
That which then on Beowulf's barm there he laid;
And gave to him there seven thousand in gift,
A built house and king-stool; to both them together
Was in that folkship land that was kindly,
Father-right, home; to the other one rather
A wide realm, to him who was there the better.
But thereafter it went so in days later worn
Through the din of the battle, sithence Hygelac lay low
And unto Heardred swords of the battle
Under the war-board were for a bane;
When fell on him midst of this victory-folk
The hard battle-wolves, the Scyldings of war,
And by war overwhelmed the nephew of Hereric;
That sithence unto Beowulf turned the broad realm
All into his hand. Well then did he hold it
For a fifty of winters; then was he an old king,
An old fatherland's warder; until one began
Through the dark of the night-tide, a drake, to hold sway,
In a howe high aloft watched over an hoard,
A stone-burg full steep; thereunder a path sty'd
Unknown unto men, and therewithin wended
Who of men do I know not; for his lust there took he,
From the hoard of the heathen his hand took away
A hall-bowl gem-flecked, nowise back did he give it
Though the herd of the hoard him sleeping beguil'd he
With thief-craft; and this then found out the king,
The best of folk-heroes, that wrath-bollen was he.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

XXXII.

HOW THE WORM CAME TO THE HOWE, AND HOW HE
WAS ROBBED OF A CUP; AND HOW HE FELL ON THE
FOLK.

NOT at all with self-wielding the craft of the worm-hoards
He sought of his own will, who sore himself harmed;
But for threat of oppression a thrall, of I wot not
Which bairn of mankind, from blows wrathful fled,
House-needy forsooth, and hied him therein,
A man by guilt troubled. Then soon it betided
That therein to the guest there stood grisly terror;
However the wretched, of every hope waning

.
The ill-shapen wight, whenas the fear gat him,
The treasure-vat saw; of such there was a many
Up in that earth-house of treasures of old,
As them in the yore-days, though what man I know not,
The huge leavings and loom of a kindred of high ones,
Well thinking of thoughts there had hidden away,
Dear treasures. But all them had death borne away
In the times of erewhile; and the one at the last
Of the doughty of that folk that there longest lived,
There waxed he friend-sad, yet ween'd he to tarry,
That he for a little those treasures the longsome
Might brook for himself. But a burg now all ready
Wonn'd on the plain nigh the waves of the water,
New by a ness, by narrow-crafts fasten'd;
Within there then bare of the treasures of earls
That herd of the rings a deal hard to carry,
Of gold fair beplated, and few words he quoth:
Hold thou, O earth, now, since heroes may hold not,
The owning of earls. What! it erst within thee
Good men did get to them; now war-death hath gotten,
Life-bale the fearful, each man and every
Of my folk; e'en of them who forwent the life:
The hall-joy had they seen. No man to wear sword
I own, none to brighten the beaker beplated,
The dear drink-vat; the doughty have sought to else-whither.
Now shall the hard war-helm bedight with the gold
Be bereft of its plating; its polishers sleep,
They that the battle-mask erewhile should burnish:
Likewise the war-byrny, which abode in the battle

O'er break of the war-boards the bite of the irons,
Crumbles after the warrior; nor may the ring'd byrny
After the war-leader fare wide afield
On behalf of the heroes: nor joy of the harp is,
No game of the glee-wood; no goodly hawk now
Through the hall swingeth; no more the swift horse
Beateth the burg-stead. Now hath bale-quelling
A many of life-kin forth away sent.
Suchwise sad-moody moaned in sorrow
One after all, unblithely bemoaning
By day and by night, till the welling of death
Touch'd at his heart. The old twilight-scather
Found the hoard's joyance standing all open,
E'en he that, burning, seeketh to burgs,
The evil drake, naked, that flieth a night-tide,
With fire encompass'd; of him the earth-dwellers
Are strongly adrad; wont is he to seek to
The hoard in the earth, where he the gold heathen
Winter-old wardeth; nor a whit him it betters.
So then the folk-scather for three hundred winters
Held in the earth a one of hoard-houses
All-eked of craft, until him there anger'd
A man in his mood, who bare to his man-lord
A beaker beplated, and bade him peace-warding
Of his lord: then was lightly the hoard searched over,
And the ring-hoard off borne; and the boon it was granted
To that wretched-wrought man. There then the lord saw
That work of men foregone the first time of times.
Then awaken'd the Worm, and anew the strife was;
Along the stone stank he, the stout-hearted found
The foot-track of the foe; he had stept forth o'er-far
With dark craft, over-nigh to the head of the drake.
So may the man unfey full easily outlive
The woe and the wrack-journey, he whom the Wielder's
Own grace is holding. Now sought the hoard-warden
Eager over the ground; for the groom he would find
Who unto him sleeping had wrought out the sore:
Hot and rough-moody oft he turn'd round the howe
All on the outward; but never was any man
On the waste; but however in war he rejoiced,
In battle-work. Whiles he turn'd back to his howe
And sought to his treasure-vat; soon he found this,
That one of the grooms had proven the gold,
The high treasures; then the hoard-warden abided,
But hardly forsooth, until come was the even,
And all anger-bollen was then the burg-warden,
And full much would the loath one with the fire-flame pay back
For his drink-vat the dear. Then day was departed

E'en at will to the Worm, and within wall no longer
Would he bide, but awayward with burning he fared,
All dight with the fire: it was fearful beginning
To the folk in the land, and all swiftly it fell
On their giver of treasure full grievously ended.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

XXXIII.

THE WORM BURNS BEOWULF'S HOUSE, AND
BEOWULF GETS READY TO GO AGAINST HIM.
BEOWULF'S EARLY DEEDS IN BATTLE WITH THE
HETWARE TOLD OF.

BEGAN then the guest to spew forth of gleeds,
The bright dwellings to burn; stood the beam of the burning
For a mischief to menfolk; now nothing that quick was
The loathly lift-flier would leave there forsooth;
The war of the Worm was wide to be seen there,
The narrowing foe's hatred anigh and afar,
How he, the fight-scather, the folk of the Geats
Hated and harm'd; shot he back to the hoard,
His dark lordly hall, ere yet was the day's while;
The land-dwellers had he in the light low encompass'd
With bale and with brand; in his burg yet he trusted,
His war-might and his wall: but his weening bewray'd him.
Then Beowulf was done to wit of the terror
Full swiftly forsooth, that the house of himself,
Best of buildings, was molten in wellings of fire,
The gift-stool of the Geats. To the good one was that
A grief unto heart; of mind-sorrows the greatest.
Weened the wise one, that Him, e'en the Wielder,
The Lord everlasting, against the old rights
He had bitterly anger'd; the breast boil'd within him
With dark thoughts, that to him were naught duly wonted.
Now had the fire-drake the own fastness of folk,
The water-land outward, that ward of the earth,
With gleeds to ground wasted; so therefore the war-king,
The lord of the Weder-folk, learned him vengeance.
Then he bade be work'd for him, that fence of the warriors,
And that all of iron, the lord of the earls,
A war-board all glorious, for wissed he yarely
That the holt-wood hereto might help him no whit,
The linden 'gainst fire-flame. Of fleeting days now
The Atheling exceeding good end should abide,
The end of the world's life, and the Worm with him also,
Though long he had holden the weal of the hoard.
Forsooth scorned then the lord of the rings
That he that wide-flier with war-band should seek,
With a wide host; he fear'd not that war for himself,
Nor for himself the Worm's war accounted one whit,

His might and his valour, for that he erst a many
Strait-daring of battles had bided, and liv'd,
Clashings huge of the battle, sithence he of Hrothgar,
He, the man victory-happy, had cleansed the hall,
And in war-tide had gripped the kindred of Grendel,
The loathly of kindreds; nor was that the least
Of hand-meetings, wherein erst was Hygelac slain,
Sithence the Geats' king in the onrush of battle,
The lord-friend of the folks, down away in the Frieslands,
The offspring of Hrethel, died, drunken of sword-drinks,
All beaten of bill. Thence Beowulf came forth
By his own craft forsooth, dreed the work of the swimming;
He had on his arm, he all alone, thirty
Of war-gears, when he to the holm went adown.
Then nowise the Hetware needed to joy them
Over the foot-war, wherein forth against him
They bore the war-linden: few went back again
From that wolf of the battle to wend to their homes.
O'erswam then the waters' round Ecgtheow's son,
Came all wretched and byrd-alone back to his people,
Whereas offer'd him Hygd then the kingdom and hoard,
The rings and the king-stool: trowed naught in the child,
That he 'gainst folks outland the fatherland-seats
Might can how to hold, now was Hygelac dead:
Yet no sooner therefor might the poor folk prevail
To gain from the Atheling in any of ways
That he unto Heardred would be for a lord,
Or eke that that kingdom henceforward should choose;
Yet him midst of the folk with friend-lore he held,
All kindly with honour till older he waxed
And wielded the Weder-Geats. To him menwaifs thereafter
Sought from over the sea, the sons they of Othhere,
For they erst had withstood the helm of the Scylfings,
E'en him that was best of the kings of the sea,
Of them that in Swede-realm dealt out the treasure,
The mighty of princes. Unto him 'twas a life-mark;
To him without food there was fated the life-wound,
That Hygelac's son, by the swinging of swords;
And him back departed Ongentheow's bairn,
To go seek to his house, sithence Heardred lay dead,
And let Beowulf hold the high seat of the king
And wield there the Geats. Yea, good was that king.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

XXXIV.

BEOWULF GOES AGAINST THE WORM. HE TELLS OF HEREBEALD AND HÆTHCYN.

OF that fall of the folk-king he minded the payment
In days that came after: unto Eadgils he was
A friend to him wretched; with folk he upheld him
Over the wide sea, that same son of Ohthere,
With warriors and weapons. Sithence had he wreaking
With cold journeys of care: from the king took he life.
Now each one of hates thus had he outlived,
And of perilous slaughters, that Ecgtheow's son,
All works that be doughty, until that one day
When he with the Worm should wend him to deal.
So twelvesome he set forth all swollen with anger,
The lord of the Geats, the drake to go look on.
Aright had he learnt then whence risen the feud was,
The bale-hate against men-folk: to his barm then had come
The treasure-vat famous by the hand of the finder;
He was in that troop of men the thirteenth
Who the first of that battle had set upon foot,
The thrall, the sad-minded; in shame must he thenceforth
Wise the way to the plain; and against his will went he
Thereunto, where the earth-hall the one there he wist,
The howe under earth anigh the holm's welling,
The wave-strife: there was it now full all within
With gems and with wires; the monster, the warden,
The yare war-wolf, he held him therein the hoard golden,
The old under the earth: it was no easy cheaping
To go and to gain for any of grooms.
Sat then on the ness there the strife-hardy king
While farewell he bade to his fellows of hearth,
The gold-friend of the Geats; sad was gotten his soul,
Wavering, death-minded; weird nigh beyond measure,
Which him old of years gotten now needs must be greeting,
Must seek his soul's hoard and asunder must deal
His life from his body: no long while now was
The life of the Atheling in flesh all bewounded.
Now spake out Beowulf, Ecgtheow's bairn:
Many a one in my youth of war-onsets I outliv'd,
And the whiles of the battle: all that I remember.
Seven winters had I when the wielder of treasures,
The lord-friend of folk, from my father me took,
Held me and had me Hrethel the king,

Gave me treasure and feast, and remember'd the friendship.
For life thence I was not to him a whit loather,
A berne in his burgs than his bairns were, or each one,
Herebeald, or Hæthcyn, or Hygelac mine.
For the eldest there was in unseemly wise
By the mere deed of kinsman a murder-bed strawen,
Whenas him did Hæthcyn from out of his hornbow,
His lord and his friend, with shaft lay alow:
His mark he miss'd shooting, and shot down his kinsman,
One brother another with shaft all bebloody'd;
That was fight feeless by fearful crime sinned,
Soul-weary to heart, yet natheless then had
The atheling from life all unwreak'd to be ceasing.
So sad-like it is for a carle that is aged
To be biding the while that his boy shall be riding
Yet young on the gallows; then a lay should he utter,
A sorrowful song whenas hangeth his son
A gain unto ravens, and naught good of avail
May he, old and exceeding old, anywise frame.
Ever will he be minded on every each morning
Of his son's faring otherwhere; nothing he heedeth
Of abiding another withinward his burgs,
An heritage-warder, then whenas the one
By the very death's need hath found out the ill.
Sorrow-careful he seeth within his son's bower
The waste wine-hall, the resting-place now of the winds,
All bereft of the revel; the riders are sleeping,
The heroes in grave, and no voice of the harp is,
No game in the garths such as erewhile was gotten.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

XXXV.

BEOWULF TELLS OF PAST FEUDS, AND BIDS
FAREWELL TO HIS FELLOWS. HE FALLS ON THE
WORM, AND THE BATTLE OF THEM BEGINS.

THEN to sleeping-stead wendeth he, singeth he sorrow,
The one for the other; o'er-roomy all seem'd him
The meads and the wick-stead. So the helm of the Weders
For Herebeald's sake the sorrow of heart
All welling yet bore, and in nowise might he
On the banesman of that life the feud be abooting;
Nor ever the sooner that warrior might hate
With deeds loathly, though he to him nothing was lief.
He then with the sorrow wherewith that sore beset him
Man's joy-tide gave up, and chose him God's light.
To his offspring he left, e'en as wealthy man doeth,
His land and his folk-burgs when he from life wended.
Then sin was and striving of Swedes and of Geats,
Over the wide water war-tide in common,
The hard horde-hate to wit sithence Hrethel perish'd;
And to them ever were the Ongentheow's sons
Doughty and host-whetting, nowise then would friendship
Hold over the waters; but round about Hreosnaburgh
The fierce fray of foeman was oftentimes fram'd.
Kin of friends that mine were, there they awreaked
The feud and the evil deed, e'en as was famed;
Although he, the other, with his own life he bought it,
A cheaping full hard: unto Hæthcyn it was,
To the lord of the Geat-folk, a life-fateful war.
Learned I that the morrow one brother the other
With the bills' edges wreaked the death on the banesman,
Whereas Ongentheow is a-seeking of Eofor:
Glode the war-helm asunder, the aged of Scylfings
Fell, sword-bleak; e'en so remember'd the hand
Feud enough; nor e'en then did the life-stroke withhold.
I to him for the treasure which erewhile he gave me
Repaid it in warring, as was to me granted,
With my light-gleaming sword. To me gave he land,
The hearth and the home-bliss: unto him was no need
That unto the Gifhas or unto the Spear-Danes
Or into the Swede-realm he needs must go seeking
A worse wolf of war for a worth to be cheaping;
For in the host ever would I be before him

Alone in the fore-front, and so life-long shall I
Be a-framing of strife, whileas tholeth the sword,
Which early and late hath bestead me full often,
Sithence was I by doughtiness unto Day-raven
The hand-bane erst waxen, to the champion of Hug-folk;
He nowise the fretwork to the king of the Frisians,
The breast-worship to wit, might bring any more,
But cringed in battle that herd of the banner,
The Atheling in might: the edge naught was his bane,
But for him did the war-grip the heart-wellings of him
Break, the house of the bones. Now shall the bill's edge,
The hand and hard sword, about the hoard battle.
So word uttered Beowulf, spake out the boast word
For the last while as now: Many wars dared I
In the days of my youth, and now will I yet,
The old warder of folk, seek to the feud,
Full gloriously frame, if the scather of foul-deed
From the hall of the earth me out shall be seeking.
Greeted he then each one of the grooms,
The keen wearers of helms, for the last while of whiles,
His own fellows the dear: No sword would I fare with,
No weapon against the Worm, wist I but how
'Gainst the monster of evil in otherwise might I
Uphold me my boast, as erst did I with Grendel;
But there fire of the war-tide full hot do I ween me,
And the breath, and the venom; I shall bear on me therefore
Both the board and the byrny; nor the burg's warden shall I
Overflee for a foot's-breadth, but unto us twain
It shall be at the wall as to us twain Weird willeth,
The Maker of each man. Of mood am I eager;
So that 'gainst that war-flier from boast I withhold me.
Abide ye upon burg with your byrnies bewarded,
Ye men in your battle-gear, which may the better
After the slaughter-race save us from wounding
Of the twain of us. Naught is it yours to take over,
Nor the measure of any man save alone me,
That he on the monster should mete out his might,
Or work out the earlship: but I with my main might
Shall gain me the gold, or else gets me the battle,
The perilous life-bale, e'en me your own lord.
Arose then by war-round the warrior renowned
Hard under helm, and the sword-sark he bare
Under the stone-cliffs: in the strength then he trowed
Of one man alone; no dastard's way such is.
Then he saw by the wall (e'en he, who so many,
The good of man-bounties, of battles had out-liv'd,
Of crashes of battle whenas hosts were blended)
A stone-bow a-standing, and from out thence a stream

Breaking forth from the burg; was that burn's outwelling
All hot with the war-fire; and none nigh to the hoard then
Might ever unburning any while bide,
Live out through the deep for the flame of the drake.
Out then from his breast, for as bollen as was he,
Let the Weder-Geats' chief the words be out faring;
The stout-hearted storm'd and the stave of him enter'd
Battle-bright sounding in under the hoar stone.
Then uproused was hate, and the hoard-warden wotted
The speech of man's word, and no more while there was
Friendship to fetch. Then forth came there first
The breath of the evil beast out from the stone,
The hot sweat of battle, and dinn'd then the earth.
The warrior beneath the burg swung up his war-round
Against that grisly guest, the lord of the Geats;
Then the heart of the ring-bow'd grew eager therewith
To seek to the strife. His sword ere had he drawn,
That good lord of the battle, the leaving of old,
The undull of edges: there was unto either
Of the bale-minded ones the fear of the other.
All steadfast of mind stood against his steep shield
The lord of the friends, when the Worm was a-bowing
Together all swiftly, in war-gear he bided;
Then boune was the burning one, bow'd in his going,
To the fate of him faring. The shield was well warding
The life and the lyke of the mighty lord king
For a lesser of whiles than his will would have had it,
If he at that frist on the first of the day
Was to wield him, as weird for him never will'd it,
The high-day of battle. His hand he up braided,
The lord of the Geats, and the grisly-fleck'd smote he
With the leaving of Ing, in such wise that the edge fail'd,
The brown blade on the bone, and less mightily bit
Than the king of the nation had need in that stour,
With troubles beset. But then the burg-warden
After the war-swing all wood of his mood
Cast forth the slaughter-flame, sprung thereon widely
The battle-gleams: nowise of victory he boasted,
The gold-friend of the Geats; his war-bill had falter'd,
All naked in war, in such wise as it should not,
The iron exceeding good. Naught was it easy
For him there, the mighty-great offspring of Ecgtheow,
That he now that earth-plain should give up for ever;
But against his will needs must he dwell in the wick
Of the otherwhere country; as ever must each man
Let go of his loan-days. Not long was it thenceforth
Ere the fell ones of fight fell together again.
The hoard-warden up-hearten'd him, welled his breast

With breathing anew. Then narrow need bore he,
Encompass'd with fire, who erst the folk wielded;
Nowise in a heap his hand-fellows there,
The bairns of the athelings, stood all about him
In valour of battle; but they to holt bow'd them;
Their dear life they warded; but in one of them welled
His soul with all sorrow. So sib-ship may never
Turn aside any whit to the one that well thinketh.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

XXXVI.

WIGLAF SON OF WEOHSTAN GOES TO THE HELP OF
BEOWULF: NÆGLING, BEOWULF'S SWORD, IS BROKEN
ON THE WORM.

WIGLAF so hight he, the son of Weohstan,
Lief linden-warrior, and lord of Scylfings,
The kinsman of Aelfhere: and he saw his manlord
Under his host-mask tholing the heat;
He had mind of the honour that to him gave he erewhile,
The wick-stead the wealthy of them, the Wægmundings,
And the folk-rights each one which his father had owned.
Then he might not withhold him, his hand gripp'd the round,
Yellow linden; he tugg'd out withal the old sword,
That was known among men for the heirloom of Eanmund,
Ohthere's son, unto whom in the strife did become,
To the exile unfriended, Weohstan for the bane
With the sword-edge, and unto his kinsmen bare off
The helm the brown-brindled, the byrny beringed,
And the old eoten-sword that erst Onela gave him;
Were they his kinsman's weed of the war,
Host-fight-gear all ready. Of the feud nothing spake he,
Though he of his brother the bairn had o'er-thrown.
But the host-gear befretted he held many seasons,
The bill and the byrny, until his own boy might
Do him the earlship as did his ere-father.
Amidst of the Geats then he gave him the war-weed
Of all kinds unnumber'd, whenas he from life wended
Old on the forth-way. Then was the first time
For that champion the young that he the war-race
With his high lord the famed e'er he should frame:
Naught melted his mood, naught the loom of his kinsman
Weaken'd in war-tide; that found out the Worm
When they two together had gotten to come.
Now spake out Wiglaf many words rightwise,
And said to his fellows: all sad was his soul:
I remember that while when we gat us the mead,
And whenas we behight to the high lord of us
In the beer-hall, e'en he who gave us these rings,
That we for the war-gear one while would pay,
If unto him thislike need e'er should befall,
For these helms and hard swords. So he chose us from host
To this faring of war by his very own will,

Of glories he minded us, and gave me these gems here,
Whereas us of gar-warriors he counted for good,
And bold bearers of helms. Though our lord e'en for us
This work of all might was of mind all alone
Himself to be framing, the herd of the folk,
Whereas most of all men he hath mightiness framed,
Of deeds of all daring, yet now is the day come
Whereon to our man-lord behoveth the main
Of good battle-warriors; so thereunto wend we,
And help we the host-chief, whiles that the heat be,
The glee-terror grim. Now of me wotteth God
That to me is much liefer that that, my lykebody,
With my giver of gold the glee should engrip.
Unmeet it methinketh that we shields should bear
Back unto our own home, unless we may erst
The foe fell adown and the life-days defend
Of the king of the Weders. Well wot I hereof
That his old deserts naught such were, that he only
Of all doughty of Geats the grief should be bearing,
Sink at strife. Unto us shall one sword be, one helm,
One byrny and shield, to both of us common.
Through the slaughter-reek waded he then, bare his war-helm
To the finding his lord, and few words he quoth:
O Beowulf the dear, now do thee all well,
As thou in thy youthful life quothest of yore,
That naught wouldst thou let, while still thou wert living,
Thy glory fade out. Now shalt thou of deeds famed,
The atheling of single heart, with all thy main deal
For the warding thy life, and to stay thee I will.
Then after these words all wroth came the Worm,
The dire guest foesome, that second of whiles
With fire-wellings flecked, his foes to go look on,
The loath men. With flame was lightly then burnt up
The board to the boss, and might not the byrny
To the warrior the young frame any help yet.
But so the young man under shield of his kinsman
Went onward with valour, whenas his own was
All undone with gleeds; then again the war-king
Remember'd his glories, and smote with main might
With his battle-bill, so that it stood in the head
Need-driven by war-hate. Then asunder burst Nægling,
Waxed weak in the war-tide, e'en Beowulf's sword,
The old and grey-marked; to him was not given
That to him any whit might the edges of irons
Be helpful in battle; over-strong was the hand
Which every of swords, by the hearsay of me,
With its swing over-wrought, when he bare unto strife
A wondrous hard weapon; naught it was to him better.

Then was the folk-scather for the third of times yet,
The fierce fire-drake, all mindful of feud;
He rac'd on that strong one, when was room to him given,
Hot and battle-grim; he all the halse of him gripped
With bitter-keen bones; all bebloody'd he waxed
With the gore of his soul. Well'd in waves then the war-sweat.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

XXXVII.

THEY TWO SLAY THE WORM. BEOWULF IS WOUNDED
DEADLY: HE BIDDETH WIGLAF BEAR OUT THE
TREASURE.

THEN heard I that at need of the high king of folk
The upright earl made well manifest might,
His craft and his keenness as kind was to him;
The head there he heeded not (but the hand burned
Of that man of high mood when he helped his kinsman),
Whereas he now the hate-guest smote yet a deal nether,
That warrior in war-gear, whereby the sword dived,
The plated, of fair hue, and thereby fell the flame
To minish thereafter, and once more the king's self
Wielded his wit, and his slaying-sax drew out,
The bitter and battle-sharp, borne on his byrny;
Asunder the Weder's helm smote the Worm midmost;
They felled the fiend, and force drave the life out,
And they twain together had gotten him ending,
Those athelings sib. E'en such should a man be,
A thane good at need. Now that to the king was
The last victory-while, by the deeds of himself,
Of his work of the world. Sithence fell the wound,
That the earth-drake to him had wrought but erewhile,
To swell and to sweal; and this soon he found out,
That down in the breast of him bale-evil welled,
The venom withinward; then the Atheling wended,
So that he by the wall, bethinking him wisdom,
Sat on seat there and saw on the works of the giants,
How that the stone-bows fast stood on pillars,
The earth-house everlasting upheld withinward.
Then with his hand him the sword-gory,
That great king his thane, the good beyond measure,
His friend-lord with water washed full well,
The sated of battle, and unspann'd his war-helm.
Forth then spake Beowulf, and over his wound said,
His wound piteous deadly; wist he full well,
That now of his day-whiles all had he dreed,
Of the joy of the earth; all was shaken asunder
The tale of his days; death without measure nigh:
Unto my son now should I be giving
My gear of the battle, if to me it were granted
Any ward of the heritage after my days

To my body belonging. This folk have I holden
Fifty winters; forsooth was never a folk-king
Of the sitters around, no one of them soothly,
Who me with the war-friends durst wend him to greet.
And bear down with the terror. In home have I abided
The shapings of whiles, and held mine own well.
No wily hates sought I; for myself swore not many
Of oaths in unright. For all this may I,
Sick with the life-wounds, soothly have joy.
Therefore naught need wyte me the Wielder of men
With kin murder-bale, when breaketh asunder
My life from my lyke. And now lightly go thou
To look on the hoard under the hoar stone,
Wiglaf mine lief, now that lieth the Worm
And sleepeth sore wounded, beshorn of his treasure;
And be hasty that I now the wealth of old time,
The gold-having may look on, and yarely behold
The bright cunning gems, that the softlier may I
After the treasure-weal let go away
My life, and the folk-ship that long I have held.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

XXXVIII.

BEOWULF BEHOLDETH THE TREASURE AND PASSETH AWAY.

THEN heard I that swiftly the son of that Weohstan
After this word-say his lord the sore wounded,
Battle-sick, there obeyed, and bare forth his ring-net,
His battle-sark woven, in under the burg-roof;
Saw then victory-glad as by the seat went he,
The kindred-thane moody, sun-jewels a many,
Much glistering gold lying down on the ground,
Many wonders on wall, and the den of the Worm,
The old twilight-flier; there were flagons a-standing,
The vats of men bygone, of brighteners bereft,
And maim'd of adornment; was many an helm
Rusty and old, and of arm-rings a many
Full cunningly twined. All lightly may treasure,
The gold in the ground, every one of mankind
Befool with o'erweening, hide it who will.
Likewise he saw standing a sign there all-golden
High over the hoard, the most of hand-wonders,
With limb-craft belocked, whence light a ray gleamed,
Whereby the den's ground-plain gat he to look on,
The fair works scan throughly. Not of the Worm there
Was aught to be seen now, but the edge had undone him.
Heard I then that in howe of the hoard was bereaving,
The old work of the giants, but one man alone,
Into his barm laded beakers and dishes
At his very own doom; and the sign eke he took,
The brightest of beacons. But the bill of the old lord
(The edge was of iron) erewhile it scathed
Him who of that treasure hand-bearer was
A long while, and fared a-bearing the flame-dread
Before the hoard hot, and welling of fierceness
In the midnights, until that by murder he died.
In haste was the messenger, eager of back-fare,
Further'd with fretted gems. Him longing fordid
To wot whether the bold man he quick there shall meet
In that mead-stead, e'en he the king of the Weders,
All sick of his might, whereas he erst left him.
He fetching the treasure then found the king mighty,
His own lord, yet there, and him ever all gory
At end of his life; and he yet once again
Fell the water to warp o'er him, till the word's point

Brake through the breast-hoard, and Beowulf spake out,
The aged, in grief as he gaz'd on the gold:
Now I for these fretworks to the Lord of all thanking,
To the King of all glory, in words am yet saying,
To the Lord ever living, for that which I look on;
Whereas such I might for the people of mine,
Ere ever my death-day, get me to own.
Now that for the treasure-hoard here have I sold
My life and laid down the same, frame still then ever
The folk-need, for here never longer I may be.
So bid ye the war-mighty work me a howe
Bright after the bale-fire at the sea's nose,
Which for a remembrance to the people of me
Aloft shall uplift him at Whale-ness for ever,
That it the sea-goers sithence may hote
Beowulf's Howe, e'en they that the high-ships
Over the flood-mists drive from afar.
Did off from his halse then a ring was all golden,
The king the great-hearted, and gave to his thane,
To the spear-warrior young his war-helm gold-brindled,
The ring and the byrny, and bade him well brook them:
Thou art the end-leaving of all of our kindred,
The Wægmundings; Weird now hath swept all away
Of my kinsmen, and unto the doom of the Maker
The earls in their might; now after them shall I.
That was to the aged lord youngest of words
Of his breast-thoughts, ere ever he chose him the bale,
The hot battle-wellings; from his heart now departed
His soul, to seek out the doom of the soothfast.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

XXXIX.

WIGLAF CASTETH SHAME ON THOSE FLEERS.

BUT gone was it then with the unaged man
Full hard that there he beheld on the earth
The liefest of friends at the ending of life,
Of bearing most piteous. And likewise lay his bane
The Earth-drake, the loathly fear, reft of his life,
By bale laid undone: the ring-hoards no longer
The Worm, the crook-bowed, ever might wield;
For soothly the edges of the irons him bare off,
The hard battle-sharded leavings of hammers,
So that the wide-flier stilled with wounding
Fell onto earth anigh to his hoard-hall,
Nor along the lift ever more playing he turned
At middle-nights, proud of the owning of treasure,
Show'd the face of him forth, but to earth there he fell
Because of the host-leader's work of the hand.
This forsooth on the land hath thriven to few,
Of men might and main bearing, by hearsay of mine,
Though in each of all deeds full daring he were,
That against venom-scather's fell breathing he set on,
Or the hall of his rings with hand be a-stirring,
If so be that he waking the warder had found
Abiding in burg. By Beowulf was
His deal of the king-treasure paid for by death;
There either had they fared on to the end
Of this loaned life. Long it was not until
Those laggards of battle the holt were a-leaving,
Unwarlike troth-liars, the ten there together,
Who durst not e'en now with darts to be playing
E'en in their man-lord's most mickle need.
But shamefully now their shields were they bearing,
Their weed of the battle, there where lay the aged;
They gazed on Wiglaf where weary'd he sat,
The foot-champion, hard by his very lord's shoulder,
And wak'd him with water: but no whit it sped him;
Never might he on earth howsoe'er well he will'd it
In that leader of spears hold the life any more,
Nor the will of the Wielder change ever a whit;
But still should God's doom of deeds rule the rede
For each man of men, as yet ever it doth.
Then from out of the youngling an answer full grim
Easy got was for him who had lost heart erewhile,

And word gave out Wiglaf, Weohstan's son,
The sorrowful-soul'd man: on those unlief he saw:
Lo that may he say who sooth would be saying,
That the man-lord who dealt you the gift of those dear things,
The gear of the war-host wherein there ye stand,
Whereas he on the ale-bench full oft was a-giving
Unto the hall-sitters war-helm and byrny,
The king to his thanes, e'en such as he choicest
Anywhere, far or near, ever might find:
That he utterly wrongsome those weeds of the war
Had cast away, then when the war overtook him.
Surely never the folk-king of his fellows in battle
Had need to be boastful; howsoever God gave him,
The Victory-wielder, that he himself wreak'd him
Alone with the edge, when to him need of might was.
Unto him of life-warding but little might I
Give there in the war-tide; and yet I began
Above measure of my might my kinsman to help;
Ever worse was the Worm then when I with sword
Smote the life-foe, and ever the fire less strongly
Welled out from his wit. Of warders o'er little
Throng'd about the king when him the battle befell.
Now shall taking of treasures and giving of swords
And all joy of your country-home fail from your kindred,
All hope wane away; of the land-right moreover
May each of the men of that kinsman's burg ever
Roam lacking; sithence that the athelings eftsoons
From afar shall have heard of your faring in flight,
Your gloryless deed. Yea, death shall be better
For each of the earls than a life ever ill-fam'd.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

XL.

WIGLAF SENDETH TIDING TO THE HOST: THE WORDS OF THE MESSENGER.

THEN he bade them that war-work give out at the barriers
Up over the sea-cliff, whereas then the earlhost
The morning-long day sat sad of their mood,
The bearers of war-boards, in weening of both things,
Either the end-day, or else the back-coming
Of the lief man. Forsooth he little was silent
Of the new-fallen tidings who over the ness rode,
But soothly he said over all there a-sitting:
Now is the will-giver of the folk of the Weders,
The lord of the Geats, fast laid in the death-bed,
In the slaughter-rest wonneth he by the Worm's doings.
And beside him yet lieth his very life-winner
All sick with the sax-wounds; with sword might he never
On the monster, the fell one, in any of manners
Work wounding at all. There yet sitteth Wiglaf,
Weohstan's own boy, over Beowulf king,
One earl over the other, over him the unliving;
With heart-honours holdeth he head-ward withal
Over lief, over loath. But to folk is a weening
Of war-tide as now, so soon as unhidden
To Franks and to Frisians the fall of the king
Is become over widely. Once was the strife shapen
Hard 'gainst the Hugs, sithence Hygelac came
Faring with float-host to Frisian land,
Whereas him the Hetware vanquish'd in war,
With might gat the gain, with o'er-mickle main;
The warrior bebyrny'd he needs must bow down:
He fell in the host, and no fretted war-gear
Gave that lord to the doughty, but to us was aye sithence
The mercy ungranted that was of the Merwing.
Nor do I from the Swede folk of peace or good faith
Ween ever a whit. For widely 'twas wotted
That Ongentheow erst had undone the life
Of Hætheyn the Hrethel's son hard by the Raven-wood,
Then when in their pride the Scylfings of war
Erst gat them to seek to the folk of the Geats.
Unto him soon the old one, the father of Ohthere,
The ancient and fearful gave back the hand-stroke,
Brake up the sea-wise one, rescued his bride,
The aged his spouse erst, bereft of the gold,

Mother of Onela, yea and of Ohthere;
And follow'd up thereon his foemen the deadly,
Until they betook them and sorrowfully therewith
Unto the Raven-holt, reft of their lord.
With huge host then beset he the leaving of swords
All weary with wounds, and woe he behight them,
That lot of the wretched, the livelong night through;
Quoth he that the morrow's morn with the swords' edges
He would do them to death, hang some on the gallows
For a game unto fowl. But again befell comfort
To the sorry of mood with the morrow-day early;
Whereas they of Hygelac's war-horn and trumpet
The voice wotted, whenas the good king his ways came
Faring on in the track of his folk's doughty men.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

XLI.

MORE WORDS OF THE MESSENGER. HOW HE FEARS
THE SWEDES WHEN THEY WOT OF BEOWULF DEAD.

WAS the track of the war-sweat of Swedes and of Geats,
The men's slaughter-race, right wide to be seen,
How those folks amongst them were waking the feud.
Departed that good one, and went with his fellows,
Old and exceeding sad, fastness to seek;
The earl Ongentheow upward returned;
Of Hygelac's battle-might oft had he heard,
The war-craft of the proud one; in withstanding he trow'd not,
That he to the sea-folk in fight might debate,
Or against the sea-farers defend him his hoard,
His bairns and his bride. He bow'd him aback thence,
The old under the earth-wall. Then was the chase bidden
To the Swede-folk, and Hygelac's sign was upreared,
And the plain of the peace forth on o'er-pass'd they,
After the Hrethlings onto the hedge throng'd.
There then was Ongentheow by the swords' edges,
The blent-hair'd, the hoary one, driven to biding,
So that the folk-king fain must he take
Sole doom of Eofor. Him in his wrath then
Wulf the Wonreding reach'd with his weapon,
So that from the stroke sprang the war-sweat in streams
Forth from under his hair; yet naught fearsome was he,
The aged, the Scylfing, but paid aback rathely
With chaffer that worse was that war-crash of slaughter,
Sithence the folk-king turned him thither;
And nowise might the brisk one that son was of Wonred
Unto the old carle give back the hand-slaying,
For that he on Wulf's head the helm erst had sheared,
So that all with the blood stained needs must he bow,
And fell on the field; but not yet was he fey,
But he warp'd himself up, though the wound had touch'd nigh.
But thereon the hard Hygelac's thane there,
Whenas down lay his brother, let the broad blade,
The old sword of eotens, that helm giant-fashion'd
Break over the board-wall, and down the king bowed,
The herd of the folk unto fair life was smitten.
There were many about there who bound up his kinsman,
Upraised him swiftly when room there was made them,
That the slaughter-stead there at the stour they might wield,
That while when was reaving one warrior the other:

From Ongentheow took he the iron-wrought byrny,
The hard-hilted sword, with his helm all together:
The hoary one's harness to Hygelac bare he;
The fret war-gear then took he, and fairly behight him
Before the folk due gifts, and even so did it;
Gild he gave for that war-race, the lord of the Geats,
The own son of Hrethel, when home was he come,
To Eofor and Wulf gave he over-much treasure,
To them either he gave an hundred of thousands,
Land and lock'd rings. Of the gift none needed to wyte him
Of mid earth, since the glory they gained by battle.
Then to Eofor he gave his one only daughter,
An home-worship soothly, for pledge of his good will.
That is the feud and the foeship full soothly,
The dead-hate of men, e'en as I have a weening,
Wherefor the Swede people against us shall seek,
Sithence they have learned that lieth our lord
All lifeless; e'en he that erewhile hath held
Against all the haters the hoard and the realm;
Who after the heroes' fall held the fierce Scylfings,
Framed the folk-rede, and further thereto
Did earlship-deeds. Now is haste best of all
That we now the folk-king should fare to be seeing,
And then that we bring him who gave us the rings
On his way to the bale: nor shall somewhat alone
With the moody be molten; but manifold hoard is,
Gold untold of by tale that grimly is cheapen'd,
And now at the last by this one's own life
Are rings bought, and all these the brand now shall fret,
The flame thatch them over: no earl shall bear off
One gem in remembrance; nor any fair maiden
Shall have on her halse a ring-honour thereof,
But in grief of mood henceforth, bereaved of gold,
Shall oft, and not once alone, alien earth tread,
Now that the host-learn'd hath laid aside laughter,
The game and the glee-joy. Therefore shall the spear,
Full many a morn-cold, of hands be bewounded,
Uphoven in hand; and no swough of the harp
Shall waken the warriors; but the wan raven rather
Fain over the fey many tales shall tell forth,
And say to the erne how it sped him at eating,
While he with the wolf was a-spoiling the slain.
So was the keen-whetted a-saying this while
Spells of speech loathly; he lied not much
Of weirds or of words. Then uprose all the war-band,
And unblithe they wended under the Ernes-ness,
All welling of tears, the wonder to look on.
Found they then on the sand, now lacking of soul,

Holding his bed, him that gave them the rings
In time erewhile gone by. But then was the endday
Gone for the good one; since the king of the battle,
The lord of the Weders, in wonder-death died.
But erst there they saw a more seldom-seen sight,
The Worm on the lea-land over against him
Down lying there loathly; there was the fire-drake,
The grim of the terrors, with gleeds all beswealed.
He was of fifty feet of his measure
Long of his lying. Lift-joyance held he
In the whiles of the night, but down again wended
To visit his den. Now fast was he in death,
He had of the earth-dens the last end enjoyed.
There by him now stood the beakers and bowls,
There lay the dishes and dearly-wrought swords,
Rusty, through-eaten they, as in earth's bosom
A thousand of winters there they had wonned.
For that heritage there was, all craftily eked,
Gold of the yore men, in wizardry wounden;
So that that ring-hall might none reach thereto,
Not any of mankind but if God his own self,
Sooth king of victories, gave unto whom he would
(He is holder of men) to open that hoard,
E'en to whichso of mankind should seem to him meet.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

XLII.

THEY GO TO LOOK ON THE FIELD OF DEED.

THEN it was to be seen that throve not the way
To him that unrightly had hidden within there
The fair gear 'neath the wall. The warder erst slew
Some few of folk, and the feud then became
Wrothfully wreaked. A wonder whenas
A valour-strong earl may reach on the ending
Of the fashion of life, when he longer in nowise
One man with his kinsmen may dwell in the mead-hall!
So to Beowulf was it when the burg's ward he sought,
For the hate of the weapons: he himself knew not
Wherethrough forsooth his world's sundering should be.
So until Doomsday they cursed it deeply,
Those princes the dread, who erst there had done it,
That that man should be of sins never sackless,
A-hoppled in shrines, in hell-bonds fast set,
With plague-spots be punish'd, who that plain should plunder.
But naught gold-greedy was he, more gladly had he
The grace of the Owner erst gotten to see.
Now spake out Wiglaf, that son was of Weohstan:
Oft shall many an earl for the will but of one
Dree the wrack, as to us even now is befallen:
Nowise might we learn the lief lord of us,
The herd of the realm, any of rede,
That he should not go greet that warder of gold,
But let him live yet, whereas long he was lying,
And wonne in his wicks until the world's ending;
But he held to high weird and the hoard hath been seen,
Grimly gotten: o'er hard forsooth was that giving,
That the king of the folk e'en thither enticed.
Lo! I was therein, and I look'd it all over,
The gear of the house, when for me room was gotten,
But I lightly in nowise had leave for the passage
In under the earth-wall; in haste I gat hold
Forsooth with my hands of a mickle main burden
Of hoard-treasures, and hither then out did I bear them,
Out unto my king, and then quick was he yet,
Wise, and wit-holding: a many things spake he,
That aged in grief-care, and bade me to greet you,
And pray'd ye would do e'en after your friend's deeds
Aloft in the bale-stead a howe builded high,
Most mickle and mighty, as he amongst men was

The worthfullest warrior wide over the world,
While he the burg-weal erewhile might brook.
Then so let us hasten this second of whites
To see and to seek the throng of things strange,
The wonder 'neath wall; I shall wise you the way,
So that ye from a-near may look on enough
Of rings and broad gold; and be the bier swiftly
All yare thereunto, whenas out we shall fare.
Then let us so ferry the lord that was ours,
The lief man of men, to where long shall he
In the All-Wielder's keeping full patiently wait.
Bade then to bid the bairn of that Weohstan,
The deer of the battle, to a many of warriors,
The house-owning wights, that the wood of the bale
They should ferry from far, e'en the folk-owning men,
Toward the good one. And now shall the glee fret away,
The wan flame a-waxing, the strong one of warriors,
Him who oft-times abided the shower of iron
When the storm of the shafts driven on by the strings
Shook over the shield-wall, and the shaft held its service,
And eager with feather-gear follow'd the barb.
Now then the wise one, that son was of Weohstan,
Forth from the throng then call'd of the king's thanes
A seven together, the best to be gotten,
And himself went the eighth in under the foeroof;
One man of the battlers in hand there he bare
A gleam of the fire, of the first went he inward.
It was nowise allotted who that hoard should despoil,
Sithence without warden some deal that there was
The men now beheld in the hall there a-wonning,
Lying there fleeting; little mourn'd any,
That they in all haste outward should ferry
The dear treasures. But forthwith the drake did they shove,
The Worm, o'er the cliff-wall, and let the wave take him,
The flood fathom about the fretted works' herd.
There then was wunden gold on the wain laden
Untold of each kind, and the Atheling borne,
The hoary of warriors, out on to Whale-ness.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

XLIII.

OF THE BURIAL OF BEOWULF.

FOR him then they geared, the folk of the Geats,
A pile on the earth all unweaklike that was,
With war-helms behung, and with boards of the battle,
And bright byrnies, e'en after the boon that he bade.
Laid down then amidmost their king mighty-famous
The warriors lamenting, the lief lord of them.
Began on the burg of bale-fires the biggest
The warriors to waken: the wood-reek went up
Swart over the smoky glow, sound of the flame
Bewound with the weeping (the wind-blending stilled),
Until it at last the bone-house had broken
Hot at the heart. All unglad of mind
With mood-care they mourned their own liege lord's quelling.
Likewise a sad lay the wife of aforeside
For Beowulf the king, with her hair all up-bounden,
Sang sorrow-careful; said oft and over
That harm-days for herself in hard wise she dreaded,
The slaughter-falls many, much fear of the warrior,
The shaming and bondage. Heaven swallow'd the reek.
Wrought there and fashion'd the folk of the Weders
A howe on the lithe, that high was and broad,
Unto the wave-farers wide to be seen:
Then it they betimber'd in time of ten days,
The battle-strong's beacon; the brands' very leavings
They bewrought with a wall in the worthiest of ways,
That men of all wisdom might find how to work.
Into burg then they did the rings and bright sun-gems,
And all such adornments as in the hoard there
The war-minded men had taken e'en now;
The earls' treasures let they the earth to be holding,
Gold in the grit, wherein yet it liveth,
As useless to men-folk as ever it erst was.
Then round the howe rode the deer of the battle,
The bairns of the athelings, twelve were they in all.
Their care would they mourn, and bemoan them their king,
The word-lay would they utter and over the man speak:
They accounted his earlship and mighty deeds done,
And doughtily deem'd them; as due as it is
That each one his friend-lord with words should belaud,
And love in his heart, whenas forth shall he
Away from the body be fleeting at last.

In such wise they grieved, the folk of the Geats,
For the fall of their lord, e'en they his hearth-fellows;
Quoth they that he was a world-king forsooth,
The mildest of all men, unto men kindest,
To his folk the most gentlest, most yearning of fame.

Printed by Ballantyne, Hanson & Co.

Edinburgh & London