

*John Lesslie Hall. Beowulf*  
*Mary W. Shelley. Frankenstein, or The Modern*  
*Prometheus*  
*Gustav Meyrink. The Golem*  
*Richard Marsh. The Beetle. A Mystery*  
*William Hope Hodgson. The Voice in the Night*  
*Arthur Machen. The Novel of the Black Seal*  
*Bram Stoker. Dracula*  
*Bram Stoker. Dracula's Guest*  
*Nikolai Gogol. The Viy*  
*H. P. Lovecraft. The Call of Cthulhu*

UNCANNY.-Ill-featured, grizzly.

UNNETHE.-Difficult.

WAR-SPEED.-Success in war.

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

WEEDED.-Clad (cf. widow’s weeds).

WEEN.-Suppose, imagine.

WEIRD.-Fate, Providence.

WHILOM.-At times, formerly, often.

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

WIGHT.-Creature.

WOLD.-Plane, extended surface.

WOT.-Knows.

YOUNKER.-Youth.

## 1. The Life And Death Of Scyld

Lo! the Spear-Danes’ glory through splendid  
achievements

The folk-kings’ former fame we have heard of,  
How princes displayed then their  
prowess-in-battle.

Oft Scyld the Scefing from scathers in numbers  
From many a people their mead-benches tore.  
Since first he found him friendless and  
wretched,

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

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

to

Bow to his bidding and bring him their tribute:  
An excellent atheling! After was borne him  
A son and heir, young in his dwelling,  
Whom God-Father sent to solace the people.  
He had marked the misery malice had caused

them,

2 That reaved of their rulers they wretched had  
erstwhile<sup>3</sup>

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

him.

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

Danemen.

So the carle that is young, by kindnesses  
rendered

The friends of his father, with fees in

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<sup>2</sup> For the 'þæt' of verse 15, Sievers suggests 'þá' (= which). If this be accepted, the sentence 'He had ... afflicted' will read: *He (i.e. God) had perceived the malice-caused sorrow which they, lordless, had formerly long endured* .

<sup>3</sup> For 'aldor-léase' (15) Gr. suggested 'aldor-ceare': *He perceived their distress, that they formerly had suffered life-sorrow a long while* .

abundance

Must be able to earn that when age approacheth  
Eager companions aid him requitingly,  
When war assaults him serve him as liegemen:  
By praise-worthy actions must honor be got  
'Mong all of the races. At the hour that was

fated

Scyld then departed to the All-Father's keeping  
Warlike to wend him; away then they bare him  
To the flood of the current, his fond-loving

comrades,

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

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

Long did rule them.<sup>4</sup> The ring-stemmèd vessel,  
Bark of the atheling, lay there at anchor,  
Icy in glimmer and eager for sailing;  
The belovèd leader laid they down there,  
Giver of rings, on the breast of the vessel,  
The famed by the mainmast. A many of jewels,  
Of fretted embossings, from far-lands brought

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<sup>4</sup> A very difficult passage. 'Áhte' (31) has no object. H. supplies 'geweald' from the context; and our translation is based upon this assumption, though it is far from satisfactory. Kl. suggests 'lændagas' for 'lange': *And the beloved land-prince enjoyed (had) his transitory days (i.e. lived)*. B. suggests a dislocation; but this is a dangerous doctrine, pushed rather far by that eminent scholar.

over,

Was placed near at hand then; and heard I not

ever

That a folk ever furnished a float more superbly

With weapons of warfare, weeds for the battle,

Bills and burnies; on his bosom sparkled

Many a jewel that with him must travel

On the flush of the flood afar on the current.

And favors no fewer they furnished him

soothly,

Excellent folk-gems, than others had given him

Who when first he was born outward did send

him

Lone on the main, the merest of infants:

And a gold-fashioned standard they stretched

under heaven

High o'er his head, let the holm-currents bear

him,

Seaward consigned him: sad was their spirit,

Their mood very mournful. Men are not able

Soothly to tell us, they in halls who reside,<sup>5</sup>

Heroes under heaven, to what haven he hied.

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<sup>5</sup> The reading of the H.-So. text has been quite closely followed; but some eminent scholars read 'séle-rædenne' for 'sele-rædenne.' If that be adopted, the passage will read: *Men cannot tell us, indeed, the order of Fate, etc.* 'Sele-rædenne' has two things to support it: (1) v. 1347; (2) it affords a parallel to 'men' in v. 50.

## 2. Scyld's Successors – Hrothgar's Great Mead-Hall

In the boroughs then Beowulf, bairn of the  
Scyldings,  
Belovèd land-prince, for long-lasting season  
Was famed mid the folk (his father departed,  
The prince from his dwelling), till afterward  
sprang  
Great-minded Healfdene; the Danes in his  
lifetime  
He graciously governed, grim-mooded, agèd.  
Four bairns of his body born in succession  
Woke in the world, war-troopers' leader  
Heorogar, Hrothgar, and Halga the good;  
Heard I that Elan was Ongentheow's consort,  
The well-beloved bedmate of the War-Scylfing  
leader.

Then glory in battle to Hrothgar was given,  
Waxing of war-fame, that willingly kinsmen  
Obeyed his bidding, till the boys grew to  
manhood,  
A numerous band. It burned in his spirit  
To urge his folk to found a great building,  
A mead-hall grander than men of the era  
Ever had heard of, and in it to share  
With young and old all of the blessings  
The Lord had allowed him, save life and  
retainers.

Then the work I find afar was assigned  
To many races in middle-earth's regions,  
To adorn the great folk-hall. In due time it  
happened  
Early 'mong men, that 'twas finished entirely,  
The greatest of hall-buildings; Heorot he  
named it  
Who wide-reaching word-sway wielded 'mong  
earlmen.  
His promise he brake not, rings he lavished,  
Treasure at banquet. Towered the hall up  
High and horn-crested, huge between antlers:  
It battle-waves bided, the blasting fire-demon;  
Ere long then from hottest hatred must  
sword-wrath  
Arise for a woman's husband and father.  
Then the mighty war-spirit<sup>6</sup> endured for a  
season,  
Bore it bitterly, he who bided in darkness,  
That light-hearted laughter loud in the building  
Greeted him daily; there was dulcet  
harp-music,  
Clear song of the singer. He said that was able  
To tell from of old earthmen's beginnings,  
That Father Almighty earth had created,  
The winsome wold that the water encircleth,

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<sup>6</sup> R. and t. B. prefer 'ellor-gæst' to 'ellen-gæst' (86): *Then the stranger from afar endured, etc.*

Set exultingly the sun's and the moon's beams  
To lavish their lustre on land-folk and races,  
And earth He embellished in all her regions  
With limbs and leaves; life He bestowed too  
On all the kindreds that live under heaven.  
So blessed with abundance, brimming with

joyance,

The warriors abided, till a certain one gan to  
Dog them with deeds of direfullest malice,  
A foe in the hall-building: this horrible

stranger<sup>7</sup>

Was Grendel entitled, the march-stepper  
famous

Who<sup>8</sup> dwelt in the moor-fens, the marsh and  
the fastness;

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

Creator

Had banned him and branded. For that bitter  
murder,

The killing of Abel, all-ruling Father  
The kindred of Cain crushed with His

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<sup>7</sup> Some authorities would translate 'demon' instead of 'stranger.'

<sup>8</sup> Some authorities arrange differently, and render: *Who dwelt in the moor-fens, the marsh and the fastness, the land of the giant-race.*

vengeance;

In the feud He rejoiced not, but far away drove  
him

From kindred and kind, that crime to atone for,  
Meter of Justice. Thence ill-favored creatures,  
Elves and giants, monsters of ocean,  
Came into being, and the giants that longtime  
Grappled with God; He gave them requital.

### 3. Grendel The Murderer

When the sun was sunken, he set out to visit  
The lofty hall-building, how the Ring-Danes  
had used it

For beds and benches when the banquet was  
over.

Then he found there reposing many a noble  
Asleep after supper; sorrow the heroes,<sup>9</sup>  
Misery knew not. The monster of evil  
Greedy and cruel tarried but little,  
Fell and frantic, and forced from their slumbers

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<sup>9</sup> The translation is based on ‘weras,’ adopted by H.-So.-K. and Th. read ‘wera’ and, arranging differently, render 119(2)-120: *They knew not sorrow, the wretchedness of man, aught of misfortune* .-For ‘unhælo’ (120) R. suggests ‘unfælo’: *The uncanny creature, greedy and cruel, etc* .

Thirty of thanemen; thence he departed  
Leaping and laughing, his lair to return to,  
With surfeit of slaughter sallying homeward.  
In the dusk of the dawning, as the day was just

breaking,

Was Grendel's prowess revealed to the  
warriors:

Then, his meal-taking finished, a moan was  
uplifted,

Morning-cry mighty. The man-ruler famous,  
The long-worthy atheling, sat very woful,  
Suffered great sorrow, sighed for his liegemen,  
When they had seen the track of the hateful

pursuer,

The spirit accursèd: too crushing that sorrow,  
Too loathsome and lasting. Not longer he

tarried,

But one night after continued his slaughter  
Shameless and shocking, shrinking but little  
From malice and murder; they mastered him

fully.

He was easy to find then who elsewhere  
looked for

A pleasanter place of repose in the lodges,  
A bed in the bowers. Then was brought to his

notice

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

10 So ruled he and strongly strove against  
justice

Lone against all men, till empty uptowered  
The choicest of houses. Long was the season:  
Twelve-winters' time torture suffered  
The friend of the Scyldings, every affliction,  
Endless agony; hence it after<sup>11</sup> became  
Certainly known to the children of men  
Sadly in measures, that long against Hrothgar  
Grendel struggled:-his grudges he cherished,  
Murderous malice, many a winter,  
Strife unremitting, and peacefully wished he

12 Life-woe to lift from no liegeman at all of  
The men of the Dane-folk, for money to settle,

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10 S. rearranges and translates: *So he ruled and struggled unjustly, one against all, till the noblest of buildings stood useless (it was a long while) twelve years' time: the friend of the Scyldings suffered distress, every woe, great sorrows, etc .*

11 For 'syððan,' B. suggests 'sárcwidum': *Hence in mournful words it became well known, etc .* Various other words beginning with 's' have been conjectured.

12 The H.-So. glossary is very inconsistent in referring to this passage.-'Sibbe' (154), which H.-So. regards as an instr., B. takes as accus., obj. of 'wolde.' Putting a comma after Deniga, he renders: *He did not desire peace with any of the Danes, nor did he wish to remove their life-woe, nor to settle for money .*

No counsellor needed count for a moment  
On handsome amends at the hands of the  
murderer;  
The monster of evil fiercely did harass,  
The ill-planning death-shade, both elder and  
younger,  
Trapping and tricking them. He trod every  
night then  
The mist-covered moor-fens; men do not know  
where  
Witches and wizards wander and ramble.  
So the foe of mankind many of evils  
Grievous injuries, often accomplished,  
Horrible hermit; Heort he frequented,  
Gem-bedecked palace, when night-shades had  
fallen  
(Since God did oppose him, not the throne  
could he touch,<sup>13</sup>  
The light-flashing jewel, love of Him knew  
not).

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<sup>13</sup> Of this difficult passage the following interpretations among others are given: (1) Though Grendel has frequented Heorot as a demon, he could not become ruler of the Danes, on account of his hostility to God. (2) Hrothgar was much grieved that Grendel had not appeared before his throne to receive presents. (3) He was not permitted to devastate the hall, on account of the Creator; *i.e.* God wished to make his visit fatal to him.-Ne ... wisse (169) W. renders: *Nor had he any desire to do so ; 'his' being obj. gen. = danach.*

'Twas a fearful affliction to the friend of the  
Scyldings  
Soul-crushing sorrow. Not seldom in private  
Sat the king in his council; conference held  
they  
What the braves should determine 'gainst  
terrors unlooked for.  
At the shrines of their idols often they promised  
Gifts and offerings, earnestly prayed they  
The devil from hell would help them to lighten  
Their people's oppression. Such practice they  
used then,  
Hope of the heathen; hell they remembered  
In innermost spirit, God they knew not,  
Judge of their actions, All-wielding Ruler,  
No praise could they give the Guardian of  
Heaven,  
The Wielder of Glory. Woe will be his who  
Through furious hatred his spirit shall drive to  
The clutch of the fire, no comfort shall look  
for,  
Wax no wiser; well for the man who,  
Living his life-days, his Lord may face  
And find defence in his Father's embrace!

#### **4. Beowulf Goes To Hrothgar's Assistance**

So Healfdene's kinsman constantly mused on

His long-lasting sorrow; the battle-thane clever  
Was not anywise able evils to 'scape from:  
Too crushing the sorrow that came to the  
people,  
Loathsome and lasting the life-grinding torture,  
Greatest of night-woes. So Higelac's liegeman,  
Good amid Geatmen, of Grendel's  
achievements

Heard in his home:<sup>14</sup> of heroes then living  
He was stoutest and strongest, sturdy and  
noble.

He bade them prepare him a bark that was  
trusty;

He said he the war-king would seek o'er the  
ocean,  
The folk-leader noble, since he needed  
retainers.

For the perilous project prudent companions  
Chided him little, though loving him dearly;  
They egged the brave atheling, augured him  
glory.

The excellent knight from the folk of the

---

<sup>14</sup> 'From hám' (194) is much disputed. One rendering is: *Beowulf, being away from home, heard of Hrothgar's troubles, etc* . Another, that adopted by S. and endorsed in the H.-So. notes, is: *B. heard from his neighborhood (neighbors), i.e. in his home, etc* . A third is: *B., being at home, heard this as occurring away from home* . The H.-So. glossary and notes conflict.

## Geatmen

Had liegemen selected, likest to prove them  
Trustworthy warriors; with fourteen

companions

The vessel he looked for; a liegeman then  
showed them,

A sea-crafty man, the bounds of the country.

Fast the days fleeted; the float was a-water,

The craft by the cliff. Clomb to the prow then

Well-equipped warriors: the wave-currents

twisted

The sea on the sand; soldiers then carried

On the breast of the vessel bright-shining

jewels,

Handsome war-armor; heroes outshoved then,

Warmen the wood-ship, on its wished-for

adventure.

The foamy-necked floater fanned by the

breeze,

Likest a bird, glided the waters,

Till twenty and four hours thereafter

The twist-stemmed vessel had traveled such

distance

That the sailing-men saw the sloping

embankments,

The sea cliffs gleaming, precipitous mountains,

Nesses enormous: they were nearing the limits

At the end of the ocean.<sup>15</sup> Up thence quickly

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<sup>15</sup> ‘Eoletes’ (224) is marked with a (?) by H.-So.; our rendering

The men of the Weders clomb to the mainland,  
Fastened their vessel (battle weeds rattled,  
War burnies clattered), the Wielder they  
thanked

That the ways o'er the waters had waxen so  
gentle.

Then well from the cliff edge the guard of the  
Scyldings

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

Brave ones bearing beauteous targets,  
Armor all ready, anxiously thought he,  
Musing and wondering what men were  
approaching.

High on his horse then Hrothgar's retainer  
Turned him to coastward, mightily brandished  
His lance in his hands, questioned with  
boldness.

"Who are ye men here, mail-covered warriors  
Clad in your corslets, come thus a-driving  
A high riding ship o'er the shoals of the waters,

16 And hither 'neath helmets have hied o'er

---

simply follows his conjecture.-Other conjectures as to 'eolet' are:  
(1) *voyage* , (2) *toil* , *labor* , (3) *hasty journey* .

16 The lacuna of the MS at this point has been supplied by various conjectures. The reading adopted by H.-So. has been rendered in the above translation. W., like H.-So., makes 'ic' the beginning of a new sentence, but, for 'helmas bæron,' he reads 'hringed stefnan.' This has the advantage of giving a parallel to

the ocean?

I have been strand-guard, standing as warden,  
Lest enemies ever anyway ravage  
Danish dominions with army of war-ships.  
More boldly never have warriors ventured  
Hither to come; of kinsmen's approval,  
Word-leave of warriors, I ween that ye surely  
Nothing have known. Never a greater one  
Of earls o'er the earth have *I* had a sight of  
Than is one of your number, a hero in armor;  
No low-ranking fellow<sup>17</sup> adorned with his

weapons,

But launching them little, unless looks are  
deceiving,

And striking appearance. Ere ye pass on your  
journey

As treacherous spies to the land of the

---

'brontne ceol' instead of a kenning for 'go.'-B puts the (?) after 'holmas', and begins a new sentence at the middle of the line. Translate: *What warriors are ye, clad in armor, who have thus come bringing the foaming vessel over the water way, hither over the seas? For some time on the wall I have been coast guard, etc.* S. endorses most of what B. says, but leaves out 'on the wall' in the last sentence. If W.'s 'hringed stefnan' be accepted, change line 51 above to, *A ring-stemmed vessel hither o'ersea.*

<sup>17</sup> 'Seld-guma' (249) is variously rendered: (1) *housecarle*; (2) *home-stayer*; (3) *common man*. Dr. H. Wood suggests a *man-at-arms in another's house*.

Scyldings

And farther fare, I fully must know now  
What race ye belong to. Ye far-away dwellers,  
Sea-faring sailors, my simple opinion  
Hear ye and hearken: haste is most fitting  
Plainly to tell me what place ye are come

from.”

## 5. The Geats Reach Heorot

The chief of the strangers rendered him answer,  
War-troopers’ leader, and word-treasure  
opened:

“We are sprung from the lineage of the people  
of Geatland,

And Higelac’s hearth-friends. To heroes  
unnumbered

My father was known, a noble head-warrior  
Ecgtheow titled; many a winter

He lived with the people, ere he passed on his  
journey,

Old from his dwelling; each of the counsellors  
Widely mid world-folk well remembers him.

We, kindly of spirit, the lord of thy people,  
The son of King Healfdene, have come here to  
visit,

Folk-troop’s defender: be free in thy counsels!  
To the noble one bear we a weighty

commission,

The helm of the Danemen; we shall hide, I  
ween,

Naught of our message. Thou know'st if it  
happen,

As we soothly heard say, that some savage  
despoiler,

Some hidden pursuer, on nights that are murky  
By deeds very direful 'mid the Danemen  
exhibits

Hatred unheard of, horrid destruction  
And the falling of dead. From feelings least  
selfish

I am able to render counsel to Hrothgar,  
How he, wise and worthy, may worst the  
destroyer,

If the anguish of sorrow should ever be  
lessened,<sup>18</sup>

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

Or ever hereafter he agony suffer  
And troublous distress, while towereth upward  
The handsomest of houses high on the  
summit.”

Bestriding his stallion, the strand-watchman

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<sup>18</sup> ‘Edwendan’ (280) B. takes to be the subs. ‘edwenden’ (cf. 1775); and ‘bisigu’ he takes as gen. sing., limiting ‘edwenden’: *If reparation for sorrows is ever to come*. This is supported by t.B.

answered,

The doughty retainer: “The difference surely  
’Twixt words and works, the warlike

shield-bearer

Who judgeth wisely well shall determine.

This band, I hear, beareth no malice

To the prince of the Scyldings. Pass ye then

onward

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

To my war-trusty vassals command I shall  
issue

To keep from all injury your excellent vessel,

Your fresh-tarred craft, ’gainst every opposer

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

bark shall

Waft back again the well-beloved hero

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

To warrior so great ’twill be granted sure

In the storm of strife to stand secure.”

Onward they fared then (the vessel lay quiet,

The broad-bosomed bark was bound by its

cable,

Firmly at anchor); the boar-signs glistened<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Combining the emendations of B. and t.B., we may read: *The boar-images glistened ... brilliant, protected the life of the war-mooded man* . They read ‘ferh-wearde’ (305) and ‘gúðmódgum men’ (306).