

A TWOLFE translated by Gummere PRELUDE OF THE FOUNDER OF THE DANISH HOUSE LOI, praise of the prowess of people-kings of spear-armed Danes, in days long sped, we have heard, and what honor the athelings won! Oft Scyld the Seefing from quadroned foes, from man to mead, the mead-bench rove, awing the earls. Since erst he lay friendless, a founding, fate repaid him; for he waxed under welkin, in wealth he throve, till before him folk, both far and near, who house by the whale-path, heard his mandate, gave him gifts: a good king he! To man an heir was afterward born, a son in his halls, whom heaven sent to favor the folk, feeling their woe that erst they had lacked an earl for leader so long a while; the Lord endowed him, the Wielder of Wonder, with world's renown. Famed was this Beowulf: far flew the boast of him, sown as Scyld, in the Scandinavian lands. So becomes it a youth to quit him with his father's friends, by fee and gift, that to aid him, aged, in after days, come warriors willing, should war draw nigh, liegemen loyal; by lauded deeds shall an earl have honor in every clan. Forth he fared at the fated moment, sturdy Scyld to the shelter of God. Then they bore him over to ocean's billow, loving clansmen, as late he charged them, while wielded words the winsome Scyld, the leader beloved who long had ruled.... In the roadstead rocked a ring-dight vessel, ice-flecked, o'er its outboard, atheling's barge: there laid they down their darling lord on the breast of the boat, the breaker-of-rings, by the mast the mighty one. Many a treasure fetched from far was freighted with him. No ship have I known so nobly dight with weapons of war and weeds of battle, with breastplate and blade: on his bosom lay a heaped hoard that hence should go far o'er the flood with him floating away. No less these loaded the lordly gifts, thanes' huge treasure, than those had done who in former time forth had sent him sole on the seas, a suckling child. High o'er his head they hoist the standard, a gold-wove banner; let billows take him, gave him to ocean. Grave were their spirits, mournful their mood. No man is able to say in sooth, no son of the halls, no hero 'neath heaven, who harbored that freight! I now Beowulf bode in the burg of t

the Scyldings, leader beloved, and long he ruled in fame with all folk, since his father had gone away from the world, till awake an heir, haughty Healfdene, who held through life, sage and sturdy, the Scyldings glad. Then, one after one, there woke to him, to the chieftain of clansmen, the children four: Heorogar, then Hrothgar, then Halga brave; and I heard that -- was -- 's queen, the Heathoscylding's helpmate dear. To Hrothgar was given such glory of war, such honor of combat, that all his kin obeyed him gladly till great grew his band of youthful comrades. It came in his mind to bid his henchmen a hall uprear, a master mead-house, mightier far than ever was seen by the sons of earth, and within it, then, to old and young he would all allot that the Lord had sent him, save only the land and the lives of his men. Wide, I heard, was the work com-manded, for many a tribe this mid-earth round, to fashion the folkstead. It fell, as he ordered, in rapid achievement that ready it stood there, of halls the noblest: Heorot he named it whose message had might in many a land. Not reckless of promise, the rings he dealt, treasure at ban-

quet: there towered the hall, high, gabled wide, the hot surge waiting of furious flame. Nor far was that day when father and son-in-law stood in feud for warfare and hatred that wo-

undraye the din of revel high in the hall: there harps rang out, clear song of the singer. He sang who knew tales of the early time of man, how the Almighty made the earth, fairest field of deed bright the breast of earth with limbs and leaves, made life for all of mortal beings that breathe and move. So lived the clansmen in cheer and revel a winsome life, till one be-

moored land living, in fen and fastness; fief of the giants the hapless wight a while had kept since the Creator his exile doomed. On kin of Cain was the killing avenged by sovran-

of men. Of Cain awoke all that woful breed, Etins and elves and evil-spirits, as well as the giants that warred with God weary while; but their wage was paid them: if WENT he

lost of his thanes, when once had been traced the trail of the fiend, spirit accur-

easy to find who elsewhere sought in room remote their rest at night, bed in the

aring homeward, laden with slaughter, his fair to seek. Then at the dawning, as

loss of his thanes, when once had been traced the trail of the fiend, spirit accur-

easy to find who elsewhere sought in room remote their rest at night, bed in the

and his fill one against all; until empty stood that lordly building, and long it bode s-

ceaselessly Grendel harassed Hrothgar, what hate he bore him, what murder and y-

great fear for the feud from his fiendish hands. But the evil one ambushed old and y-

heaping of horrors the hater of men, lonely roamer, wrought unceasing, harassings

was the sorrow to Scyldings'-friend, heart-rending misery. Many nobles sat assemble-

d, asked with words that the slayer-of-souls would succor give them for the pain of their

Heaven's-Helmet heeded they ever, Wielder-of-Wonder. -- Woe for that man who in har-

find in the Father's arms! Ill THUS seethed unceasing the son of Healfdene with the wo-

quay. This heard in his home Hygelac's thane, great among Geats, of Grendel's doings. He

o'er the swan-road he fain would seek, the noble monarch who needed men! The prince's j-

of Geats comrades chose, the keenest of warriors o'er he could find; with fourteen men the

y climbed, warriors ready; waves were churning sea with sand; the sailors bore on the breast

y might of the wind that bark like a bird with breast of foam, till in season due, on the second d

ff a Scylding clansman, a warden that guided the water-side, how they bore o'er the gangway an

thgar's henchman; with hand of might he shook his spear, and spake in parley. "Who are ye, then

sea-march here, lest any foe to the folk of Danes with harrying fief should hale the land. No alien

of warriors in world than is one of you, -- yon hero in harness! No henchman he worthied by weapo-

sies in Danish land. Now, dwellers afar, ocean-travellers, take from me simple advice: the sooner the

We are by kin of the clan of Geats, and Hygelac's own hearth-fellows we; to folk afar was my father kn-

se men all. To thy lord and liege in loyal mood we hasten hither, to Healfdene's son, people-protector: be

hear -- thou knowest if sooth it is -- the saying of men, that amid the Scyldings' a scathing monster, dark ill

e Wise-and-Brave may worst his foes, -- if ever the end of ill is fated, of cruel contest, if cure shall follow, a

t house unpeered!" Astride his steed, the strand-wand armed, clansman unquailing: "The keen-souled the

master. March, then, bearing weapons and weeds the way I show you. I will bid my men your boat meanwhil

some well-loved thanes, -- winding-neck'd wood, -- to Weders' bands, heroes such as the best of fate shall succo-

ship. -- Then shone the boars over the cheek-guard; chased with gold, keen and gleaming, guard it kept o'er the m

fold of earth, of houses 'neath heaven, where Hrothgar lived; and the gleam of it lightened o'er lands afar. The sturdy

led them thus: -- "'Tis time that I fare from you. Father Almighty in grace and mercy guard you well, safe in your seek

smen. Corsetlets glistered hand-forged, hard; on their harness bright the steel ring sang, as they strode along in m

and bowed them to bench: the breastplates clanged, war-gear of men; their weapons stacked, spears of the se-

home and kin. "Whence, now, bear ye burnished shields, harness gray and helmets grim, spear

prossess, not plunging into exile, for high-hearted valor, Hrothgar ye seek!" Him the sturdy-in-war bespake

owed. I am seeking to say to the son of Healfdene this mission of mine, to thy master-lord, the doughy prin

many was known, his courage and counsel: "The king of Danes, the Scyldings' friend, I fail will tell, the Br

y monarch may deign to give." Lied then in haste to where Hrothgar sat white-haired and old, his ears ab-

"Hither have fared to thee far-come men o'er the paths of ocean, people of Geatland; and the stateliest there b-

rayer to give them hearing, gracious Hrothgar! In weeds of the warrior worthy they, methinks, of our liking; their

n his youthful days; his aged father was Ecgtowe named, to whom, at home, gave Hrethel the Geat his only da-

he Geatish court, thither for thanks, -- he has thirty men's heft of grasp in the gripe of his hand, the bold-in-battle.

the good youth glow for his gallant thought. Be thou in haste, and bid them hither, clan of kinsmen, to come before me;

--: "To you this message my master sends, East-Danes' King, that your kin he knows, hardy heroes, and hails you all welc-

attle-shields bid your parity, and wooden war-shafts witl its end." Uprose the mighty one, ringed with his men, brave band

in, under Heorot's roof: [the hero strode,] hardy 'neath helm, till the hearth he neared. Beowulf spake, -- his breastplate glea-

ained in youth! These Grendel-deeds I heard in my home-land heralded clear. Seafarers say how stands this hall, of buildings

me well, -- brave and wise, the best of men, -- O sovran Hrothgar, to seek thee here, for my nerve and my might they knew full wel

I slew nikors by night, in need and peril avenging the Weders, whose woe they sought, -- crushing the grim ones. Grendel now, monst

d-of-the-folk, refuse it not, O Warriors'-shield, now I've wandered far, -- that I alone with my liegemen here, this hardy band, may Heorot pu

red, kind to me! -- brand or buckler to bear in the fight, gold-colored target; but with gripe alone must I front the fiend and fight for life, fo

and will he fearless eat, -- as oft before, -- my noblest thanes. Nor need'st thou then to hide my head; for his shall I be, dyed in gore, if death must

no: further for me need'st food prepare! To Hygelac send, if Hild should see me, best of war-weeds, warding my breast, armor excellent,

lend my Beowulf, to succor and save, thou hast sought us here. Thy father's combat a feud enkindled when Heathotlaf with hand he slew a

Honor-Scyldings, when first I was ruling the folk of Danes, wielded, youthful, this widespread realm, this hoard-hold of heroes. Heorogar

Wyfplings sent, o'er watery ridges, treasures olden: oaths he swore me. Sore is my soul to say to any of the race of man what rath for m

rendel's grasp. But God is able this deadly foe from his deeds to turn! Boasted full oft, as my beer they drank, earls o'er the ale-cup, ar

with gored, when the daylight broke, all the boards of the benches blood-bespinkled, gory the hall: I had heroes the less, doughy d

ERTH spake, the son of Ecglafr, who sat at the feet of the Scyldings' lord, unbouned the battle-runers. -- Beowulf's quest, sturdy seafarer's, sor

beowulf, Breca's rival, who emulous swam on the open sea, when for pride the pair of you proved the floods, and wantonly dared in waters de

ce he tied to his home so dear beloved of his liegemen, to land of Brondings, fastest of kin, where his folk he ruled, town and treasure. In tri

in struggle grim, -- if Grendel's approach thou darst await through the watch of night!" Beowulf spake, bairn of Ecgtowe: -- "What a deal h

not a man else, more ocean-endurance. We twain had talked, in time of youth, and made our boast, -- we were merely boys, striplings still, -- to t

nales. Not a whit from me could he float afar o'er the flood of waves, haste o'er the billows; nor him I abandoned. Together we twain on the t

hed on us: rough was the surge. Now the wrath of the sea-fish rose apace; yet me 'gainst the monsters my mailed coat, hard and hand-link

le, with grimmest gripe. 'Twas granted me, though, to pierce the monster with point of sword, with blade of battle: huge beast of the sea was

g, I dealt them due return! Nowise had they bliss from their booty then to devour their victim, vengeful creatures, seated to banquet at botto

feathomless sea-ways sailor-folk are never molested. -- Light from east, came bright God's beacon; the billows sank, so that I saw the sea-

O night-fought battles ne'er heard I a halder 'neath heaven's dome, nor adrift on the deep a more desolate man! Yet I came unharmd from

e have I heard men tell such terror of falchions, bitter battle. Breca ne'er yet, not one of you pair, in the play of war such daring deed has do

ts thee, well as thy wit may serve! For I say in sooth, thou son of Ecglafr, never had Grendel these grim deeds wrought, monster dire, on thy

-clash dread of thy Danish clan he vaunts him safe, from the Victor-Scyldings. He forces pledges, favors none of the land of Danes, but lustily

s, shall bid him battle. Blithe to mead go he that listeth, when light of dawn this morrow morning o'er men of earth, ether-robed su

m Beowulf hearing, folk's good shepherd, such firm resolve. Then was laughter of liegemen loud resounding with winsome words. Came

to the East-Danes' heir and warden, bade him be blithe at the beer-carouse, the land's beloved one. Lustily took he banquet and beaker, battle-fame

e ring-graced queen, the royal-hearted, to Beowulf bore the beaker of mead. She greeted the Geats' lord, God she thanked, in wisdom's

I am firm to do an earl's brave deed, or end the days of this life of mine in the mead-hall here." Well these words to the woman seemed

words of power, the proud-band's revel, till presently the son of Healfdene hastened to seek rest for the night; he knew there waited him

s came striding on, wan under welkin. The warriors rose. Man to man, he made harangue, Hrothgar to Beowulf, bade him hail, let him w

now to thee. Have now and hold this house unpeered; remember thy glory; thy might declare; watch for the foe! No wish shall fall thee